

Ethan Shields Doctrinal Statement

1. We believe in the verbal plenary inspiration of the Holy Bible. The sixty-six books comprising the Old and New Testament canon were inerrant in the original writings and thus constitute the believer's final authority for faith and practice.

(II Tim. 3:16,17)

2. We believe in the existence of one true and living God. We also believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, that is, within the unity of the Godhead there exists three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit who in essence are co-equal and co-eternal yet exercising distinct though harmonious works.

(Deut. 6:4)

3. We believe in God the Father, commonly spoken of as the first member of the Trinity. God is an infinite and perfect spirit who is the source and support of all things. He is perfect in perfections and purposes.

(Gen. 17:1; Ps. 139:7,11; Acts 15:18; Eph. 1:11)

4. We believe in Jesus Christ, commonly spoken of as the second member of the Trinity. He was and is the Eternal Son of God possessing both absolute deity and perfect humanity. He was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life and gave His life on Calvary as a sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. He arose bodily from the grave, ascended back into heaven and is today acting as the believer's advocate and Great High Priest.

(John 1:1, 15a; 9:6; Heb. 4:15; I Tim. 2:6; Luke 24:39; I John 2:1)

5. We believe in the Holy Spirit. As the third member of the Trinity, He is not just an influence but a person equal in essence to the Father and Son. He is actively involved in the world both in bringing the lost to Christ for salvation, and in performing many wonderful ministries for the saints. He also gives gifts to believers and seeks to fill the obedient Christian giving him power for service.

*(Matt. 18:19; John 3:5; 16:8; I Cor. 12:13; 6:19;
Eph. 4:30; I Cor. 12:7; Eph. 5:18)*

6. We believe that the universe as well as mankind is a result of the direct creative act of God. God created the universe and that which it contains in six consecutive days of 24 hours each. We reject all forms of evolution whether theistic or naturalistic.

(Gen. 1:1, 27; Col. 1:16)

7. We believe in the existence of angels. Angels are spirit beings created by God for the purpose of bringing Him glory and fulfilling His purpose in the universe. They are more powerful than human beings but are not all-powerful.

(Ps. 148:5; 103:20; Heb. 1:13, 14)

8. We believe that within the body of angelic beings there exists a group, which we refer to as fallen angels headed by Satan himself. Satan, also known as the devil, is a real person created by God as the angel Lucifer, who because of rebellion, fell from that lofty position. When he fell he took part of the angelic hosts with him. Today these demonic hosts serve Satan just as the good angels serve God. Satan is in the business of opposing God and God's people in any way possible. His eternal destiny has already been determined in the lake of fire.

(Is. 14:12-14; Rev. 12:7; 20:10; I Pet. 5:8)

9. We believe that man is a direct creation of God. Man who was created in the image and likeness of God in a state of sinlessness or innocence did my transgression fall from that high position, and in so doing, all of mankind are now sinners by nature and by choice. In the fall, mankind incurred the just condemnation of a Holy God resulting in both spiritual and physical death.

(Gen. 1:26-27; 2:1-19; Rom. 5:12-19; 2:10-12, 23)

10. We believe in the salvation of sinners. The basis or ground of our salvation is the finished work on Christ on Calvary and the avenue of our salvation is repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation does not come by what we can do but by what He has done. It is offered freely to all. We are simply the recipients of His matchless grace. When we receive Christ as our Saviour we are regenerated, justified, adopted, sanctified and some day we shall be glorified. When we are genuinely saved we can never be finally lost because our destiny depends on His keeping power and not on our own.

(John 3:16; Acts 3:19; 4:12; 20:21; Eph. 2:8,9; Titus 3:5-7; Rom. 5:1; 8:15; 8:30; I Cor. 6:11; Phil. 1:6; I Tim. 4:10)

11. We believe in the sanctification of the believer. Sanctification in the Bible has the idea of the believer being set apart for God's service and thus becoming more like his Master. Sanctification can be viewed in three aspects. Positional sanctification occurs the moment a person is saved and he dons the robes of Christ's righteousness. Practical sanctification is an ongoing process whereby the believer becomes more and more conformed to the likeness of God's Son. Perfect sanctification shall occur someday when we go to be with the Lord (either through death or translation) and we no longer have to contend with the old nature because we shall become like He is.

(I Cor. 1:2; II Pet. 3:18; Phil. 3:20-21; I John 3:2)

12. We believe God has given spiritual gifts to Christians to serve in and through the local Church. Every believer has at least one gift and the use of the gifts is always for the ultimate purpose of bringing glory to God. Among the gifts listed in the Bible we believe that the sign gifts (miracles, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy) were temporary in nature and given to the church in its infant state before the completion of the canon of Scripture. Therefore, we reject the modern charismatic movement and the confusion, which it has brought.

(Rom. 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:1-11; 13:8; Eph. 4:11-12)

13. We believe in the church of Jesus Christ as God's institution for this age to accomplish his purposes in the world. The church as the body of Christ is comprised of all believers from Pentecost to Rapture. Local churches are visible expressions of the body of Christ meeting in a particular time and place. Christ is the head of the church and the Word of God is to be its source of authority. The local church is to be comprised of baptized believers who meet together for worship, fellowship, service, edification and evangelism. Local churches are to be led by men serving in the biblical offices of pastor and deacons. They are to observe the two ordinances of baptism (by immersion) and the Lord's Supper.

*(Acts 1:5; 2:41-47; I Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18;
Gal. 1:2; I Tim. 3:2,8; I Cor. 11:17-34)*

14. We believe that God has a plan and a program for the end of the ages. The next event on God's prophetic calendar is the return of the Lord Jesus. We believe this return will be accomplished in two phases. The first phase called the Rapture of the Church will be pre-millennial and pre-tribulation and is an imminent event. After the Rapture, the seven year tribulation will occur climaxed by the second phase of Christ's return referred to as the Second Coming. Following this will be the millennial reign of Christ culminating in the Great White Throne Judgment of the lost. After this comes the eternal state. We believe in the conscious eternal punishment of the lost in hell and the blessed eternal felicity of the saints in heaven.

*(I Thes. 4:16, 17; Rev. 3:10; 6-19;
19:11-16; 20:1-6, 11-15; 21:1-8)*

15. We believe God has called believers to live a life characterized by personal, ecclesiastical and even familial separation. Personally we are to refrain from all things that would defile us or bring shame to the name of Christ, which we bear. We are called to live a life characterized by holiness and purity and to be an example of what the believer is to be like to a watching world. Ecclesiastically we are called upon to refrain from cooperation or alliances with groups

that do not stand unashamedly for the truths revealed in the Word of God. Thus, we cannot accept the position reflected in the Ecumenical Movement, Neo-Orthodoxy, New Evangelicalism or the various branches of the Charismatic Movement. We believe cooperation should be limited to those of like precious faith.

*(I Thes. 5:22; I Cor. 6:19,20; I John 2:15-17; Rom. 16:17;
II John 9,10; II Cor. 6:14-17; II Thes. 3:6, 14, 15)*