

Statement of Faith

This statement of faith was written for Hope Evangelical Covenant Church in Grand Forks, North Dakota by the Council of Church Elders. The guiding principle for this statement is unity in the essentials, freedom in the non-essentials, and love in all things (Augustine).

1. THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. Inspired by God, it is the supreme source of truth and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct. It is the foundation by which we learn of God and His ways. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6.

2. GOD

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three interdependent persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. Out of love, God has revealed Himself to humanity. Genesis 1:1, 26-27; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; John 6:45-46; 1John 4:19.

3. JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He is co-equal with and reveals the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again to earth, on a day only God knows, to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He invites people into relationship to follow Him as Savior, and Lord. He is the Head of the church, His active body of believers on earth. Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13; Colossians 1:15-20; Ephesians 4:9-15; Matthew 4:18-20; Matthew 24:36.

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their sin and need for Jesus Christ. He is present in every follower of Christ from the moment of salvation, providing power for serving, comfort in trials, knowledge of spiritual truth, and guidance in living. He gives every believer spiritual gifts for the common good of the church. 2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 12:7.

5. HUMAN BEINGS

In love, God made people in His image, to be like Him in character, to exist in relationship with Him, and to be the supreme object of His creation. Every person has tremendous potential for good; however, people's nature is marred by sin resulting in actions and attitudes of disobedience toward God. This sin separates people from God and results in a lesser life. Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23-24; Isaiah 59:1-2; John 10:10; John 3:16.

6. SALVATION

Because sin separates people from God, He offers in love, through Jesus Christ, the free gift of salvation which includes payment for all sin and rebellion toward God. It is only by trusting Jesus Christ's payment for sin and receiving forgiveness that humanity can live in relationship with God. Salvation is not possible through self-improvement or good works but comes only through God's free gift of grace (undeserved favor). Eternal life, or salvation, begins the moment someone receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1, 8; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; John 3:16.

7. ETERNITY

Heaven and hell really exist. Heaven is a place of glorious joy in God's presence and hell is a place of torment away from God's presence. Heaven, hell, and the spirit of a person are all eternal. Hell was created primarily for the devil and his angels. God's desire is for all people to be rescued from their sins and live eternally with Him in heaven. Eternal life, salvation, begins the moment someone receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. Luke 16:19-26; Matthew 25:44-46; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, 5:10; Revelation 20:15; Revelation 21:1-8.