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Pioneer Church Planters to Gabon, Africa ~ Serving with Silent Word Ministries International
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1. Concerning the Scriptures

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were inspired by God, both verbally and in every part. We believe that His Holy Word is not only inspired but also preserved inerrant in all sixty-six books. We believe God, Who is Truth, communicated through Spirit-controlled men so that the Scriptures are infallible and therefore authoritative in all they teach and in all matters they touch. We believe the Bible is the supreme revelation of God's will for man and constitutes the only unfailing guide for faith and life. Matthew 5:17, 18; 15:4-6; Romans 3:1-4; 15:4; II Peter 1:19-21; Mark 12:36; Galatians 3:16; Revelation 22:18, 19; John 10:34, 35; II Timothy 3:16, 17; Psalm 19:7; Acts 1:16; Heb. 4:12 *We use the King James Bible while dealing with the English speaking people, and TR faithful translations while dealing with those of another tongue.*

2. Concerning the True God

We believe in one God, the Creator of Heaven and earth; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, known as the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory, and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. Genesis 1:1, 26; Isaiah 45:14; 46:9; Romans 1:1-6, 19, 20; Exodus 20:2, 3; Matthew 3:16, 17; 28:19, 20; I Corinthians 8:6; Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4; 32:39; John 1:1-3; 5:36-40; Ephesians 1:3-10; 4:3-6; Psalm 2:7-9; Acts 5:3, 4; Hebrews 1:1-3

3. Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is very God of very God, being "God manifest in the flesh." He lived a life of absolute sinlessness and in His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins, dying not as a martyr, but as a voluntary Substitute in the sinner's place. He rose from the dead on the third day and ascended bodily into Heaven. He is personally and bodily coming again, which is our "blessed hope", first to rapture His saints, and then to set up the throne of David and establish His kingdom. The rapture is imminent and will be personal, pre-tribulational and pre-millennial. Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; Acts 1:9-11; 15:16; II Thessalonians 2:6-8; Matthew 1:18-25; 28:6; II Corinthians 5:20-21; I Peter 2:22; 3:18; John 1:1, 14; 14:3; I Thessalonians 4:16-17

4. Concerning the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person possessing all the attributes of personality and of deity. He is eternally equal with the Father and the Son and is of the same essence and nature. His relation to the unbelieving world is that He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He is the Agent of the new birth, and His work among believers is that He seals, indwells, fills, guides, and teaches them the ways of righteousness. We believe there is a distinction between the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and His ministry in the New Testament. There is a new and unique work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Body of Christ, that is, the baptism of the Holy Spirit by which He places each believer into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation. In addition, we believe that the Holy Spirit endows believers with service gifts upon conversion. We believe the Bible does not support the authenticity of the sign gifts of prophecy, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles and healing for today and repudiates the experience-oriented theory and ecumenically oriented practice of the charismatic movement. Matthew 28:19; Romans 8:9; 12:3-8; Hebrews 9:14; John 7:39; 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-11; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:7-11; 5:18; Revelation 22:18-19; Acts 1:5; 5:3-4; I Corinthians 12:8-13, 28-31; 13:8-12

5. Concerning Man

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created by a direct act of God and not from any previously existing form of life. By voluntary transgression he fell from his state of innocence, in consequence of which all men are now sinners by nature and by choice, utterly devoid of the holiness required by God and His Law, positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal, literal punishment and everlasting, conscious existence separated from God without defense or excuse. Genesis 1:26, 27; Jeremiah 17:9; Revelation 20:11-15; Psalm 14:1-3; 51:5; Romans 3:10, 23; 5:12-19; Isaiah 53:6; Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-19

6. Concerning Creation

We believe in the Genesis account of a six day creation and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through protracted periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was made directly and God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their kind." Since God created mankind into genders distinctly male and female, we believe that the only divinely approved marriage is that between one man and one woman. Genesis 1:1, 11, 24, 26-27; 2:21-23; Exodus 20:11; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17; Leviticus 18:22-24; Acts 4:24; 17:23-26; I Timothy 1:8-11; Nehemiah 9:6; Romans 1:20; Hebrews 11:3; Jeremiah 10:12; I Corinthians 6:9, 10; Revelation 10:6

7. Concerning Salvation

We believe the Scriptures teach that salvation of sinners is divinely initiated, wholly of grace, and accomplished only through the mediatorial work of the Son of God; that it is wholly apart from works and is upon the sole condition of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and never without genuine repentance; that in order to be saved the sinner must be born again, being regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith in God's Word and becoming the recipient of a new nature; that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification, that judicial act of God accompanied by the pardon of sin and the imputation of divine righteousness, not because of any works of righteousness on our part, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; that the believer who has exercised personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is completely justified and in possession of a salvation which is eternally secure. Matthew 26:28; II Corinthians 7:9, 10; Hebrews 4:2; John 3:3-6, 16; 10:28, 29; Ephesians 2:8-10; I Peter 1:18-23; Acts 3:19; 13:39; 16:31; 20:21; I Timothy 2:5-6; II Peter 1:4; Romans 1:16, 17; 2:4; 3:24-30; Titus 3:5

8. Concerning the Eternal Security of the Believer

We believe that salvation is not only a gift from the Lord, but also is sustained by the Lord. The Holy Spirit permanently indwells the believer and seals him in salvation for eternity. Therefore, since salvation is solely of the Lord, apart from any good works of man, we hold that the believer is and shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation. This security in no way gives professors in Christ a license to sin. It is our belief that all who are preserved by God's eternal omnipotence should pursue holiness. John 10:28, 29; 6:37-40; 14:16-17, 26; Romans 5:21-6:2; 6:22; 8:1-2; II Corinthians 7:1; I Peter 1:5, 13-16; I Corinthians 2:9-14; Ephesians 1:4, 13; 2:8-10; Jude 24, 25

9. Concerning the Church

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Church of Jesus Christ is distinct from Israel in the Old Testament. We believe that a Baptist church is a local congregation of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, said church being understood to be the citadel and propagator of the divine and eternal grace; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word. Its Scriptural officers are pastors, sometimes called bishops or elders, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures to both Timothy and Titus.

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions of men and women in the home and in the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to hold the leadership positions (pastors and deacons) in the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible of licensure and ordination for pastor or deacon by the church.

This definition of the local church leads to these Scriptural distinctives:

- A. Sole authority of the Scriptures for faith and practice;
- B. Autonomy of the local church;
- C. Believers' baptism by immersion before church membership;
- D. Two offices, pastor (elder, bishop) and deacon;
- E. Two symbolic ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Table;
- F. Individual priesthood of the believer and soul liberty;
- G. Separation of church and state.

We believe the true mission of the church is found in the Great Commission: first, to evangelize through the preaching of the Gospel to every creature; second, to build up the church through baptizing the new converts; and, third, to make individual disciples by teaching and instructing as Christ commanded. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit. We believe that it is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in fellowship, contending for the faith, and for the furtherance of the Gospel. We also hold that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation, and that, on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final. Matthew 22:21; 28:19-20; Col. 1:18; Acts 2:1-4, 41-42; 6:5-6; 14:23; 15:22-23; 20:17-28; Hebrews 12:23; I Corinthians 5:11-13; 6:1-4; 11:2, 23-33; 12:4,13; 16:1-2; I Timothy 2:11-14; 3:1-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:11; 5:23-24; Titus 1:5-8; 2:7-8

10. Concerning Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem his identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, illustrating the believer's own death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It is prerequisite to membership and privileges in a local church.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded by solemn self-examination. Observance of the Lord's Supper is for believers only. The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper must be observed under the discipline of the local church. Matthew 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-28

11. Concerning Missions

We believe that the command to give the Gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and that the "Great Commission" was given to the church to fulfil in the power of the Spirit. We believe that missions, the sending forth of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost

and dying world, is the obligation of each and every local church. We believe that it is the responsibility of each and every saved individual to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Holy Scriptures and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to “every creature.” We believe that God will save a great multitude from every nation, tribe, race, and language to His own glory. Matthew 28:18-20; John 20:21; Romans 10:13-15; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Revelation 5:9; 7:9

12. Concerning the Eternal State

We believe the Scriptures teach the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust. All those who through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will spend eternity in Heaven, in full enjoyment of God’s presence and blessings, and those who through impenitence and unbelief refuse to accept God’s offer of mercy will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire, suffering everlasting damnation and punishment. We believe that Heaven, Hell, and the Lake of Fire are literal and distinct places, and not only a condition or state of being. Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 14:2; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1-22:5; Luke 16:19-26; Psalm 16:11

13. Concerning Satan

We believe that Satan was once holy, and enjoyed Heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels; that he is now the malignant “prince of the power of the air,” and the unholy “god of this world.” We hold him to be full of all subtlety, man’s great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power behind the present apostasy; the lord of the antichrist, and the author of all the powers of darkness. We believe that he was conquered by Christ on the cross, and is destined to final defeat at the hands of God’s own Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice of damnation and punishment in the Lake of Fire, a place prepared for him and his angels. Isaiah 14:12-15; II Corinthians 4:4; 11:13-15; Hebrews 2:14; Ezekiel 28:14-17; Ephesians 2:2; 6:11, 12, 16; I Peter 5:8; Matthew 4:1-3; 13:25; 25:41; 27:39; II Peter 2:4; Mark 13:21-22; I Thessalonians 3:5; I John 3:8; 4:3; John 14:30; 16:11; II Thess. 2:8-11; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-10; 13:13-14; 19:11, 16, 20; 20:1-3, 10

14. Concerning Personal Separation

We believe the Scriptures teach that every believer should be separated unto God from the world, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, should walk in truth and holiness, exhibiting qualities of honesty, integrity, forgiveness, and loving-kindness. We further believe that any achievement in these characteristics will be evidenced by sincere humility and genuine zeal for the advancement of the cause of Christ. We also believe the Scriptures admonish every believer not to love the world or the things of the world, but rather to flee evil desires, avoid every kind of evil, and refrain from questionable practices which destroy one’s testimony, offend one’s brother, and fail to glorify God. Proverbs 15:33; II Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 4:8; Romans 6:11-13; 14:19-21; Galatians 5:22-25; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; I Corinthians 6:18-20; 8:9-13; Ephesians 4:32; 5:1-2, 15-20; I Peter 1:14-16; 5:5-6; I Corinthians 10:23,31-33; I John 2:15-17

15. Concerning Ecclesiastical Separation

SWMI stands firmly in opposition to doctrinal error and separates from those organizations and individuals that sanction theological compromise, or who promote unity without regard to doctrinal integrity. This doctrine is based upon God’s eternal principle of division between truth and error, light and darkness, and His specific command to be separate from unbelievers and disobedient brethren. This truth is to be practiced with an attitude of devotion to God, humility, and compassion, yet with conviction, to create the proper condition and atmosphere for maintaining fellowship with God and Christian brethren, and a testimony of both salt and light that leads men to glorify God. We believe ecumenical evangelism that involves false teachers and disobedient brethren violates the principles taught in God’s Word. Matthew 10:34-39; 18:15; II Corinthians 6:14-18; II Thessalonians 3:14-15; Matthew 5:13-16; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5:7-13; II Timothy 2:16-18; I Kings 13:11-26

16. Conclusion: On the Supremacy of Scripture

The preceding doctrinal statement is meant to be a summary “of those things which are most surely believed among us.” It is only that — a summary. It is neither intended to be a definitive statement of all revealed truth, nor to exhaust all that the Scriptures say concerning those doctrines listed.

Final authority, therefore, must rest not in this summary, but in the whole body of revealed truth, the Holy Scriptures, commonly known as the Bible. Isaiah 8:19-20; Isaiah 55:8-11; II Timothy 2:15