

# THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

As part of the universal church, we hold to the ecumenical creeds (the Apostles', Nicene-Constantinopolitan, Chalcedonian and Athanasian Creeds). As Protestant Christians, we affirm that justification is by faith alone, and stand in the tradition of Reformation confessional documents like the Heidelberg Catechism, although we believe water baptism is only for believers. As contemporary evangelicals, we also affirm modern statements such as the Lausanne Covenant and the Evangelical Alliance statement of faith.

## CORE DOCTRINAL VALUES

### 1. Word-based

*(Col 1:25; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 4:1-5)*

We believe in the absolute truthfulness, sufficiency and final authority of Scripture. This value is expressed through the Bible having the central place in governing doctrine, practice, ethos and patterns of church life.

### 2. Grace-filled

*(Eph 2:8-10; Acts 11:23; Col 1:6)*

The message of grace and the gospel is central to the Christian life and local church. Grace ought to be expressed in relation to salvation, church life, relationships and leadership style. We see our salvation as a work of God from start to finish.

Grace is at the heart of the Christian life and continually renews the believer and the Church. The gospel of grace is not the first step in a stairway of truths; rather, it is more like the hub in a wheel of truth. The gospel is not just the ABC but the A to Z of Christianity. The gospel is not the minimum required doctrine necessary to enter the kingdom, but the way we make all progress in the kingdom.

The gospel of grace is the way that *anything* is renewed and transformed by Christ—whether a heart, a relationship, a church, or a community. It is the key to all doctrine and to our view of our lives in this world. Therefore, all our problems come from a lack of orientation to the gospel. Put positively, the gospel transforms our hearts and thinking and approaches to absolutely everything.

Implied in our understanding of grace is a confident trust in God who is the author and finisher of our faith. Because God is the prime mover, we see God's sovereignty as foundational to our understanding of the Christian life and practice.

### **3. Spirit-empowered**

*(Eph 5:18; Acts 1:7-8; Gal 3:1-5; 1 Cor 12:1-7)*

We believe that all the gifts in Scripture are available and desirable today for building the local church and extending the Kingdom of God. We believe every believer should be filled with the Spirit as part of God's desire to empower us for Christian life and witness.

In addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service. While all genuine believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at conversion, the New Testament indicates the importance of an ongoing, empowering work of the Spirit subsequent to conversion as well. Being indwelt by the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit are theologically distinct experiences. The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer continually with increased power for Christian life and witness, and imparts his supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and for various works of ministry in the world. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first century are available today, are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be earnestly desired and practised.

## **CORE LEADERSHIP VALUES**

### **4. Elders in each local church**

*(Acts 14:21-23; 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Jam 5:14)*

The Holy Spirit appoints elders confirmed by the church and apostolic ministry. Church government is not a democracy nor an autocracy but rather a theocracy. Elders' main functions involve leading, feeding, guarding and guiding the church. We see eldership as the calling of qualified men who lead as a team in their shared endeavour. It has been our normal practice to see one of the elders provide leadership to the eldership team as a first among equals.

### **5. Ephesians 4 ministries**

*(Acts 14:21-23; 20:28; Eph 4:7-16; Rom 16:1-16)*

All Ephesians 4:11 gifts are valid today and help bring churches to maturity and to equip men and women to fulfil their God-given ministry. Eldership teams are encouraged to invite Ephesians 4 ministries to help bring their local church to maturity. Local elders are the final human governing authority in a local church. However, the local elders are encouraged to invite and then to receive clear apostolic input and authority.

## **6. Servant-heartedness**

*(Mark 10:42-45; 1 Cor 4:1-2; 1 Thess 2:1-12; 1 Pet 5:1-4)*

Christian leadership, in its essence, is a call to be an example not an exception. Following the example of Jesus, Christian leaders are meant to serve others not be served. Christian leadership should be godly, transparent and accessible. Christian leadership exists to multiply ministry, not monopolise it. Christian leadership ought to have a bias towards partnership and collaboration with other gospel-shaped leaders, rather than demonstrating isolation and individualism.

## **CORE MISSION VALUES:**

### **7. Local church focused**

*(Matt 16:17-20 and 18:15-20; Acts 16:5; 1 Thess 1:4-8; Rev 1:20)*

We regard the local church as central to the mission and purposes of God. We see the local church as the place of primary focus for Ephesians 4 ministries. Ephesians 4 ministries exist to serve the local church, not the other way round.

### **8. Mission ought to be expressed locally, globally and holistically**

*(Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Rom 15:17-22; Gal 2:10; Col 4:5-6)*

We desire to see local churches effectively and fruitfully engaged in local Kingdom mission. We desire to see local churches caught up on a global apostolic Kingdom mission. We desire to see local churches involved in holistic mission, engaging with all sectors of society, particularly the poor and the marginalised. Normally local fruitfulness and effectiveness leads to a wider sphere of ministry, rather than the other way round.

### **9. Contextual freedom in application**

*(Acts 16:1-5; Rom 14:1-4; 1 Cor 9:19-23)*

We recognise that our core values will need to be contextualised and applied differently in different contexts. Sound contextualisation means translating and applying our core values without compromising the essence of the values themselves.