

# Beliefs

## **GOD**

There is one God who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This mystery is called the Trinity and is the foundation of Christian faith and life.

God is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. We believe that God in his love, grace and sovereignty creates, sustains, rules, redeems and judges all things. He made everything that exists and keeps it all going for his glory!

## **JESUS CHRIST**

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, (this is known as the incarnation) and lived a sinless life in obedience to God the Father.

On the cross Jesus Christ died in our place. He became our substitute, traded his perfection for our guilt, bore God's wrath and paid the price for our sin, redeeming us by his blood, defeating evil, conquering death and so reconciling us with God. (This is called the atonement.)

Jesus Christ rose in bodily form from the dead on the third day and for a period of forty days appeared to over five hundred witnesses giving many convincing proofs that he was alive. He ascended into heaven where he reigns over all and intercedes for his people, the church, in the presence of God the Father.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit has been sent by God the Father to glorify Jesus Christ and to apply His work of salvation. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment, unites us with Jesus Christ through new birth, and helps us understand the truth about Jesus Christ as contained in the Bible.

The Holy Spirit indwells all believers; brings assurance of salvation, imparts new abilities and gifts, and produces increasing likeness to Jesus Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

## **THE BIBLE**

God has revealed himself in the Bible, i.e. the Old and New Testament Scriptures alone, and inspired the Bible so that as originally given, it is in its entirety the authoritative written Word of God. The Bible is therefore completely trustworthy and always enough, i.e. sufficient, for teaching us what to believe and how to live.

## **THE HUMAN RACE**

All men and women have equal dignity and worth, being created in God's image to love, worship and obey Him. As a result of Adam and Eve's sin, (this is known as the Fall), every aspect of human nature has been corrupted such that all men and women are spiritually dead, born sinful and completely unable to turn towards God. Every person therefore stands condemned before God unless the Holy Spirit imparts life and brings new birth. (This is known as regeneration.)

## **SALVATION**

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace; it is not deserved and cannot be earned. It has been made possible by Jesus Christ so that now all who believe in and confess Him as Saviour and Lord are forgiven, declared righteous, adopted into the family of God, and receive eternal life. (This is known as justification by faith alone.)

This free gift of God's grace, i.e. salvation, is from start to finish His initiative, the evidence of which consists of repentance, faith, baptism in water, receiving the Holy Spirit and a changed life as a result.

## **THE CHURCH**

The universal Church is the body of which Jesus Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are communities of believers who are committed to each other for the glory of God.

The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between local churches exists in the Holy Spirit and flourishes only where they are faithful to the gospel.

God's rule, (this is known as the kingdom of God), is primarily expressed through the life of each local church in its worship and witness. This consists of praise and prayer, the preaching of God's Word, the administering of baptism and the Lord's Supper, discipleship and discipline, caring for the poor, seeing the sick healed and reaching out with the good news of Jesus Christ to the local community and beyond.

There should be plurality of leadership within the local church.

## **BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Jesus Christ has given Baptism and the Lord's Supper to the Church as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is an outward symbol and powerful confirmation of a person's inner belief and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, and represents their entry into the Church. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Jesus Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and a means of encounter with him, though it involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

## **THE FUTURE**

God's rule will come in all its fullness with the personal, visible and glorious return of Jesus Christ to the earth. He will raise the dead and judge all people welcoming the righteous into a life of everlasting joy and sending the lost to a life of everlasting condemnation. God will make all things new at this time.