

# AEC STATEMENT OF FAITH

The beliefs expressed in this document (and stated in greater detail in the *Fellowship of Evangelical Churches Manual of Faith, Practice, and Organization*) form the theological basis for the existence of the Archbold Evangelical Church.

## **The Bible**

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is God's Word to all people. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is literally "God-breathed." Because the Bible is inspired by God, it is absolute truth without any mixture of error in the original writings, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and the supreme source of truth and authority for Christian beliefs and living.

*(2 Tim 1:13; 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Ps 12:6; 119:105,160; Prov 30:5)*

## **Tri-une God**

We believe in the one true and living God who eternally exists in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is the Creator and sovereign ruler of all things in the universe, visible and invisible. He is perfectly holy, righteous, and just, and He must punish sin because He cannot tolerate it. He is worthy to receive all glory and adoration.

*(Gen 1:1, 26-27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matt 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Cor 13:14)*

## **God the Father**

We believe in God as the Father who is good in all He does and in everything He gives, including His discipline. He perfectly loves and cares for His children, showing compassion to those who fear Him. He loved the world enough to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Savior of the world. Through a personal relationship with Christ, we come to know God as our Father and can say, "Abba, Father."

*(John 3:16; Gal 3:26; 2 Cor 1:3; Ephes 4:6-7)*

## **God the Son: Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, fully God and fully man. Jesus lived a sinless life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice, taking on Himself God's punishment for the sins of mankind by dying on a cross. He arose bodily from the dead on the third day, demonstrating His power over sin and death. He ascended into heaven and will return to earth in power and glory to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

*(Matt 1:22-23; Isa 9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Heb 4:14-15; 1 Cor 15:3,4; Rom 1:3,4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Tim 6:14-15; Tit 2:13)*

## **God the Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is God and co-equal with the Father and the Son. He is present in the world to convict the world of sin and make humanity aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under His control continually.

*(2 Cor 3:17; John 14:16-17; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 2:12; 3:16; Ephes 1:13; 5:18; Gal 5:25)*

## **Man**

We believe that, by an immediate act, God created man without sin in the image and likeness of God and as the supreme object of God's creation. By voluntarily disobeying God's command, man lost his original condition and became separated from God by his sin. As a result, all mankind are sinners by nature and by choice, guilty before God, deserving His righteous judgment, and unable to save themselves by self-improvement or good works.

*(Gen 1:27; Ps 8:3-6; Isa 53:6; Rom 3:23; Is 59:1-2)*

## **Salvation**

We believe that because God is rich in mercy and love, He has made a provision by which man can be saved from the punishment he deserves. Only by turning away from his sin and trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can man be saved from sin's penalty, be born again by God's Spirit, and receive God's free gift of salvation. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through faith in His atoning death and resurrection.

*(Eph 2:4,8-9; Rom 6:23; 5:1; Isa 55:7; Prov 28:13; Luke 13:3; John 1:12; 14:6; Tit 3:5; Gal 3:26)*

## **Discipleship**

We believe that every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ in faith and obedience, submitting to Him as Lord in every area of life. God commands the Christian to grow in Christ, and He provides the power to do so through the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer. He also provides His Word, prayer, the local body of believers, and trials to help bring about the Christian disciple's growth in faith, holiness, and Christ-likeness.

*(Matt 16:24-26; Luke 14:25-27, 33; 2Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 1:16; 2:2; Matt 26:41; Hebrews 10:24-25; James 1:2-4)*

## **The Local Church**

We believe in the local church as a part of the universal Body of Christ. Its members are to be devoted to one another in love and to meet together regularly for worship, instruction, and mutual encouragement. The mission of the local church is to make disciples for Jesus Christ in its local community and throughout the world. The local church provides an avenue for the proper use of spiritual gifts and the observance of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

*(Matt 28:19-20; 1 Cor 12-14; Ephes 4:11-16; Heb 10:24-25)*

## **Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

We believe that there are two ordinances which were instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ for perpetual use by the church. The first, water baptism, is the outward sign or symbol of what God has already done in the individual's life and is a testimony to all people that, through repentance and faith, the person now belongs to Jesus Christ. Baptism is administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The second ordinance, the Lord's Supper, is a commemoration of the death of Jesus and is done in remembrance of Him until He comes again; it is a sign of our loving participation in Him. Both ordinances are restricted to those who are believers in Christ.

*(Matt 28:19; Acts 8:35-39; 16:30-34; 1 Cor 11:17-34)*

### **The Sanctity of Human Life**

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in his image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (*Ps 139*)

### **Marriage and Divorce**

We believe that marriage was created and ordained by God and therefore can be rightfully defined only by Him. According to God's Word, marriage is an exclusive, permanent, and totally intimate relationship between one man and one woman. It is a covenant before God, intended to endure until the death of one of the partners. We believe the Scriptures do not give liberty for a believer to marry a non-believer.

We believe divorce is a basic violation of God's original intention for marriage. Although there are two cases in Scripture where divorce is permitted, it is nowhere encouraged in Scripture, and reconciliation should always be pursued with zeal. In the case of those who have divorced, we believe that Jesus Christ will show His mercy and forgiveness in response to their confession and repentance. Following Christ's example, His followers should also show forgiveness, restoration, love, and acceptance.

(*Gen 2:18-25; Romans 7:2; 1 Cor 7:10-13, 15; Eph 5:22-23; Matt 19:5-9*)

### **Gender and Sexuality**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as either male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders are of equal worth in the sight of God. Together they reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. (*Gen 1:26-27*)

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God.

(*1 Cor 6:9-20; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4; Matt 15:18-20*)

### **Eternity**

We believe that man was created to exist forever. He will exist eternally, either separated from God by sin or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is to spend eternity in Hell; to be eternally in union with Him is to spend eternity in Heaven. Both Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

(*John 3:16, 18, 36; 1 John 2:25; 5:11-13; Rev 20:5*)