

Bethel Baptist Church Statement of Faith

- I. As a part of our complete Statement of Faith, we maintain our Essential Beliefs as such:
 - A) Section Defined: The Essential Beliefs are the core theological doctrines that represent the fundamental tenets of our faith. Agreement with these non-negotiable teachings is required for all positions of church leadership and ministry, as well as for full membership within our fellowship.
 - B) The Essential Beliefs of Bethel Baptist Church are as follows:
 - 1) Scripture
 - (a) We believe the Bible to be the verbally inspired Word of God, consisting of the Old and New Testaments. It is inerrant in the original manuscripts and the sufficient and final authority for all matters of faith, practice, and life.
 - (b) We believe the Bible to be God's complete written revelation of His will and is upheld as the supreme and final authority in faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)
 - 2) The Trinity
 - (a) We believe the one true and living God is one in essence, possessing three personal distinctions: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - (b) We believe in one God who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. He is perfect in holiness, justice, truth, grace, wisdom, power, mercy, and love. (Exodus 34:6; 2 Samuel 24:14; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 9:16; Psalm 31:5; Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 46:9; Isaiah 6:3; Jeremiah 33:11; John 3:16; Romans 11:33; 1 John 5:7; Revelation 19:6)
 - 3) God the Father
 - (a) We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He, in keeping with his justice, possesses righteous anger toward all those who do wicked. Yet, in accordance with His steadfast love, He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men. He hears and answers our prayers, and He willfully and joyfully saves from sin and death all that come to him through faith in Jesus Christ. (Matthew 6:8-9, 32; John 4:2; John 5:21,46; John 6:44; John 14:2; Acts 1:6-7; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3,4; James 1:17; 1 John 3:1)
 - 4) Jesus Christ
 - (a) We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, paid the penalty for our sins on the cross, and rose from the dead three days later.

- (b) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God in order that He might reveal God to and redeem sinful man. He was and is without sin. He died, was raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, and now intercedes for believers at the Father's right hand. (Matthew 1:23; Matthew 28:5, 7; Luke 1:35; Luke 23:33; John 1:1-2; Romans 8:34; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

5) The Holy Spirit

- (a) We believe in the deity of the Holy Spirit and that He indwells and enables the Christian to live a godly life.
- (b) We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person equal with the Father and Son and of the same substance and nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relationship to the unbelieving world, He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment, bearing witness to the truth; that He is the agent of the new birth; and that He seals, guides, teaches, witnesses to, sanctifies and helps the believer, indwelling every true child of God in the Church Age. (John 14:15-17; John 16:7-14; Romans 8:14, 27; 2 Thessalonians 2:7)

6) Angels, Demons, and Satan

- (a) We believe in the existence of angels, demons, and Satan. Satan is the unholy ruler of this age and the prince of all the powers of darkness. He is destined to the judgment of eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire. (Matthew 4:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10)

7) Man

- (a) We believe that man, in the person of the first Adam, was created in God's image. We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, including all life, "each after its own kind," by direct act, according to the Genesis account, and that man was created in the image and likeness of God.
- (b) We believe man was created in innocence, but by voluntary transgression, man fell into sin, thus plunging the whole race into condemnation. As a result, all men are born sinners and are directed by their sin natures to willful acts of sin. Sin is any failure to conform (in action, attitude, or character) to the moral law of God as revealed in the entirety of Scripture. (Genesis 1:2; Genesis 3; John 1:3; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 1:16-17)

8) Salvation

- (a) We believe that the Triune God saves sinners by grace alone through faith alone in Christ's substitutionary atonement alone.

9) Grace in the New Creation

- (a) We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth, the one who dies to trespasses and sins is subsequently made alive to righteousness, as a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, which is the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, thus securing our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life. (John 3:3-7, 18; Acts 16:30-33; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Ephesians 2:1; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:5; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 5:1)

10) Atonement for Sin

- (a) We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who, by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Himself our penalty for sin, yet was without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience and by His death made a full and vicarious substitution of Himself for the unjust—Christ the Lord taking the punishment for sins on the cross. Having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven, divinely perfect yet still able to compassionately understand our struggles and weaknesses. He is in every way a compassionate and all-sufficient Savior. (Isaiah 53:4-7; Matthew 8:11; John 3:16; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 4:10).

11) Justification

- (a) We believe that Christ secures the justification of all those who believe in Him: that justification includes the pardon of sin (imputed to Christ on the cross) and the declaration of righteousness (imputed from Christ through faith). The righteousness of believers is solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood and not bestowed due to any works of righteousness which we have done. (Isaiah 53:11; Acts 13:39; Romans 4:25; Romans 5:1-9)

12) Faith

- (a) We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition for salvation. Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with a Holy God, and eternal life with God. It is not just a belief in facts, but a personal trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior to save from sin. (John 3:16-18; John 5:24; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:13; Ephesians 2:8-9)
- (b) We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations and inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God. Repentance is a

heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ. It is being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior. (Psalm 51; Mark 1:15; Luke 18:13; John 3:36; Acts 2:37-38; Acts 20:20-21)

13) Sanctification

- (a) We believe the Scriptures teach that sanctification is a work of grace within the life of the individual believer. We believe that sanctification has three aspects: the positional aspect whereby God sets apart those that are His; the progressive aspect whereby man separates himself from the defilement of sin and yields himself unto God; the ultimate aspect, or glorification, when the believer is perfectly whole in body, soul, and spirit at the resurrection of believers on the last day. (1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13; Hebrews 10:9-14)
- (b) We believe that all saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon our Savior and Lord and that separation from unbiblical heresy and all sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded by God. (Romans 12:1-2; Romans 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; James 1:14-17; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11)

14) The Church

- (a) We believe that the universal Church is the body of Christ, comprised of all true believers from the past, present, and those in the future. Jesus Christ is the sole head of the church.
- (b) We believe that all who put their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church, of which Christ is the head. The purpose of the church is to glorify God by building its members up in the faith, by instruction of the word, by fellowship, by keeping the ordinances, and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world. (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:14-27; Ephesians 3:10; Ephesians 4:4-6; Ephesians 5:23-32; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

15) Local Church

- (a) We believe that a local church is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant in faith and fellowship through the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word. The local church has leaders, with biblical authority, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are

clearly defined in the Scriptures. (Acts 2:41-42; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:11; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:15)

- (b) We believe that the Scriptures give great importance to worship. Worship should include personal worship (the individual believer having consistent time alone in listening to God through His Word and in prayer), family worship (families coming together for prayer, instruction in the Word, and in praise and thanksgiving), and corporate worship (the local church body gathering to offer united praise and thanksgiving to God, to receive instruction from the Word of God, and to participate in the ordinances of the church). (Psalm 95:6; Psalm 96:9; John 4:24; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 12:18; Revelation 22:9)

16) Ordinances

- (a) We believe that there are two church ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- (b) We believe that baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with Him, in His death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into Him; of remission of sins; and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:38; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4)
- (c) We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. (Matthew 3:16; Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:14-20; John 3:23; Acts 8:26-39; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28; Colossians 2:12)

17) Last Things

- (a) We believe in Jesus' visible and glorious return to judge the living and the dead. This will be accompanied by the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the unsaved; the saved unto the resurrection of life and the unsaved unto the resurrection of damnation. (Job 19:25-26; Daniel 12:2; Zechariah 14:4-11; John 5:29, 11:24; Acts 24:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18, 5:9; Revelation 3:10, 19:11-16, 20:1-6)

18) The Judgment Seat of Christ

- (a) We believe that every saved person will appear before the Judgment Seat to be judged by the Lord in regard to faithful service. (Matthew 6:21; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

19) The Eternal State

- (a) We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited and glorified to be forever with the Lord. The souls of the unbelievers after death remain in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with spirit, soul, and body reunited they shall appear before the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment. (Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-26; John 5:28-29; 2 Corinthians 5:8, 10; Philippians 1:23)

20) Marriage and Sexuality

- (a) We believe that the term, “marriage” has only one valid meaning and that is a covenantal union sanctioned by God which joins one biological man and one biological woman in a monogamous, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-24; Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, 39)
- (b) We believe that God intends marriage between a biological man and a biological woman to be the only context for sexual intercourse to occur. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, or any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God in any context. (Proverbs 5:15-19; Matthew 5:27-30; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 18-20; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; Hebrews 13:4)
- (c) We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ and to provide a biblical role model to the Church Members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly. (Ephesians 5:23-32, Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Hebrews 13:7)
- (d) We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking his mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:9)

II. As a part of our complete Statement of Faith, we maintain our Theological Distinctives as such:

- A) Section Defined: Theological Distinctives encompass doctrinal perspectives that Bethel affirms as important and consistent with our Essential Beliefs. While providing important theological context, we recognize diversity exists amongst the universal church on these interpretive matters. Accordingly, disagreement on

secondary doctrines alone does not determine one's eligibility for ministry or right standing with our fellowship, so long as our essential doctrines are held. However, Bethel reserves the right to refrain from actively endorsing or administering any activities that are deemed to compromise our Theological Distinctives.

B) The Theological Distinctives of Bethel Baptist Church are as follows:

1) Ministry of Spiritual Gifts

- (a) We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts. We believe that the Holy Spirit empowers and gifts believers for their ministry. Some of these gifts can be categorized as "supernatural" gifts because their expression overrides natural laws and ordinary human abilities. These gifts can include speaking in unlearned foreign languages, miraculous healers, and speaking prophetically of future events. It is clear from Scripture that God empowered human beings with these gifts at certain times and in certain places as a way of authenticating His message.
- (b) We believe that God is no less capable of working through His people in these same ways today. We do not believe, however, that Scripture clearly supports the expression of these gifts in all times and in all cultural contexts. For the sake of unity within this church family, we do not practice or teach these supernatural gifts. Instead, we encourage believers to seek the "most excellent way" of love and to be zealous about the gifts that are certain to edify the church. (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 8-10; 1 Corinthians 14:1-3, 22-23, 33; Ephesians 4:7-12)

2) The Genesis Account of Creation

- (a) We believe the Genesis account of Creation is intended to be taken perfectly literally, that God created the universe, earth, and all life in six literal days. (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

3) Complementarianism

- (a) We believe that men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity, and value but created with different yet complementary roles and responsibilities as outlined in Scripture. While both genders are called to active participation in ministry, we reserve the office of elder/pastor and roles of preaching and officiating ordinances for qualified men based on biblical passages describing pastoral oversight and leadership. At the same time, we affirm women's important involvement in teaching, discipling, and serving throughout the church and seek to cultivate brotherly and sisterly love as the guiding relationship between all members. Our goal is to implement distinct gender roles in a way that prevents any abuse, neglect, or subjugation while providing opportunities for all members to use their gifts

for Christ and His kingdom. (Genesis 1:27-28; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Corinthians 14:33-35; Ephesians 4:11-16, 29; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; Philippians 4:3; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:2-3)

4) Total Depravity

(a) We believe man's fall into sin resulted in total depravity, rendering him unable to remedy his sinful condition through his own free will and works, and making him wholly opposed by nature to God and spiritual good. (Romans 3:10-18, 23; Ephesians 2:1-3)

5) Salvation Wholly and Solely by the Power of the Holy Spirit

(a) We believe that salvation is entirely a work of God's grace through the person and power of the Holy Spirit. All people are by nature dead in their sins and transgressions, unable to save or restore themselves. It is only through a supernatural and spiritually resurrecting work that anyone can be delivered from bondage to sin and brought to newness of life. This regenerating work is accomplished solely by the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who opens blind eyes, softens hard hearts, and draws sinners to faith. No one can come to the Father unless drawn by Him. Not by any power of the human will but only by the Spirit's sovereign and effectual call can salvation be appropriated. (John 6:44, 65; John 16:8-11; Romans 6:17-18; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-5)

6) Eternal Security

(a) We believe that true believers are eternally secure; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from individuals who profess superficially; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation. (Matthew 6:30; Matthew 13:19-20; John 8:31-32; Romans 8:28-39; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 John 5:11-13)

7) The Process of Sanctification and Victory in This Life

(a) We believe that while complete sanctification awaits the final glorification of the believer, God's grace provides victory over the inherent sinfulness of the flesh in this life through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. While believers still experience temptation and struggle with sinful desires and thoughts in the flesh, we reject the claim that some may achieve a state of entire sanctification or sinless perfection free from every sin in this life. Victory over indwelling sin comes by walking according to the Spirit through faith, and all growth in grace and spiritual maturation culminates in heaven. (Romans 6:11-13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10)

8) The Church of All Ages

- (a) We believe that the true, spiritual Church is God bringing to fullness what He was pointing to in the Old Testament; established by God; led by Jesus Christ as its sole Head; revealed, empowered, and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit; His body for service; and His bride for glory. It existed in seed form as true Israel in the Old Testament, and it grew until finally blossoming on the Day of Pentecost. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:4-42; Acts 3:24; Romans 11:11-24; 1 Corinthians 12:12-18; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

9) Church Autonomy

- (a) We believe that the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity, free from the interferences of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is Scriptural for the true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation on all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline, and benevolence. (Matthew 23:8-12; Acts 15:22-29; Acts 20:28-32; Romans 14:1-4, 12-13; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 1:10-12; Ephesians 1:22-23)

10) Method of Baptism

- (a) We believe that those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance, and that immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance. (Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:36-37; Acts 18:8)