



Dernancourt Uniting Church

Statement of Faith

This Statement of Faith expresses the doctrines (teachings) of the Bible, which we believe unite all true believers in Jesus Christ. This statement, then, defines what it is to be 'evangelical.'

The Scriptures

We believe that God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of thirty-nine Old Testament books and twenty-seven New Testament books; sixty-six books in all. Every word in these books is inspired by God and was put to writing through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is sufficient for matters of belief and practice.

God

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three Persons are equal in being but execute distinct roles in the great work of God in salvation. God is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the Almighty Creator, Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to his sovereign will for his own glory.

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He was fully God from eternity. Through the incarnation, he became fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary. He lived a perfect, righteous and sinless life, as recorded in the gospels of the New Testament. He was put to death by crucifixion and His body was physically buried. On the third day thereafter, He was physically raised from the dead. After showing Himself to many witnesses including His disciples, He commissioned them to preach the gospel to the whole world. He then ascended into heaven and is now seated in glory at the right hand of His Father.

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead. He has been fully God from eternity. He is often seen working in both Old and New Testaments as the agent of God's power. After Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent to all believers from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply His work of salvation. He convicts men and

women of their sins, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the church and empowers/gifts its members for worship, service and mission.

Creation

We believe that the entire universe was created by God through the agency of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and that it and everything in it is sustained by Him. God is completely sovereign over His creation, so that nothing may take place which is not in accordance with His permissive will.

Man

We believe that God created mankind, male and female, in His likeness. Man was created in original righteousness to worship God and to enjoy fellowship with Him. However, through voluntary disobedience, man fell from that state and became subject to the just judgement of God. In consequence, all men and women are by nature subject to sin, positively inclined to do evil, and incapable of regaining or attaining the righteousness that God desires by their own efforts. They therefore live under the just condemnation of God, in enmity towards Him and alienated from Him. Without God's saving action, they face certain judgement after death and stand rightly and fairly condemned to eternal punishment.

The Provision of Salvation

We believe that, in the fullness of time, God has intervened in history to save men and women from sin and judgement, so that they might be restored to true righteousness and reconciled to Him such that they are able to enjoy eternal fellowship with Him. Men and women are saved wholly by God through grace. Such salvation is made possible only through the mediatorial work of the Son of God, who came into our world through supernatural conception via the virgin, Mary. By means of His death upon the cross, Jesus Christ made full atonement for our sins. He willingly stood in our place as a substitute and representative, becoming sin for us, thereby taking upon himself the just judgement of God which we deserve. He obediently offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins to propitiate the wrath of God against us. By virtue of His death, men and women who respond to Him in faith receive the forgiveness of their sins, freedom from condemnation, and a new spiritual life which will continue for eternity.

The Receipt of Salvation

We believe that the salvation secured through the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ is effective to save only those men and women who repent of their sins and exercise true faith in Jesus Christ by submitting to Him as their Lord and Master. Salvation is bestowed freely upon those who exercise such genuine repentance and true faith, and is not earned by the performance of works of righteousness. Nevertheless, Jesus was explicit in stating that all genuine believers evidence their faith and love for Him through faithful obedience to His Word.

Regeneration

We believe that in order to receive salvation, a man or a woman must be regenerated (born again) by the work of the Holy Spirit of God. Without such regeneration, men and women remain sinners in a state of spiritual death and are incapable of exercising genuine repentance and true faith. The Holy Spirit alone is able to convict and convince men and women of their sinful state, of the fact that they face the certain prospect of the eternal judgement of God, and consequently of their need of salvation. He alone enables them to comprehend, and appropriate for themselves, the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ. Likewise, the Holy Spirit alone is able to bring men and women to rebirth and new spiritual life, enabling them to place voluntary faith in Jesus Christ. Such faith is itself a gift of God.

Justification

A person who exercises genuine repentance and true faith in Jesus Christ is thereby justified before God in accordance with His promise. Justification involves the receipt from God of a sure and certain pardon of all sin, whether past, present or future, and the imputation of the perfect righteousness of Christ. A justified person is as acceptable to God as Jesus Christ Himself, and is adopted into the family of God as a child and heir.

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

We believe that when a person is regenerated and justified by genuine repentance and true faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit enters his or her body and henceforth makes His dwelling there. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a regenerate person brings him or her assurance of salvation, confidence of adoption into the family of God, and guarantees that he or she will receive eternal life in the age to come.

Sanctification

We believe that those who are regenerated, justified and indwelt by the presence of the Holy Spirit are subject to the transforming work of God. Whilst such persons will never be entirely free from sin before being raised to new resurrection life in the age to come, in this present life they will experience a progressive growth in righteousness and godliness. By the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, appropriated by the mortification of sinful desires, their lives will exhibit the fruit of the Spirit and they will be brought into ever increasing conformity with the character of Christ. Whilst salvation is not earned by the performance of works of righteousness, it is always evidenced by godly conduct and the performance of good works pleasing to God.

The Universal Church (past, present and future)

We believe that the universal church is the spiritual body of Christ, which consists of all people who have exercised genuine repentance and true faith in Jesus Christ, and who have thus been adopted into the family of God. The universal church is a worldwide body and its members are united in fellowship with one another irrespective of race or nationality. The extent of the universal church is known to God alone and remains invisible to man. Jesus Christ is the head of the universal church; it is the body through which He accomplishes the worldwide proclamation

of the gospel message.

The Local Church

We believe that members of the universal church are commanded to join together as local congregations. A local church is a visible assembly of regenerated individuals, organised in unity under a suitably qualified leadership, who meet together to join in corporate worship, fellowship, prayer, teaching and instruction, and to encourage one another to persevere in faith and good works. A local church must also exercise such discipline as may become necessary against believers who fall into apostasy or commit open and notorious sin of which they are unrepentant. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between local churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between local churches exists only among those who are faithful to the gospel. The Holy Spirit bestows gifts upon members of the local church which enable it to grow to maturity in Christ and take His message to the world. The Holy Spirit bestows gifts upon members of the local church which enable it to serve the body, grow to maturity in Christ and take His message to the world.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion)

We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into His church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine – they remain symbols of Christ's body and blood. All of its blessings are received by faith.

The Leadership of the Local Church

We believe that God calls, sets apart and gives gifts to certain men for leading the local church by teaching the Bible. These leaders are normally referred to as Pastors, although in some churches they may be called elders and in some settings there even exists hierarchical structures within the leadership team.

The Proclamation of the Gospel

We believe that the preaching of the gospel (the spreading of Christ's Good News) in all the world is Christ's final commission to the church. It is to continue until His return and is to be an integral part of the life of every believer.

The Return of Christ

We believe that, at a time unknown to anyone but God Himself and when all His elect have come to faith, Jesus Christ will return from heaven to bring this world, and this current age, to an end. He will return in Person and in great power to gather His believing people to Himself. The dead shall be raised and all men and women shall be judged by Him. A solemn separation will then take place. Those who are not regenerate (born again) and justified shall be condemned to eternal punishment in hell. Those who are regenerate (born again) and justified shall dwell eternally in the presence of God, reigning with Christ in His kingdom. God will make

all things new and will be glorified forever.