

# South Fellowship Condensed Statement of Faith

## Section 1: The Bible

We believe that the Bible is God's own word, written by people prepared and carried along by His Spirit. The Bible is inspired by God and is the testimony that God desires humanity to have of his nature, character, and story. We believe that the Scriptures are to be believed as God's instruction in all that it affirms; obeyed as God's command in all that it requires; and embraced as God's pledge in all that it promises. Ultimately, the Scriptures are God's witness to the person and work of Jesus the Messiah (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35; John 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:14-16; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)

## Section 2: The Godhead (Trinity)

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are identical in essence and equal in power and glory; they possess the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of the same worship, confidence, and obedience (Matthew 28:19--20; Mark 12:29; John 1:1--4; Acts 5:3--4; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

## Section 3: The Person and Work of Jesus

We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He came to reveal God to mankind and to redeem sinful humanity by giving Himself as a sinless sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, carrying the curse and penalty for sin on our behalf – which is physical and spiritual death. He then arose bodily from the dead and ascended to the Father's right hand where He intercedes on the believer's behalf. All the Scriptures, from first to last, testify of Him (Luke 1:34-35; 24:27; John 1:1--2, 14, 18; Romans 3:24--26; 8:34).

## Section 4: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Spirit is a person, possessing all the distinctively divine attributes. He is God. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates, seals, and sets apart the believer to a holy life. At regeneration, He baptizes the believer into the body of Christ and comes to indwell him permanently. The Holy Spirit seeks to direct people to Jesus so that they are drawn to his beauty and glory. (John 3:5--8; 14:16-17; 16:7-11; 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Rom. 8:9; 26-27; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18; Titus 3:5).

## Section 5: The Condition of Man

We believe that man was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, free from sin. Humanity sinned and consequently experienced not only physical death but also spiritual death (which is separation from God). The consequences of this sin affect the entire human race. All human beings are born with a sinful nature and are alienated from the life of God and incapable of remedying his lost and depraved condition apart from divine grace (Genesis 1:26; 3:1--24; 6:5; Psalms 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3).

## **Section 6: The Means of Salvation**

We believe that salvation from the guilt and condemnation of sin is possible only as the gift of God's grace and that whoever by faith receives Jesus Christ as His Savior becomes a child of God. His salvation is not the result of any human effort or merit, rather it is the work which Christ accomplished through his life, death, burial, and resurrection that purchases salvation. (John 5:24; Ephesians 1:6--7; 2:8--9; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23).

## **Section 7: The Church**

We believe that all who have placed their faith in Christ are united by the Holy Spirit into one spiritual body, the Church, of which Christ is the Head. They are people seeking to live in the way of Jesus with the heart of Jesus – trusting Jesus not only as Lord, but also as rabbi. All believers from the day of Pentecost until Jesus' return are members of the universal church, regardless of organizational affiliation. The members of this one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies for teaching, worship, prayer, fellowship, service, and the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are likewise to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:3).

## **Section 8: Our Life in Christ**

We believe that all who have been born again by God's transforming grace are secure in Christ forever. It is their privilege to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation, not on the basis of their own accomplishments, but on the basis of God's faithfulness and the accomplished work of Jesus. While their assurance is secure, this assurance must not become an occasion for sin. The reality of their faith in Christ is demonstrated through seeking to live in the way of Jesus with heart of Jesus by the Spirit's empowerment. (Matthew 7:20; John 10:27--29; 13:34--35; Romans 6:13; 8:28--39; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 2:10; 1 John 3:14,23; 5:13).

## **Section 9: The Gifts of the Spirit**

We believe that believers receive from the Holy Spirit spiritual gifts which they should endeavor to discover, develop, and use to serve and build up the Body. The Body functions most effectively when gifts are being properly exercised. However, the fruit of the Spirit, not spiritual gifts, is the evidence of being filled by the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-27; Eph. 4:7-13)

## **Section 10: The Culmination of History**

We believe in the personal, bodily, visible return of Christ Jesus. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all people: believers to enjoy eternal life with God; unbelievers to experience judgment and then eternal separation from God. We believe the New Heavens and New Earth are the eternal destiny for all believers (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6; Revelation 21-22).