

RHEMA BIBLE CHURCH NORTH STATEMENT OF FAITH

This statement constitutes a guide to the fundamental beliefs of Rhema Bible Church. The programmes and activities of Rhema Bible Church shall be based upon and, at all times, be consistent with this statement.

THE SCRIPTURES: The Scriptures in their original form, both the Old and New Testament, are divinely inspired and are the revelation of God to man. All Scripture is God-breathed – the Holy Spirit inspired the authors, revealing to them what He wanted written (Acts 1:16; 2 Tim.3:16; 2 Pet.1:20,21). These scriptures are infallible truth, containing no contradiction or error. It is the final authority for faith, doctrine and life. The canon of the Bible is closed. Christians must remain receptive to the illumination of Scriptural truth by the Holy Spirit (Matt 5:18; John 17:17; Rom.10:17; 15:4; 1 Cor.10:11; 2:13; James 1:21). The Old Testament was endorsed by Jesus Christ as God's Word. The New Testament is not a contradiction, but a culmination and consummation of Old Testament truth (Matt.5:17; Luke 4:17-21; 24:27, 44; John 5:39; 1 Cor.14:37; 2 Pet.3:15, 16).

THE GODHEAD: God is Spirit – infinite, eternal, uncreated and unchangeable in His being or attributes. In Him all things have their source, support and end (John 4:24; Ps.102:25-27; Gen.1:1,26; John 1:1-3; Heb.1:1-3; Col.1:15-17). There is one true God who has a plural nature – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – all distinct personalities, all designated God (John 1:1,18,14; Heb.1:8; Acts 5:3,4). The Bible does not teach that there are three Gods, but upholds the doctrine of the Trinity – one God who reveals Himself in three persons – equal in power and glory (Gen.1:26; Matt.3:16, 17; 28:19; Acts 10:38; 1 Cor.12:4-6).

THE FATHER: God, the Father, is the Father of all in a creative sense, but only those who have received Jesus Christ can be called His children in a redemptive sense. He is the Father of all Christians in a special, intimate relationship (Mal.2:10; Acts 17:28; John 1:12, 13; 8:41-44; 17:3; 20:17).

JESUS CHRIST: Jesus Christ is Lord and the Son of God – these titles proclaim His deity. He is the Only Begotten of the Father, not that He is a son of God in a general sense, but the Son of God in a unique sense. As God He existed eternally and will exist forever (John 1:1-3, 18; 17:5; Heb.1:2-12; 13:8). By taking on the form of man, Jesus is the Word that became flesh. His birth was supernatural and not natural as in the case of all other men. He was miraculously 'virgin-born' of the Holy Spirit, without a human father (John 1:14, 8; Isa.7:14; Matt. 1:18-25). The Bible declares His absolute deity and His complete humanity. He lived a sinless life on earth; teaching, preaching and performing miracles with divine authority (Matt. 16:13, 16; Philip.2:5-8; 1 Tim.2:5; Heb.2:14-18; 4:15; 2 Cor.5:21; Matt.4:23, 24; Acts 2:22). Jesus fulfilled God's plan in history. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, was buried and descended to Hades. Christ died for all and rose bodily from the dead. He did not only rise spiritually, nor just as a spirit being, but it was a physical resurrection. The doctrine of the resurrection is foundational for Christianity (1 Cor.15:3, 4, 14-21; Luke 24:6, 39; Acts 4:33; Rom.1:4; 5:10; 8:11). After His resurrection He ascended to the Father in heaven. He is alive forevermore in His resurrected body and exalted position, representing us before the throne of God as our High Priest and Advocate (1Tim.3:16; Mark 16:19; Philip.3:20, 21; Rom.8:34; Heb.4:14-16; 7:24, 25).

THE HOLY SPIRIT: The Holy Spirit is a divine person, the third person of the Holy Trinity, distinct from the Father and the Son (Luke 1:35; 1 Cor.2:10, 11; 2 Cor.13:14). The clear and unmistakable teaching of Scripture is that the Holy Spirit is personal and is God. He is not an impersonal force, nor a mere principle or influence, but possesses full, distinct personality (John 14:16, 26; 16:7, 8; Acts 13:2, 4; 1 Cor.12:11; Eph.4:30).

THE CREATION AND FALL OF HUMANKIND: All people have been created equally and in the image of God, irrespective of race, ethnicity, colour, gender, age, language, culture or class (Gen.1:26-28; 3:20; Prov.22:2; Acts 10:34, 35; 17:26, 27; James 3:9; Col.3:10, 11; Gal.3:28). God created humankind in His own image, but that image has been marred by sin. Humankind was given a free will and through Satan's temptation sinned, thereby incurring the penalty of death, both physical and spiritual. All human beings inherit a sinful nature which results, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, in actual transgression involving personal guilt (Gen.1:26-28; 3:1-6; Rom.5:12; Eph.2:1-3). All have sinned – therefore humankind is in a lost sinful state, fallen from original righteousness (Isa.53:6; Rom.3:9-12, 23; 1Cor.15:21, 22; Gal.3:22). The Bible describes sin in many ways – missing the mark, not meeting God's standards, breaking His laws, going against His will, disobeying Him, acting in unbelief, failing to do what is good, owing a debt, etc. Sin is humankind's fallen condition evident in human character, will, thoughts, attitudes or acts. It is proud, self-willed rebellion against God in active or passive form (Dan.9:5, 8, 9; James 2:8-11; 4:17; Rom.14:23; 1 John 3:4; 5:17; Matt.6:12).

THE SALVATION OF HUMANKIND: Jesus Christ gave His life as a substitutionary sacrifice and ransom for all (1 Cor.15:3; Matt.20:28; 1 Tim.2:3-6). His atoning death on the cross and His shed blood fully paid the price of redemption required for the release of sinners. Through His death people can obtain the forgiveness and remission of sins; washing and cleansing from unrighteousness; justification and pardon from the guilt of transgressions; righteousness and right standing with God; propitiation and reconciliation which restores fellowship and favour with God; healing and wholeness; the victorious life; and the gift of eternal life (Gal.3:13, 14; 1 Pet.1:18, 19; 2:24; Col.1:13, 14; Rom.3:22-26; 5:8-11, 17-19; Titus 3:4-7; 1 John 2:2; 3:8; Rev.12:10, 11). People are not able to save themselves by works; by trying to keep the Law or the Ten Commandments; by personal merit in themselves; by self-effort; or by natural development from within – no one can add anything to the completed atoning work of Christ (Isa.64:6; Rom.3:20, 28; Gal.2:16; Titus 3:5). Salvation is by grace, the free gift of eternal life from God to all those who believe in Christ. It is received by faith in the crucified and risen Saviour, resulting in the supernatural work of the new birth, which is essential to make the repentant sinner a new creation in Christ Jesus and a child of God (Eph.2:8, 9; Gal.3:26; Rom.6:23; 10:9, 10; 2 Cor.7:10; 5:17; John 3:3-5, 16; 1:12, 13; 1 John 5:1).

WATER BAPTISM: Water baptism is a direct commandment of our Lord. Scripture requires that all who have become disciples through repentance and faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord are to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Baptism is by immersion of water and is for believers only (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38, 39; 8:36-39; 16:31-33). The ordinance of baptism is an act of obedience; a symbol of the Christian's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection; a declaration that the believer has died with Christ and has been raised with Him to walk in newness of life; a public confession of the new believer's faith in Christ; and the answer of a good conscience toward God (Matt.3:13-17; Rom.6:3-5; Col.2:12; 1 Pet.3:21)

COMMUNION: Communion is the regular partaking of the emblems of the bread and the cup as symbolic of the Saviour's broken body and the shed blood. In following this ordinance, believers are remembering the Lord Jesus Christ; proclaiming His death; giving thanks for the benefits of his broken body and shed blood; expressing their communion with Him and one another; celebrating His resurrection; and anticipating His return (Matt.26:26-29; 1Cor.10:16,17; 11:23-32).

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT: The new birth is the work of regeneration that the Holy Spirit executes, by which He then indwells the believer. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience distinct and subsequent to the new birth (Titus 3:5; John 3:5, 6; 14:16, 17; Acts 8:14-17; 19:2). Jesus baptizes in the Holy Spirit and according to His command all believers are entitled to and should expect the Promise of the Father – the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This was the normal and needful experience of Christians in the Church of the early days (Matt.3:11; Acts 1:4, 5; 2:38, 39; 11: 15, 16). Through baptism in the Holy Spirit believers are empowered and equipped for life and service; and with it comes the bestowment of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit and their uses in the work of the ministry (Mark 16:17; Acts 1:8; 1Cor.12:4-11). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6).

SANCTIFICATION: The Scriptures demand a life of holiness. Believers are called to separation and consecration unto God (1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1Thes.3:12, 13; 4:3-7; 5:23; Heb. 12:14). Christ's holiness is imputed to the regenerated believer, but this positional holiness must be worked out as practical sanctification in the believer's conduct. Sanctification is a definite, yet progressive work of grace, commencing at the new birth and continuing throughout the life of the Christian (1Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Heb. 10:10, 14; Philip. 3:12-14; 2Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2, 3). Sanctification is an act of purification and separation from that which is evil; and of dedication unto God (2Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:22-24; 2 Tim. 2:21-22). Sanctification is realized in the life of believers by recognizing the identification with Christ in His death and resurrection; by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union; and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God (1Cor. 1:30; Rom. 6:11-14, 18-22; Gal. 5:16-25; John 17:17; James 1:21).

DIVINE HEALING AND MIRACLES: Divine healing was provided for in the Old Testament and is an integral part of the Gospel. The New Testament declares that through Christ's redemptive work, full provision has been made for the physical healing and health. It is the privilege of believer today (Ex. 23:25; Isa.53:4, 5; Matt. 8:16, 17; 1 Pet. 2:24; Gal. 3:13, 14; Luke 10:9). Healing is for physical ills of the human body and is wrought by God's power indifferent ways, like laying on of hands; the prayer of faith; anointing with oil; or the gifts of healing (Mark 16:17, 18; 6:13; Acts 28:8, 9; James 5:14-16; 1Cor. 12:9). Miracles are supernatural works, signs or wonders of the unchangeable God and are possible in the present day (Mark 16:17-20; John 14:12; Acts 6:8; 8:6; 1Cor. 12:10; Rom. 15:18, 19; 2Cor. 12:12).

THE CHURCH: The one true Church is the whole company of all believers who have been called out of sin and the world, redeemed by Jesus and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. It is universal in the sense that it includes all true believers out of all nations from all generations. Each Christian is an integral part of the general assembly and Church of the firstborn registered in heaven. (Matt.16:16-19; Eph.4:3-6; 1Pet. 2:5, 9, 10; Heb.12:23).

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and the Bible describes it in different terms, for example, the Body of Christ, His Bride, the family of God, the building and habitation God (Eph.1:22, 23; 2Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27; 3:15; 2:19-22). The Church also has a visible, local expression – a company of believers voluntarily fellowshiping together in a given locality. The local Church on earth should take its character from the conception of the Church universal (Matt. 18:15-17; 1Cor. 1:2; Heb.10:24, 25). Therefore, the essentials of Church membership are the new birth and personal confession of faith in Christ. It is not merely the attending of Church services or having a name on the membership list that makes one a member of Christ's true Church. Only the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the repentant sinner qualifies one for membership in the Body of Christ (Acts 2:38-41, 47; Eph. 2:13, 18, 19). The Bible teaches the principle of being in submission to authority. As such, it is understood that Church membership shall be subject to submission to authority in matters pertaining to Church governance, doctrine and personal behaviour. (Heb.13:17; 1Thes.5:12, 13; 1Pet.5:2-5). The Bible teaches heterosexual relationships between a natural man and a natural woman within the confines of lawful matrimony. Adhere to this stated principal of sexual behaviour is an inherent requirement for membership in this local Church. (Gen.1:27, 28; Lev.18:22; Rom.1:27).

The primary mission of the Church is to be an agency of God for evangelising the world; to be a corporate body bringing praise and worship to God; to be a gathering where the saints can be equipped, edified and perfected in the image of God's Son; to be a demonstration of God's love and goodness to all; to be a foundation upholding God's wisdom and truth; to be a catalyst of constructive social change and justice in the community, ministering to the poor and oppressed; and to be an instrument enforcing Satan's defeat through God's power (Matt.28:19, 20; Acts 1:8; Eph.1:6, 12,14; 4:11-16; 3:10; Gal.5:13,14; 6:9, 10; 1Tim. 3:15; Matt. 25:35-40; Acts 20:35; Rom. 16:20).

THE MINISTRY: Every Christian is a priest – to bring acceptable spiritual sacrifices, by full and equal access, to God through Christ; a minister or servant – to serve God and one another through love; a steward – to profitably use the trust granted by God; and a worker – to fulfill the labour of love in God's kingdom (Rev. 1:6; Heb. 10:19-22; 13:15,16; 6:10; 1Pet. 2:5,9; 4:10,11; Eph. 4:7,12; 2:10; Matt.25:14) The ascended Christ has given various ministries to the Church – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers – which are essential to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and build up the Body of Christ (Eph.4:11, 12; 1Cor.12:28; Rom.12:4-13).

GENDER EQUALITY: The Bible teaches us that both man and woman were created equal by God, and in His image; that they both had a relationship with God, shared equally with God, spoke to God and fellowshiped with Him, and were both given authority to rule over the earth (Gen 1:26-28). The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ came to redeem women as well as men. Through faith we all become children of God, regardless of racial, social or gender distinctions (Gal 3:26-28). In the Church spiritual gifts of women and men are to be recognized, developed and used while public recognition is to be given to both women and men who exercise ministries of service and leadership (1 Pet 4:10-11). In the family neither spouse is to seek to dominate the other but rather serve and submit to one another; spouses are to learn to share the responsibilities of leadership on the basis of gifts, expertise and availability (Eph 5:21). Both mothers and fathers are to exercise leadership in the nurture, training, discipline and teaching of their children (Prov 1:8, Eph 6:1-4, Col 3:20).

SATAN: The devil is a fallen being cast down from heaven because of his transgression. He is not an impersonal force, nor the principal of evil personified – personal names and pronouns are used with reference to him, while personal attributes and acts are ascribed to him (Isa.14:12-17; Rev.12:9). He is the real enemy of Christians; and together with his demons seek to deceive, tempt, afflict, oppress and destroy humankind. The believer, however, has been given authority over them in the name of Jesus Christ (John 8:44; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 10:38; Eph. 6:11, 12; James 4:7; 1Pet. 5:8, 9; 1 John 3:8).