

## HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH STATEMENT OF FAITH

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of this church and its members.

### 1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, and that God's Word is true without any mixture of error in the original autographs. We believe that God has and will preserve His Word. We believe the Bible to be the final authority in faith and life. We believe that any translation of the Holy Scriptures made from the original biblical languages which maintains a literal approach to translation and is done without doctrinal bias but simply attempts to communicate the actual words in the text is the Word of God. (II Tim 3:16-17; I Peter 1:23-25; II Pet 1:19-21) The King James or the New King James translations of the Bible shall be the official translations used by this church.

### 2. THE GODHEAD

We believe that there is only one living and true God, and that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – yet one in essence and equal in every divine perfection. (Exodus 20:2-3; Deuteronomy 6:4; John 14:10, 26; I Corinthians 8:6; 1 John 5:7)

### 3. THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE FATHER

We believe that the Father is a divine Person. He has spoken (Matt 3:17), He sees (Matt 6:6), He is called God (Romans 1:7), He is Sovereign (Luke 10:21), He is a Spirit and is to be worshipped (John 4:23-24), He is holy (Lev 11:44-45), He is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10), He is omniscient (Proverbs 15:3 ; Hebrews 4:13), He is omnipotent (Jeremiah 32:17), and He is immutable (James 1:17). The Father is the Creator of all things (Gen 1:1-2, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Hebrews 1:2), He preserves all things (Colossians 1:17), He elects individuals to salvation (II Thes 2:13, II Tim 1:9, I Peter 1:2), He becomes our Father by spiritual birth (John 3:3, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 5:1), and He conforms His children to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29).

### 4. THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Galatians 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8)

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Romans 3:24-25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1-2)

## 5. THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, co-existing with the Father and the Son. He is the chief agent in the conviction of sin, in regeneration, and the comfort of the believer. The Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into the body of Christ, permanently indwells him, and seals him in salvation for all of eternity. The Holy Spirit fills and empowers believers when they submit themselves to His leadership. Believers may only have victory over sin as they actively walk in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. He is the divine Teacher who illumines believers to understand and apply the Scriptures. (2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:16, 17; Romans 8:14-27; Galatians 5:16-18; Ephesians 5:18)

## 6. THE PERSON AND WORK OF SATAN

We believe that Satan is a fallen angelic being, the author of sin, the god of this world and the prince of the power of the air, and that he is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire. (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Matthew 4:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 2:20, 27; Revelation 20:10)

## 7. CREATION

We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, including all life, by direct act in six literal 24-hour periods. We reject evolution and theistic evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Genesis 1-2; Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:3)

## 8. THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN

We believe that man is the direct creation of God, and created in His image with a body, soul and spirit. Adam, the first man, sinned by disobedience. This act resulted in the fall of mankind, and incurred both physical and spiritual death for all. We believe that all men have sinned, are therefore guilty before God, and under His condemnation. (Romans 3:23, 5:12, 6:1-23; Ephesians 2:1-3; Matthew 4:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 20:10)

## 9. JUSTIFICATION

We believe that all who, by faith alone, receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior are born again by the Holy Spirit and thus become the children of God. Salvation is a gift of God, apart from works, and based solely upon the finished work of Jesus Christ, and is available to all (Christ's atonement is not limited) who call upon Him in repentance and faith. The basics of the gospel include the facts that Jesus, being God's Son and having lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death in our place, was raised from the dead, and was seen by witnesses following His resurrection. It is the commandment of God and the immediate responsibility of all to believe the gospel. Nothing prevents the salvation of any except his own voluntary rejection of the revelation of God explained in the gospel. (John 1:12 ; 3:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Ephesians 2:8,9; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 3:23)

## 10. ETERNAL SECURITY

We believe that salvation is not only a gift of God, but that it is also sustained by the power of His Spirit in the believer. Therefore, since salvation is wholly of the Lord, we hold that the believer shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (John 3:16, 10:28, 29)

## 11. SANCTIFICATION

We believe that positionally, every believer in Jesus Christ is sanctified in his spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11) and seated together with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). We are set apart unto God as saints the moment that we believe the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:2).

We believe that experientially, sanctification is a process being accomplished in the soul of a believer now as he cooperates with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in him (2 Corinthians 3:18 & Philippians 2:12-13). As God told the Israelites to take the Promised Land because He had already given it to them, so also since the Holy Spirit has made us free from sin, we are to not let sin reign in our mortal bodies but walk after the Spirit (Romans 6-8). This process often involves crises of faith along the path of life. Just as in justification, it is by grace through faith alone that we are being sanctified and not by our own good works (Galatians 3 & Ephesians 2:8-9). This process is conforming us into the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

## 12. SECOND COMING AND FUTURE EVENTS

We believe in the literal, personal, pre-millennial, pre-tribulational return of Jesus Christ for His church. At this event, the dead in Christ and living believers will be translated to meet Him in the air. At the end of the seven-year tribulation, Christ will visibly descend with the saints to establish His earthly millennial kingdom. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved in Glory, and the everlasting, conscious punishment of the lost in hell and the lake of fire (Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Revelation 19-22).

## 13. ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION

We will not cooperate with or endorse any movement, organization, or program which does not hold to our position on Justification(#9) as outlined above (Matthew 18:15-17 ; Romans 16:17 ; 1 Corinthians 5:7-11 ; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 ; Galatians 1:8-9 ; Ephesians 4:1-6 ; 2 Thessalonians 3:6 & 11-14 ; 2 Timothy 3:1-5 ; Titus 3:10 ; 2 John 9-11).

## 14. PERSONAL SEPARATION

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. Though believers will all be at different levels of being transformed into the image of Christ, we should all be advancing toward that goal and be less conformed to the society in which we live as each day passes. While we recognize that every believer is responsible to the Lord alone for his personal convictions, believers should be able to agree that we must separate ourselves from anything that promotes the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. We are called to avoid any personal practice as well that (though it may not hinder us from our own personal walk with Christ) may cause a fellow believer to stumble in his walk with the Lord (Romans 12:1-2 ; 14:1-23 ; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 ; Ephesians 2:1-10 ; 1 Timothy 2:9-10 ; 2 Timothy 3:1-5 ; 1 John 2:15-17 ; 2 John 9-11).

## 15. THE CHURCH

We believe that a New Testament church is a local group of baptized believers united for His purposes, that it was established by Jesus Christ, Who is the sole Head, and that it began with the New Testament saints and will be consummated at the coming of Christ in the Rapture.

We believe the church to be completely independent with no other person, group, or body having any authority, right or control in any form whatsoever over or within a local church; that Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Table are the only two ordinances given to the local church; that it has the absolute right of self-government directed by the Holy Spirit; and it is answerable only to the Bible, and that in all matters of membership, government, discipline and benevolence, the Scriptures should be our final authority. (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:4,5; 7:17; 11:16; 1 Timothy 3:1-15)

#### 16. MISSIONS

We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel everywhere so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether or not we are called to foreign missions, every believer is responsible to go into his own sphere of influence and preach the gospel to everyone that he comes into contact with. Evangelism must be a primary focus of every believer, and it is the responsibility of the church to train and equip them to accomplish this task. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all God-glorifying and biblically sound means available to spread the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15 ; Luke 10:2 ; 24:46-48 ; John 20:21 ; Acts 1:8 ; 2 Corinthians 5:20).

#### 17. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We believe that the Holy Spirit baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ at salvation. We must test the spirits to see whether they are of God, for counterfeiting of the gifts is a great error often used by Satan. The gift of tongues never was, nor is, proof of an individual's salvation. The imperative in the Scriptures for the New Testament believer is to be "filled with the Holy Spirit." Every believer is given at least one supernatural spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. It is only as we are being filled by the Holy Spirit that we are able to exercise our spiritual gifts in love by His empowerment. It is a necessity that an individual believer understands what his spiritual gifting is in order for him to function fully in the body. The gifts (at the least) seem to be able to be divided into the following categories: Motivational Gifts, Ministry Gifts and Office Gifts. (Acts 2: 4, 16-18; 4:8, 31; 6:3-5; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28-31; 13:8-10; Ephesians 4: 7-12; 5:18; 1 Timothy 4:1-2)

#### 18. HUMAN SEXUALITY

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a marriage between a biologically-born male and a biologically-born female. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, transgenderism, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Genesis 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one biologically-born male and one biologically-born female. (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23)

## 19. DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

We believe that God intends marriage to last until the death of a spouse (Mal 2:14-17; Rom 7:1-3). "One man and one woman for life" is the emphasis of scripture and ours as well. The marital relationship is given as a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32). We believe that God desires reconciliation between spouses when adultery takes place (as seen in the example of Hosea and clearly explained in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11). God's will is always love and forgiveness between believers (Matthew 6:15 & 1 John 2-4). Even after a divorce occurs, there is always hope for reconciliation if both parties are believers. The Lord does not give permission for remarriage as long as the hope of reconciliation remains. Nevertheless, there are cases when a believing spouse divorces and remarries. By so doing, that spouse is committing adultery. In such a case, there is permission given to the offended spouse for divorce (Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-12). There is also permission granted to a believer for divorce when he is deserted by an unbelieving spouse and reconciliation is not possible (1 Corinthians 7:12-16). Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may serve in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

## 20. ABORTION

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies are acceptable due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother. (Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5, 139: 14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1,5; Jeremiah 1:5, 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

## 21. GIVING

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basic principle for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the Church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel as the Holy Spirit prompts him to do so. The biblical model for the support of the local church is through its members and not through the sponsorship or methods used by the world. (Gen 14:20; Proverbs 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Galatians 6:6; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)

## 22. LAWSUITS BETWEEN BELIEVERS

We believe that members of a local church are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other members of that church or the church itself to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members (as described in Matthew 18:15-18). If the members involved desire to resolve the dispute, but are not able to so do between themselves, they should bring their dispute to the pastor and deacons for arbitration. It may be necessary in certain cases involving church discipline for a member to "take wrong" and "be defrauded" for testimony's sake. We believe that the principles taught in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 should be followed as much as is possible when dealing with a non-member Christian or Christian that is a member of another church. We do believe, however, that a

Christian's insurance company may seek compensation from another Christian's insurance company as long as both parties agree to this process and the claim is pursued without malice or slander (1 Corinthians 6:1-8 ; Ephesians 4:31-32).

### 23. THE LORD'S DAY

We believe that the first day of the week (Sunday) is the Lord's Day. It commemorates the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. We should encourage one another to retain this day as uniquely belonging to the Lord and distinguished as such from the other six days of the week (Matthew 28:1 ; Mark 16:2 ; Luke 24:1 ; John 20:1 ; Acts 20:7 ; I Corinthians 16:2 ; Hebrews 4:3-11 & 10:24-25 ; Revelation 1:10).

### 24. MUSIC

The primary purpose of music is to worship the Lord while its secondary purposes are to teach (instruct) and admonish (exhort) believers. Music was never designed by God as a means of evangelism. Music is a prophesying (speaking for God) by biblical definition no matter whether it is instrumental or vocal. The New Testament authorizes both men and women to publicly minister in music and encourages us to do so in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Both the music (sound) and the lyrics (words) should be found acceptable in God's sight. Music that praises worldliness, worldly desires, or worldly philosophies is evil in His sight. The "sound" of the world does not please the Lord, and light (good words) should not be mixed with darkness (bad music). The Christian is to have a "new song" in his heart because he has received a "new nature" ( Ps. 96:1 ; 1 Samuel 10:5; 1 Chronicles 25:1-5 ; 1 Corinthians 11:4-5, 14:15 ; 2 Corinthians 5:17 ; 6:13-18 ;Ephesians 5:18-19 ; Colossians 3:16 ; Hebrews 13:15 ; 1 John 2:15-17).

### 25. HUMAN GOVERNMENT & POLITICAL ENTANGLEMENT

We believe that we should submit to and pray for those in authority over us within the human government under which God has ordained that we should function. The only exception to our obeying the rules of government would be when the government requires us to disobey an explicit command of God found in His Word.

We believe that the church should avoid being unduly and unnecessarily involved in governmental politics. Our battles do not involve flesh and blood but are spiritual in nature. The answer to national moral decline is not governmental reform but national spiritual awakening (true revival). The answer is not the ballot box but the prayer altar. Our kingdom is not of this world and our focus must not be on the kingdoms of this world. While we should exercise every right given to us by our government to choose political candidates based upon scriptural principles, we must put our focus on prayer and the gospel. (2 Chronicles 7:14; John 18:36; Acts 4:19; 5:29; Romans 13:1-6; 1 Timothy 2:1-2)

### 26. REVIVAL

We believe that all fundamental and evangelical movements in the United States of America need revival. Revival is simply the manifestation of the presence of God among His people. Seeking revival is not to be motivated by seeking success or results. Seeking revival is seeking Jesus. The only means by which it (HE) is secured is prayer. The greatest need, therefore, of this hour among God's people is a return to prayer as the emphasis of every ministry. (2

Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 44:3-6; 64:1-7; Jeremiah 33:3; Daniel 9:3-19; John 1:33; Luke 11:13; Acts 2:17-18; 4:31; 2 Corinthians 3:6)

## 27. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)

We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. Believers are only to marry another believer (2 Corinthians 6:14). The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Genesis 1:26-18; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

## 28. EUTHANASIA

We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes murder contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment. (Exodus 20:13, 23:7; Matthew 5:21; Acts 17:28)

## 29. LOVE

We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:9-10, 17-21; 13:8-10; Philippians 2:2-4; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18)