

Article III. Statement of Faith

From the Damascus Community Church Constitution approved April 5, 2016

A. Scripture

We believe the original autographs of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written by men moved by the Holy Spirit. Our contemporary manuscripts are reliable. The church uses a variety of translations, but for the sake of consistency, we are using the English Standard Version in this constitution. These Scriptures are true being God-breathed and given once for all time and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. Their interpretation is found through diligent study and the grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (Ps. 119:160; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Jude 3).

B. Concerning God

We believe there is one living and true God, Creator and Sustainer of all and Sovereign over all. He is perfect in all His attributes and worthy of our worship. He is one in essence but triune in nature, eternally existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:1-2:25; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 6:3; Matt. 28:19; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:3).

We believe God the Father controls all things according to His good pleasure and perfect will and grace and for His glory. As the absolute and highest Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. His Fatherhood involves His relationship to the Son and Holy Spirit within the Trinity; to all mankind as Creator and Lord; and to all who believe in Jesus Christ and are born of Him into an intimate and eternal relationship through redemption and adoption as His own (1 Chron. 29:11; Ps. 103:19, 145:8,9; Luke 3:38; John 1:12,1:18, 3:3; Rom. 11:33; I Cor. 8:6; I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:3-6; Heb. 12:5-9; I John 3:9).

We believe that Jesus is Lord and Christ, the eternal Son of God. He became man (incarnate) by virgin birth, and yet remained God, therefore fully God and fully human. He lived a sinless life and died a substitutionary death for the sin of

all mankind. He was bodily resurrected and ascended to the right hand of the Father where He now ministers. He will return at any time now to receive those in Christ, and then establish His Kingdom on earth. He is the One through whom the Father will judge all mankind (Is. 7:14; Is. 53:5-6; Matt. 1:18-23; John 1:1, 14; Acts 2:36; Acts 1:3-11; Rom. 8:34; I Thess. 4:16-17; Heb. 7:25; I Peter 3:18; Rev. 19:6, 11-20).

We believe the Holy Spirit is at work in the world convicting mankind concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment, and guiding believers in the truth. He ministers to believers in many ways, including baptizing, indwelling, and sealing all believers at the moment of salvation; and illuminating, empowering, gifting, filling, and producing fruit (John 16:7-15; Acts 1:8, 2:1-21; Rom. 8:5-27, 12:4-6; I Cor. 12-14; II Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 1:13, 3:16, 4:4-6, 5:18;).

C. Mankind

We believe that mankind, first male and then female, was directly and immediately created by God in His image, giving human life unique value. God immutably bestows upon each person male or female gender, anatomically determined at birth. Mankind was created to enjoy fellowship with God, glorify Him, and be stewards of His earthly creation. The first man, Adam, sinned with the result that the sin nature is inherited by all; therefore, all people stand condemned before God and in need of salvation by God's grace. (Gen 1:26-28, 2:7, 20-23; John 3:16-18; Rom 3:23, 5:12; 1 Cor. 10:31, 15:21-22; 1 Tim. 2:13;).

D. Sin

God is righteous and has revealed righteousness in terms of human behavior through His Word, including both commandments and principles for living. By inherited nature and personal action, all men fall short of God's righteousness and thus are sinners and do sin in attitude, action, and thought. To deny this tenet is to reject what God has revealed about human nature and behavior. The consequence of sin is eternal condemnation, required by God's just nature. In love, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to satisfy the requirements of His justice, paying the price for our sin by His death. Believers in Jesus are in the process of

becoming like Jesus with the expectation that they will sin less as they grow through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and ultimately will be sinless upon entering His eternal presence (Ps. 51, 119; John 3:16; Rom. 3:21-26, 5:12-19, 6:23; ; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:1-3; I John 1:8-10, 3:2-3;).

E. Salvation

We believe that salvation from the condemnation that results from sin is wholly of God, by grace through faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8, 9). Regarding this salvation, our Lord says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life“ (John 5:24). “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’” (John 11:25-26). “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:44). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10:27-29). “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (John 3:18).

F. Church

We believe that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body – the Church , of which Christ is the Head . Believers are to assemble in local churches as the body of Christ to fulfill the purposes Christ gave His Church (Matt. 16:18; Acts 14:23,27; 20:17,28; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Gal. 1:2; Eph. 1:22, 4: 4-6, 15; Phil. 1:1; Col.1:18; I Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1, Heb. 10:25).

We believe the Church’s purpose is to worship and glorify God by devoting itself to prayer, by praise, by building itself up in the faith, by instruction of the Word , by fellowship , by keeping the ordinances , and by advancing and communicating

the Gospel to the entire world (Matt. 28:19; Luke 22:19; Acts 1:8, 2:38-42, 47; Eph. 3:21, 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 2:2,15; 3:16,17; I John 1:3).

Each member of the body of Christ is given one or more spiritual gifts according to God's will. No one gift is given to all members of the body, nor is any gift the necessary evidence of saving faith or of being filled with the Spirit. All gifts are given to build up the body of Christ and to fulfill God's purposes, including any biblical use of tongues, interpretation of tongues, healings, miracles, or prophecy (Rom. 12:4-6; I Cor. 12-14; Eph. 1:13; 4:4-12).

We believe that the unity Christ gives us bears witness to His saving and sustaining grace (John 17: 20-26; Eph. 4: 1-6; 1 John 2:9-19).

We believe that the one, supreme authority for the Church is Christ through Whom order, discipline, and worship are established. (Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22)

We believe the disciplining of sinning members of the congregation is in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matt. 18:15-22; Acts 5: 1 ff.; I Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; I Tim. 1:19, 20; Titus 1:10-16).

We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-28, 28:18-20).

G. Christian Conduct

We believe "... the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" (Titus 2:11-14). Therefore, the believer has responsibilities in relationship to the three institutions God has established: the family, the state, and the church.

The Family - The institution of family has as its foundation the marriage of one man to one woman, as described in Genesis 2:24, "... a man shall leave his

father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” This union is intended to be life-long, as Jesus counseled in Matthew 19:6, "... therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." Love, mutual respect, and care are to guide family members as they fulfill Biblical responsibilities toward one another. Sexual acts and sexual intimacy are reserved for and appropriate only within this marriage relationship. We believe that life begins at conception, that human life is uniquely sacred, and that children are a gift from the Lord. God alone has the prerogative to give and take life which prerogative God delegates to human will only in cases of war, capital punishment after due process of law, and defense of self or others from imminent serious bodily harm or death (Gen. 2:18-25, 9:6; ; Ex. 20:14; Deut. 32:39; I Sam. 2:6; Ps. 127: 3, 139:13-16; Matt. 19:3-9; I Cor. 6:18; Eph. 5:21-6:4; I Tim. 5:3-8;).

The State - God has established governing authorities for the purpose of maintaining order in society and punishing wrongdoers. Submission to such authorities is commanded and may be set aside only when the command of such authorities is in violation of other Biblical commands (Acts 5:25-32; Rom. 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:1-4).

The Church - As members of the body of Christ, we are also members of one another and are called to mutual love, care, and service toward one another. Our purpose is that every believer grows in likeness to Christ, and the service of every member works together toward this end. All of our gifts and resources come from God and belong to Him. The work of the church is financed by the regular, proportional giving of God's people. Believers are to live at peace with one another and resolve disputes between one another within the fellowship of believers. As witnesses who have experienced life in Christ, all believers are involved in sharing the message of salvation by various means (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Rom. 12:3-16; Eph. 4:1-16; I Cor. 6:1-8, 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:6-9; Phil. 2:3-4).

H. Angelic Beings

We believe that angels, beings of a higher order than mankind, were created to serve God and worship Him. We believe the angel Satan exists and is the author of sin. He rebelled against God, involved other angels in his rebellion, and thus

incurred God's judgment. Satan's temptation of Eve led to mankind's choice to sin (Gen. 3:1-7; Job 1:6-7, 38:4-7; Ps. 103:20; Matt. 25:41; Luke 10:18).

I. Future

We believe in that blessed hope - the personal, visible, premillennial return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We believe in the resurrection of all who have died. Unbelievers will be condemned to the eternal lake of fire along with Satan and his fallen angels. All who have believed in Jesus Christ will inherit eternal life with God in the new Heaven and new Earth (Dan. 9:24-27; Zech. 14:4-11; Matt. 24:36; John 14:1-3; I Cor. 15:51; I Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; II Peter 3:10-13; 1 John 5: 11-12; Rev. 12:7-12, 20, 21).