

2023 UPCI ARTICLES OF FAITH

PREAMBLE

WE believe the Bible to be inspired of God, the infallible Word of God. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16).

The Bible is the only God-given authority which man possesses; therefore, all doctrine, faith, hope, and all instruction for the church must be based upon, and harmonize with, the Bible. It is to be read and studied by all men everywhere, and can only be clearly understood by those who are anointed by the Holy Spirit (I John 2:27). “No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Peter 1:20-21).

FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE

The basic and fundamental doctrine of the general organization shall be the Bible standard of full salvation, which is repentance, baptism in water by immersion in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the initial sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.

We shall endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit until we all come into the unity of the faith, at the same time admonishing all brethren that they shall not contend for their different views to the disunity of the body.

THE ONE TRUE GOD

We believe in the one ever-living, eternal God: infinite in power, holy in nature, attributes and purpose; and possessing absolute, indivisible deity. This one true God has revealed Himself as Father; through His Son, in redemption; and as the Holy Spirit, by emanation (I Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; II Corinthians 5:19; Joel 2:28).

The Scripture does more than attempt to prove the existence of God; it asserts, assumes and declares that the knowledge of God is universal (Romans 1:19, 21, 28, 32; 2:15). God is invisible, incorporeal, without parts, without body, and therefore free from all limitations. He is Spirit (John 4:24), and “a spirit hath not flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39).

“The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark 12:29). (See also Deuteronomy 6:4.) “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:6).

Before the incarnation, this one true God manifested Himself in divers ways. In the incarnation, He manifests Himself in the Son, who walked among men. As He works in the lives of believers, He manifests Himself as the Holy Spirit.

THE SON OF GOD

The one true God, the Jehovah of the Old Testament, took upon Himself the form of man, and as the Son of man, was born of the virgin Mary. As Paul says, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Timothy 3:16).

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11). This one true God was manifest in the flesh, that is, in His Son Jesus Christ. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (II Corinthians 5:19).

We believe that, “in him [Jesus] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). “For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (Colossians 1:19). Therefore, Jesus in His humanity was man; in His deity was and is God. His flesh was the lamb, or the sacrifice of God. He is the only mediator between God and man. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5).

Jesus on His Father’s side was divine, on His mother’s side, human; thus, He was known as the Son of God and also the Son of man, or the God-man.

“For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all” (I Corinthians 15:27-28).

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8). *

**THE SON OF GOD*

See Position Paper entitled “THE TRUE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST” on page 238

THE NAME

God used different titles, such as “God Elohim,” “God Almighty,” “El Shaddai,” “Jehovah,” and especially “Jehovah Lord,” the redemptive name in the Old Testament.

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: . . . and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). This prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled when the Son of God was named. “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN

All people are created by God in His image (Genesis 1:27). Therefore, all human beings have intrinsic worth to God and should be treated accordingly with dignity. Human life is a sacred gift from God: thus we honor the sanctity of life of humans born and in the womb (Psalm 139:13-16).

However, we live in a world affected by the Fall. In the beginning, God created man innocent, pure, and holy; but through the sin of disobedience, Adam and Eve, the first of the human race, fell from their holy state, and God banished them from Eden. (Genesis 3:1-24). Hence by one man’s disobedience, sin entered into the world (Romans 3:23, 5:12).

Sin is not only an affront to God, but it also has dire ramifications for humans. From Cain’s murder of Abel onward, the story of humanity is filled with injustice and wrongdoing. However, as redeemed people, we strive to reflect God’s love and care for all people (Matthew 5:46-48 & Romans 5:5). Therefore, our treatment of each person should reflect that all humans, both males and females, have value to God regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, or national origin (Galatians 3:26-28).

It follows then that the church consists of people who have been born again and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ from every tribe, language, people, and nation (Revelation 5:9). The church on Earth should seek the unity and inclusion of the church in Heaven.

ATONEMENT

The Lord Jesus came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). This divine act of atonement is dependent on the blood of the Lamb of God and is the foundation that makes salvation possible. For “without the shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). “In whom we have redemption through

his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7). “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Revelation 1:5). Salvation is by grace through faith based on the atonement provided in Jesus Christ by His death, burial, and resurrection. (See Acts 2:38; 20:28.)

REPENTANCE

Pardon and forgiveness of sins is obtained by genuine repentance, a confessing and forsaking of sins. We are justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). John the Baptist preached repentance, Jesus proclaimed it, and the apostles emphasized it to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2:38, 11:18, 17:30).

The word *repentance* means a change of views and purpose, change of heart, change of mind, change of life, transformation, etc.

Jesus said, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

Luke 24:47 says, “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

WATER BAPTISM

The scriptural mode of baptism is immersion and is only for those who have fully repented, having turned from their sins and a love of the world. It should be administered by a duly authorized minister of the gospel, in obedience to the Word of God, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Acts of the Apostles 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5; thus obeying and fulfilling Matthew 28:19.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John the Baptist, in Matthew 3:11, said, “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”

Jesus, in Acts 1:5, said, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

Luke tells us in Acts 2:4, “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues [languages], as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

The terms “baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire,” “filled with the Holy Spirit,” and the “gift of the Holy Ghost” are synonymous terms used interchangeably in the Bible.

It is scriptural to expect all who receive the gift, filling, or baptism of the Holy Spirit to receive the same physical, initial sign of speaking with other tongues.

The speaking with other tongues, as recorded in Acts 2:4, 10:46, and 19:6, and the gift of tongues, as explained in I Corinthians, chapters 12 and 14, are the same in essence, but different in use and purpose.

The Lord, through the prophet Joel, said, “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28).

Peter, in explaining this phenomenal experience, said, “Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he [Jesus] hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

Further, “the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39).

DIVINE HEALING

The first covenant that the Lord (Jehovah) made with the children of Israel after they were brought out of Egypt was a covenant of healing. The Lord said, “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord [Jehovah-Rapha, the Lord that healeth] thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee” (Exodus 15:26).

Our Lord Jesus Christ went about Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people (Matthew 4:23-24).

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8).

The vicarious suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ paid not only for the salvation of our souls but also for the healing of our bodies. “With his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Matthew 8:17 reads, “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” (See also I Peter 2:24.) We see from this that divine healing for the body is in the atonement.

Jesus said of believers, “They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Later, James wrote in his epistle to all the churches: “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:14-16).

SACRAMENT OR COMMUNION

On the night of our Lord’s betrayal, He ate the Passover supper with His apostles, after which He instituted the sacrament. “And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:19-20).

Paul instructed the church how to observe it (I Corinthians 11:23-34).

Thus was instituted the use of literal bread and the fruit of the vine, which are partaken of literally, as emblems of His broken body and shed blood. There is also a spiritual significance and blessing in partaking of the sacrament.

FOOTWASHING

When the Passover supper was ended, we read in John 13:4-5, “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.”

Jesus said, “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15).

This first example was given by our Lord, and it is a divine institution. It is well to follow His example and wash one another’s feet; thus manifesting the spirit of humility.

HOLINESS

Godly living should characterize the life of every child of the Lord, and we should live according to the pattern and example given in the Word of God. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12). “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (I Peter 2:21-23).

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by

tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Peter 1:15-19).

We wholeheartedly disapprove of our people indulging in any activities which are not conducive to good Christianity and godly living, such as theaters, dances, mixed bathing or swimming, women cutting their hair, make-up, any apparel that immodestly exposes the body, all worldly sports and amusements, and unwholesome radio programs and music. Furthermore, because of the display of all these evils on television, we disapprove of any of our people having television sets in their homes. We admonish all of our people to refrain from any of these practices in the interest of spiritual progress and the soon coming of the Lord for His church. *

**HOLINESS*

See Position Papers entitled “HOLINESS” on page 224 “MEDIA TECHNOLOGY” on page 231 “GENDER DISTINCTION” on page 222

THE GRACE OF GOD

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12).

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

A Christian must walk with God and keep himself in the love of God (Jude 21) and in the grace of God. When a person transgresses and sins against God and does not repent, he will eventually be lost and cast into the lake of fire. (See John 15:2, 6; II Peter 2:20-21.) Jude speaks of the backsliders of his day, and their reward. (See also Hebrews 6:4-6.)

RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS

We understand the Scripture to teach the “restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). But we cannot find where the devil, his angels, and all sinners are included. (See Revelation 20:10).

CONSCIENTIOUS SCRUPLES

Mankind is God’s earthly image bearer as stated in Genesis 1:27: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.” As reflectors of this divine image, human life has been invested with the highest level of intrinsic value. The whole idea of the taking of human life is complicated with a wide variety of complexities. (See Exodus 20:13; Genesis 4:8-10; Numbers 35:6,12.) We recognize the deep and difficult deliberation required in these decisions. We therefore support our members in prayerfully and scripturally exploring their individual responsibility to God in these matters. We therefore honor the right of our members to serve as conscientious objectors and not bear arms. We also encourage those who serve according to their conscience, in any and all capacities, to express courageous loyalty to country while serving in appropriate roles working “heartily, as to the Lord” (Colossians 3:23). *

**CONSCIENTIOUS SCRUPLES*

See Position Paper entitled “HUMAN LIFE” on page 228

SECRET SOCIETIES, ETC.

According to the Word of God, we firmly believe and hold that the people of God should have no connection whatever with secret societies or any other organization or body wherein there is a fellowship

with unbelievers, bound by an oath (James 5:12; II Corinthians 6:14-18).

TRANSLATION OF SAINTS

We believe that the time is drawing near when our Lord shall appear; then the dead in Christ shall arise, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up with them to meet our Lord in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-17; I Corinthians 15:51-54; Philippians 3:20-21).

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery” (Matthew 19:9). (See also Matthew 5:32.) When this sin has been committed, the innocent party may be free to remarry only in the Lord. Our desire being to raise a higher standard for the ministry, we recommend that ministers do not marry again. *

Judgment begins at the house of God.

**MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE*

*See Position Papers entitled “THE BIBLICAL IDEAL OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY” on page 210
“THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF HUMAN SEXUALITY” on page 211*

TITHING

We believe tithing is God’s financial plan to provide for His work, and has been since the days of Abraham. Tithing came with faith under Abraham; Moses’ law enjoined it, and Israel practiced it when she was right with God; Jesus endorsed it (Matthew 23:23); and Paul said to lay by in store as God has prospered you. Do not rob God of His portion, viz., tithes and offerings. (Read Malachi 3.)

SECOND COMING OF JESUS

That Jesus is coming again the second time in person, just as He went away, is clearly set forth by the Lord Jesus Himself, and was preached and taught in the early Christian church by the apostles; hence, the children of God today are earnestly, hopefully, looking forward to the glorious event (Matthew 24; Acts 1:11, 3:19-21; I Corinthians 11:26; Philippians 3:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:14-17; Titus 2:13-14). *

**SECOND COMING OF JESUS*

See Position Paper entitled “THE COMING OF THE LORD” on page 219

THE MILLENNIUM

We believe that the distress upon the earth is the “beginning of sorrows” and will become more intense until there “shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time” (Daniel 12:1). (See also Matthew 24:3-8.) and that period of “tribulation” will be followed by the dawn of a better day on earth and that for a thousand years there shall be “peace on earth and good will toward men.” (See Revelation 20:1-5; Isaiah 65:17-25; Matthew 5:5; Daniel 7:27; Micah 4:1-2; Hebrews 2:14; Romans 11:25-27.)

FINAL JUDGMENT

When the thousand years are finished, there shall be a resurrection of all the dead, who will be summoned before the great white throne for their final judgment, and all whose names are not found written in the Book of Life shall be cast into the lake of fire, burning with brimstone, which God hath prepared for the devil and his angels, Satan himself being cast in first (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:7, 15; 21:8).

PUBLIC SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

We disapprove of school students attending shows, dances, dancing classes, theaters, engaging in school activities against their religious scruples, and wearing gymnasium clothes which immodestly expose the body.

We disapprove of school students being forced to take coeducational classes which involve boys and girls being mixed together in swimming, calisthenics, base- ball, and other mixed athletics while clothed in ungodly attire which immodestly exposes the body.

We disapprove of school students being forced to take any classes in which, under the guise of health classes, sex education is taught coeducationally or films or lectures are given that promote amoral or unnatural behavior.

We disapprove of school students being forced to be taught by or listen to those who promote or advocate sexual activity of any kind other than that within the bonds of the marriage relationship of husband and wife.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

The annual conference is declared to be an international religious holiday for all members, and all members are urged to attend. Furthermore, since the founding of the church occurred on the Day of Pentecost, Pentecost Sunday is also a recognized religious holiday.