

1. *Scripture, the Word of God Written*

1.1 We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the infallible Word of God, verbally inspired by God,¹ and without error² in the original manuscripts.

1.2 We believe that God's intentions, revealed in the Bible, are the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and what is right. In matters not addressed by the Bible, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture.

1.3 We believe God's intentions are revealed through the intentions of inspired human authors, even when the authors' intention was to express divine meaning of which they were not fully aware, as, for example, in the case of some Old Testament prophecies.³ Thus the meaning of Biblical texts is a fixed historical reality, rooted in the historical, unchangeable intentions of its divine and human authors. However, while meaning does not change, the application of that meaning may change in various situations. Nevertheless it is not legitimate to infer a meaning from a Biblical text that is not demonstrably carried by the words which God inspired.⁴

1.4 Therefore, the process of discovering the intention of God in the Bible (which is its fullest meaning) is a humble and careful effort to find in the language of Scripture what the human authors intended to communicate. Limited abilities, traditional biases, personal sin, and cultural assumptions often obscure Biblical texts. Therefore the work of the Holy Spirit is essential for right understanding of the Bible,⁵ and prayer for His assistance belongs to a proper effort to understand and apply God's Word.⁶

2. *The Trinity, One God as Three Persons*

2.1 We believe in one⁷ living,⁸ sovereign,⁹ and all- glorious ¹⁰ God, eternally existing in three¹¹ infinitely excellent and admirable Persons: God the Father,¹² fountain of all being;¹³ God the Son, ¹⁴ eternally begotten, ¹⁵ not made, without beginning,¹⁶ being of one essence¹⁷ with the Father; and God the Holy Spirit, proceeding in the full, divine essence,¹⁸ as a Person, ¹⁹ eternally from the Father and the Son. Thus each Person in the Godhead is fully and completely God.

2.2 We believe that God is supremely joyful²⁰ in the fellowship of the Trinity, each Person beholding and expressing His eternal and unsurpassed delight in the all-satisfying perfections of the triune God.

3. *God's Eternal Purpose and Election*

3.1 We believe that God, from all eternity, ²¹ in order to display the full extent of His glory²² for the eternal and ever-increasing enjoyment ²³ of all who love Him,²⁴ did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His will,²⁵ freely and unchangeably²⁶ ordain²⁷ and foreknow²⁸ whatever

comes to pass.

3.2 We believe that God upholds and governs all things – from galaxies²⁹ to subatomic particles,³⁰ from the forces of nature³¹ to the movements of nations,³² and from the public plans of politicians ³³ to the secret acts of solitary persons ³⁴– all in accord with His eternal, all-wise³⁵ purposes to glorify Himself, yet in such a way that He never sins,³⁶ nor ever condemns a person unjustly;³⁷ but that His ordaining and governing all things is compatible with the moral accountability³⁸ of all persons created in His image.

3.3 We believe that God’s election is an unconditional³⁹ act of free grace⁴⁰ which was given through His Son Christ Jesus before the world began.⁴¹ By this act God chose, before the foundation of the world, those who would be delivered from bondage to sin⁴² and brought to repentance⁴³ and saving faith⁴⁴ in His Son Christ Jesus.

4. God’s Creation of the Universe and Man

4.1 We believe that God created the universe,⁴⁵ and everything in it,⁴⁶ out of nothing, ⁴⁷ by the Word of His power. Having no deficiency in Himself, nor moved by any incompleteness in His joyful self- sufficiency, ⁴⁸ God was pleased in creation to display His glory⁴⁹ for the everlasting joy⁵⁰ of the redeemed, from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. ⁵¹

4.2 We believe that God directly created Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from his side. We believe that Adam and Eve were the historical parents of the entire human race;⁵² that they were created male and female equally in the image of God,⁵³ without sin;⁵⁴ that they were created to glorify⁵⁵ their Maker, Ruler, Provider, and Friend by trusting His all- sufficient goodness, admiring His infinite beauty, enjoying His personal fellowship, and obeying His all-wise counsel; and that, in God’s love and wisdom, they were appointed differing and complementary roles in marriage as a type of Christ and the church. ⁵⁶

5. Man’s Sin and Fall from Fellowship with God

5.1 We believe that, although God created man morally upright, he was led astray from God’s Word and wisdom by the subtlety of Satan’s deceit,⁵⁷ and chose to take what was forbidden, ⁵⁸ and thus declare his independence from, distrust for, and disobedience toward his all- good and gracious Creator. Thus, our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original innocence and communion with God.⁵⁹

5.2 We believe that, as the head of the human race, Adam’s fall became the fall of all his posterity, in such a way that corruption, guilt, death, and condemnation belong properly to every person. ⁶⁰ All persons are thus corrupt by nature,⁶¹ enslaved to sin, ⁶² and morally unable⁶³ to delight in God and overcome their own proud preference for the fleeting pleasures of self-rule.

5.3 We believe God has subjected the creation to futility,⁶⁴ and the entire human family is made justly liable to untold miseries of sickness,⁶⁵ decay,⁶⁶ calamity,⁶⁷ and loss.⁶⁸ Thus all the adversity and suffering in the world is an echo and a witness of the exceedingly great evil

of moral depravity in the heart of mankind; and every new day of life is a God-given, merciful reprieve from imminent judgment, pointing to repentance.⁶⁹

6. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God

6.1 We believe that in the fullness of time⁷⁰ God sent forth His eternal Son as Jesus the Messiah,⁷¹ conceived by the Holy Spirit,⁷² born of the virgin Mary. ⁷³ We believe that, when the eternal Son became flesh, ⁷⁴ He took on a fully human nature,⁷⁵ so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one Person, without confusion or mixture. Thus the Person, Jesus Christ, was and is truly God⁷⁶ and truly man, ⁷⁷ yet one Christ and the only Mediator between God and man. ⁷⁸

6.2 We believe that Jesus Christ lived without sin, though He endured the common infirmities and temptations of human life.⁷⁹ He preached and taught with truth and authority unparalleled in human history. ⁸⁰ He worked miracles, demonstrating His divine right and power over all creation: dispatching demons,⁸¹ healing the sick,⁸² raising the dead,⁸³ stilling the storm,⁸⁴ walking on water,⁸⁵ multiplying loaves,⁸⁶ and foreknowing what would befall Him and His disciples,⁸⁷ including the betrayal of Judas⁸⁸ and the denial, restoration, and eventual martyrdom of Peter.⁸⁹

6.3 We believe that His life was governed by His Father's providence with a view to fulfilling all Old Testament prophecies concerning the One who was to come,⁹⁰ such as the Seed of the woman,⁹¹ the Prophet like Moses,⁹² the Priest after the order of Melchizedek,⁹³ the Son of David,⁹⁴ and the Suffering Servant.⁹⁵

6.4 We believe that Jesus Christ suffered voluntarily⁹⁶ in fulfillment of God's redemptive plan, ⁹⁷ that He was crucified under Pontius Pilate,⁹⁸ that He died,⁹⁹ was buried¹⁰⁰ and on the third day rose from the dead¹⁰¹ to vindicate the saving work of His life and death¹⁰² and to take His place as the invincible, everlasting Lord of glory. ¹⁰³ During forty days after His resurrection, He gave many compelling evidences of His bodily resurrection¹⁰⁴ and then ascended bodily into heaven, ¹⁰⁵ where He is seated at the right hand of the Father,¹⁰⁶ interceding for His people ¹⁰⁷ on the basis of His all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, and reigning until He puts all His enemies under His feet.¹⁰⁸

7. The Saving Work of Christ

7.1 We believe that by His perfect obedience to God¹⁰⁹ and by His suffering and death¹¹⁰ as the immaculate Lamb of God,¹¹¹ Jesus Christ obtained forgiveness of sins¹¹² and the gift of perfect righteousness¹¹³ for all who trusted in God prior to the cross¹¹⁴ and all who would trust in Christ thereafter.¹¹⁵ Through living a perfect life and dying in our place, the just for the unjust, Christ absorbed our punishment,¹¹⁶ appeased the wrath of God against us,¹¹⁷ vindicated the righteousness of God in our justification, ¹¹⁸ and removed the condemnation of the law against us.¹¹⁹

7.2 We believe that the atonement of Christ for sin warrants and impels a universal offering of the gospel to all persons, so that to every person it may be truly said, "God gave His only

begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life.”¹²⁰
Whoever will may come¹²¹ for cleansing at this fountain, and whoever does come, Jesus
will not cast out.¹²²

7.3 We believe, moreover, that the death of Christ did obtain more than the bona fide offer of the gospel for all; it also obtained the omnipotent New Covenant¹²³ mercy of repentance¹²⁴ and faith¹²⁵ for God’s elect. Christ died for all, but not for all in the same way. In His death, Christ expressed a special covenant love to His friends,¹²⁶ His sheep,¹²⁷ His bride.¹²⁸ For them He obtained the infallible and effectual working of the Spirit to triumph over their resistance and bring them to saving faith. ¹²⁹

8. The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit

8.1 We believe that the Holy Spirit has always been at work in the world, sharing in the work of creation, ¹³⁰ awakening faith in the remnant of God’s people,¹³¹ performing signs and wonders,¹³² giving triumphs in battle,¹³³ empowering the preaching of prophets¹³⁴ and inspiring the writing of Scripture.¹³⁵ Yet, when Christ had made atonement for sin, and ascended to the right hand of the Father, He inaugurated a new era of the Spirit by pouring out the promise of the Father on His Church. ¹³⁶

8.2 We believe that the newness of this era is marked by the unprecedented mission of the Spirit to glorify the crucified and risen Christ.¹³⁷ This He does by giving the disciples of Jesus greater power to preach the gospel of the glory of Christ,¹³⁸ by opening the hearts of hearers that they might see Christ and believe,¹³⁹ by revealing the beauty of Christ in His Word and transforming His people from glory to glory, ¹⁴⁰ by manifesting Himself in spiritual gifts (*Need clarifying statement here to make room for both cessationists and “CJ Maheny types”*) for the upbuilding of the body of Christ¹⁴¹ and the confirmation of His Word,¹⁴² by calling all the nations into the sway of the gospel of Christ,¹⁴³ and, in all this, thus fulfilling the New Covenant promise to create and preserve a purified people ¹⁴⁴ for the everlasting habitation of God.¹⁴⁵

8.3 We believe that, apart from the effectual work of the Spirit, no one would come to faith,¹⁴⁶ because all are dead in trespasses and sins;¹⁴⁷ that they are hostile to God, and morally unable to submit to God or please Him,¹⁴⁸ because the pleasures of sin appear greater than the pleasures of God.¹⁴⁹ Thus, for God’s elect, the Spirit triumphs over all resistance,¹⁵⁰ wakens the dead,¹⁵¹ removes blindness,¹⁵² and manifests Christ in such a compellingly beautiful way through the Gospel that He becomes irresistibly attractive to the regenerate heart.

8.4 We believe the Holy Spirit does this saving work in connection with the presentation of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.¹⁵³ Thus neither the work of the Father in election, nor the work of the Son in atonement, nor the work of the Spirit in regeneration is a hindrance or discouragement to the proclamation of the gospel to all peoples and persons everywhere. On the contrary, this divine saving work of the Trinity is the warrant and the ground of our hope that our evangelization is not in vain in the Lord. The Spirit binds His saving work to the

gospel of Christ, because His aim is to glorify the Christ of the Gospel. ¹⁵⁴ Therefore we do not believe that there is salvation through any other means than through receiving the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit,¹⁵⁵ except that infants and severely retarded persons with minds physically incapable of comprehending the gospel may be saved.¹⁵⁶

9. The Justifying Act of God

9.1 We believe that in a free act of righteous grace God justifies the ungodly by faith alone apart from works,¹⁵⁷ pardoning their sins,¹⁵⁸ and reckoning them as righteous and acceptable in His presence.¹⁵⁹ Faith is thus the sole instrument ¹⁶⁰ by which we, as sinners, are united to Christ, whose perfect righteousness and satisfaction for sins is alone the ground of our acceptance with God.¹⁶¹ This acceptance happens fully and permanently at the first instant of justification. ¹⁶² Thus the righteousness by which we come into right standing with God is not anything worked in us by God, neither imparted to us at baptism nor over time, but rather is accomplished for us, outside ourselves, and is imputed to us.

9.2 We believe, nevertheless, that the faith, which alone receives the gift of justification, does not remain alone in the person so justified, but produces, by the Holy Spirit,¹⁶³ the fruit of love¹⁶⁴ and leads necessarily to sanctification. ¹⁶⁵ This necessary relation between justifying faith and the fruit of good works gives rise to some Biblical expressions which seem to make works the ground or means of justification, ¹⁶⁶ but in fact simply express the crucial truth that faith that does not yield the fruit of good works is dead, being no true faith. ¹⁶⁷

10. God's Work in Faith and Sanctification

(We are generally in agreement with all that is here but it feels too cumbersome and also appears to be a response to criticisms of Piper's "Future Grace" view of sanctification and thus we may not want to require agreement with everything that is said here. Needs further study and editing to make it ours.)

10.1 We believe that justification and sanctification are both brought about by God through faith,¹⁶⁸ but not in the same way. Justification is an act of God's imputing and reckoning;¹⁶⁹ sanctification is an act of God's imparting and transforming.¹⁷⁰ Thus the function of faith in regard to each is different. In regard to justification, faith is not the channel through which power or transformation flows to the soul of the believer, but rather faith is the occasion of God's forgiving, acquitting, and reckoning as righteous.¹⁷¹ But in regard to sanctification, faith is indeed the channel through which divine power and transformation flow to the soul;¹⁷² and the sanctifying work of God through faith does indeed touch the soul and change it into the likeness of Christ.

10.2 We believe that the reason justifying faith necessarily sanctifies in this way is fourfold: *First*, justifying faith is a persevering, that is, continuing, kind of faith. ¹⁷³ Even though we are justified at the first instant of saving faith, ¹⁷⁴ yet this faith justifies only because it is the kind of faith that will surely persevere. The extension of this faith into the future is, as it were, contained in the first seed of faith, as the oak in the acorn. Thus the moral effects¹⁷⁵ of persevering faith may be rightly described as the effects of justifying faith.

Second, we believe that justifying faith trusts in Christ not only for the gift of imputed righteousness and the forgiveness of sins,¹⁷⁶ but also for the fulfillment of all His promises to us based on that reconciliation.¹⁷⁷ Justifying faith magnifies the finished work of Christ's atonement, by resting securely in all the promises of God obtained and guaranteed by that all-sufficient work.¹⁷⁸

Third, we believe that justifying faith embraces Christ in all His roles:¹⁷⁹ Creator,¹⁸⁰ Sustainer,¹⁸¹ Savior,¹⁸² Teacher,¹⁸³ Guide,¹⁸⁴ Comforter,¹⁸⁵ Helper,¹⁸⁶ Friend,¹⁸⁷ Advocate,¹⁸⁸ Protector,¹⁸⁹ and Lord.¹⁹⁰ Justifying faith does not divide Christ, accepting part of Him and rejecting the rest. All of Christ is embraced by justifying faith, even before we are fully aware of, or fully understand, all that He will be for us. As more of Christ is truly revealed to us in His Word, genuine faith recognizes Christ and embraces Him more fully.¹⁹¹

Fourth, we believe that this embracing of all of Christ is not a mere intellectual assent, or a mere decision of the will, but is also a heartfelt, Spirit-given (yet imperfect) satisfaction in all that God is for us in Jesus.¹⁹² Therefore, the change of mind and heart that turns from the moral ugliness and danger of sin, and is sometimes called "repentance,"¹⁹³ is included in the very nature of saving faith.

10.3 We believe that this persevering, future-oriented, Christ-embracing, heart-satisfying faith is life-transforming,¹⁹⁴ and therefore renders intelligible the teaching of the Scripture that final salvation in the age to come depends on the transformation of life,¹⁹⁵ and yet does not contradict justification by faith alone. The faith which alone justifies, cannot remain alone, but works through love.¹⁹⁶

10.4 We believe that this simple, powerful reality of justifying faith is God's gift¹⁹⁷ which He gives unconditionally in accord with God's electing love,¹⁹⁸ so that no one can boast in himself,¹⁹⁹ but only give all glory to God for every part of salvation.²⁰⁰ We believe that the Holy Spirit is the decisive agent in this life-transformation, but that He is supplied to us and works holiness in us though our daily faith in the Son of God²⁰¹ whose trustworthiness He loves to glorify.²⁰²

10.5 We believe that the sanctification, which comes by the Spirit through faith,²⁰³ is imperfect and incomplete in this life.²⁰⁴ Although slavery to sin is broken,²⁰⁵ and sinful desires are progressively²⁰⁶ weakened by the power of a superior satisfaction in the glory of Christ, yet there remain remnants of corruption in every heart that give rise to irreconcilable war,²⁰⁷ and call for vigilance in the lifelong fight of faith.²⁰⁸

10.6 We believe that all who are justified will win this fight. They will persevere in faith and never surrender to the enemy of their souls.²⁰⁹ This perseverance is the promise of the New Covenant,²¹⁰ obtained by the blood of Christ,²¹¹ and worked in us by God Himself,²¹² yet not so as to diminish, but only to empower and encourage, our vigilance;²¹³ so that we may say in the end, I have fought the good fight,²¹⁴ but it was not I, but the grace of God which was with me.²¹⁵

11. Living God's Word by Meditation and Prayer

11.1 We believe that faith is awakened and sustained by God's Spirit²¹⁶ through His Word²¹⁷ and prayer.²¹⁸ The good fight of faith is fought mainly by meditating on the Scriptures²¹⁹ and praying²²⁰ that God would apply them to our souls.

11.2 We believe that the promises of God recorded in the Scriptures are suited to save us from the deception of sin by displaying for us, and holding out to us, superior pleasures in the protection, provision, and presence of God.²²¹ Therefore, reading,²²² understanding,²²³ Jesus are primary means of the Holy Spirit to break the power of sin's deceitful promises in our lives. Therefore it is needful that we give ourselves to such meditation day and night.²²⁷

11.3 We believe that God has ordained to bless²²⁸ and use²²⁹ His people for His glory through the means of prayer, offered in Jesus' ²³⁰ name by faith. ²³¹ All prayer should seek ultimately that God's name be hallowed, and that His kingdom come, and that His will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. ²³² God's sovereignty over all things is not a hindrance to prayer, but a reason for hope that our prayers will succeed.²³³

11.4 We believe that prayer is the indispensable handmaid of meditation, as we cry out to God for the inclination to turn from the world to the Word,²³⁴ and for the spiritual ability to see the glory of God in His testimonies,²³⁵ and for a soul-satisfying sight of the love of God,²³⁶ and for strength in the inner man to do the will of God.²³⁷ By prayer God sanctifies His people,²³⁸ sends gospel laborers into the world,²³⁹ and causes the Word of God to spread and triumph over Satan and unbelief. ²⁴⁰

12. Christ's Church and Her Ordinances

12.1 We believe in the one universal Church, composed of all those, in every time and place, who are chosen in Christ and united to Him through faith by the Spirit in one Body, with Christ Himself as the all-supplying, all-sustaining, all-supreme, and all-authoritative Head.²⁴¹ We believe that the ultimate purpose of the Church is to glorify God²⁴² in the everlasting and ever-increasing gladness of worship.²⁴³

12.2 We believe it is God's will that the universal Church find expression in local churches²⁴⁴ in which believers agree together to hear the Word of God proclaimed,²⁴⁵ to engage in corporate worship,²⁴⁶ to practice the ordinances of baptism²⁴⁷ and the Lord's Supper,²⁴⁸ to build each other's faith through the manifold ministries of love,²⁴⁹ to hold each other accountable in the obedience of faith through Biblical discipline,²⁵⁰ and to engage in local and world evangelization. ²⁵¹ The Church is a body in which each member should find a suitable ministry for His gifts;²⁵² it is the household of God in which the Spirit dwells;²⁵³ it is the pillar and bulwark of God's truth in a truth-denying world;²⁵⁴ and it is a city set on a hill so that men may see the light of its good deeds – especially to the poor²⁵⁵ – and give glory to the Father in heaven. ²⁵⁶

12.3 *(While we will practice credo-baptism as a church, yet we would like to make it possible for paedo-baptists to be elders. We also will not require a commitment to baptism by immersion even in the practice of credo-baptism. More work is need on the wording here.)*

We believe that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord by which those who have repented and come to faith²⁵⁷ express their union with Christ²⁵⁸ in His death and resurrection, ²⁵⁹ by being immersed in water²⁶⁰ in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.²⁶¹ It is a sign of belonging to the new people of God, the true Israel, ²⁶² and an emblem of burial²⁶³ and cleansing,²⁶⁴ signifying death to the old life of unbelief, and purification from the pollution of sin.

12.4 We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord²⁶⁵ in which gathered believers²⁶⁶ eat bread, signifying Christ's body given for His people, and drink the cup of the Lord, signifying the New Covenant in Christ's blood.²⁶⁷ We do this in remembrance of the Lord, and thus proclaim His death until He comes. Those who eat and drink in a worthy manner partake of Christ's body and blood, not physically, but spiritually, in that, by faith, they are nourished with the benefits He obtained through His death, and thus grow in grace.²⁶⁸

12.5 We believe that each local church should recognize and affirm the divine calling of spiritually qualified men to give leadership to the church through the role of pastor-elder in the ministry of the Word and prayer. Women are not to fill the role of pastor-elder in the local church, but are encouraged to use their gifts in appropriate roles that edify the body of Christ and spread the gospel. ²⁶⁹

13. Christ's Commission to Make Disciples of All Nations

We believe that the commission given by the Lord Jesus to make disciples of all nations is binding on His Church to the end of the age.²⁷⁰ This task is to proclaim the Gospel to every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ²⁷¹ baptizing them, teaching them the words and ways of the Lord,²⁷² and gathering them into churches²⁷³ able to fulfill their Christian calling among their own people. The ultimate aim of world missions is that God would create, by His Word, worshippers who glorify His name through glad-hearted faith and obedience.²⁷⁴ Missions exists because worship doesn't. When the time of ingathering is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and the goal of missions.

14. Death, Resurrection, and the Coming of the Lord

14.1 We believe that when Christians die they are made perfect in holiness,²⁷⁵ are received into paradise,²⁷⁶ and are taken consciously into the presence of Christ, which is more glorious and more satisfying than any experience on earth. ²⁷⁷

14.2 *(We will include language here that will exclude dispensational premillennialists from being elders/pastors. We may want to include progressive dispensationalists however.)* We believe in the blessed hope²⁷⁸ that at the end of the age Jesus Christ will return to this earth personally,²⁷⁹

visibly,²⁸⁰ physically,²⁸¹ and suddenly²⁸² in power and great glory; ²⁸³ and that He will gather His elect,²⁸⁴ raise the dead,²⁸⁵ judge the nations, and establish His kingdom.²⁸⁶ We believe that the righteous will enter into the everlasting joy of their Master,²⁸⁷ and those who suppressed the truth in unrighteousness²⁸⁸ will be consigned to everlasting conscious misery. ²⁸⁹ *(We will add language here to clarify the physicality of resurrection bodies and of the eternal state, ie. The new heavens and the new earth.)*

14.3 We believe that the end of all things in this age will be the beginning of a never-ending, ever-increasing happiness in the hearts of the redeemed, as God displays more and more of His infinite and inexhaustible greatness and glory for the enjoyment of His people.²⁹⁰

15. The Spirit of This Affirmation and the Unity of the Church

15.1 We do not believe that all things in this affirmation of faith are of equal weight, some being more essential, some less. We do not believe that every part of this affirmation must be believed in order for one to be saved.

15.2 Our aim is not to discover how little can be believed, but rather to embrace and teach “the whole counsel of God.”²⁹¹ Our aim is to encourage a hearty adherence to the Bible, the fullness of its truth, ²⁹² and the glory of its Author. We believe Biblical doctrine stabilizes saints in the winds of confusion²⁹³ and strengthens the church in her mission to meet the great systems of false religion and secularism. We believe that the supreme virtue of love is nourished by the strong meat of God-centered doctrine.²⁹⁴ And we believe that a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ is sustained in an atmosphere of deep and joyful knowledge of God and His wonderful works.²⁹⁵

15.3 We believe that the cause of unity in the church²⁹⁶ is best served, not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, around which all can gather, but by elevating the value of truth, stating the doctrinal parameters of church or school or mission or ministry, seeking the unity that comes from the truth, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other²⁹⁷ across boundaries rather than by removing boundaries. In this way, the importance of truth is served by the existence of doctrinal borders, and unity is served by the way we love others across those borders.

15.4 We do not claim infallibility for this affirmation and are open to refinement and correction from Scripture.²⁹⁸ Yet we do hold firmly to these truths as we see them and call on others to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so.²⁹⁹ As conversation and debate take place, it may be that we will learn from each other, and the boundaries will be adjusted, even possibly folding formerly disagreeing groups into closer fellowship.

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