

SCHEDULE "A"

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Statement of Faith General Assembly of the Church of God in Eastern Canada

The following is a statement of faith of the General Assembly of the Church of God in Eastern Canada. It is based upon an orthodox view of Holy Scripture. All scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version.

AS CHRISTIANS, HERE WE STAND ¹ We believe that "all scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We are nourished by "the sacred writings" that are able to instruct us "for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (3:15).

We believe all that the Bible teaches in light of the eternal Word incarnated in Jesus Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). "In him was life, and the life was the light for all people" (1:4). "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory," a glory that is "full of grace and truth" (1:14).

Humbled by the vastness of God's revelation in the Bible, we, nevertheless, confess major themes of our faith, using the words of Scripture.

1. GOD AND SALVATION

We believe in the eternally triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

Along with the ancient people of Israel, we confess, "the Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You

¹ Gilbert W. Stafford, *As Christians, Here We Stand*. Anderson, IN: Warner Press/Church of God Ministries of the Church of God, 2002, used with permission. All scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version.

shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

In harmony with a New Testament hymn of faith, we confess that Jesus Christ "is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:15-20).

Likewise, with Scripture, we confess that our Lord, in whom "all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell," was also fully human: "And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:7d-8). And we confess that he "died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

In agreement with the New Testament, we confess, "Jesus is Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

As people of resurrection faith, we experience "the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has

made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:19-23).

We rejoice at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and experience the fulfillment of Jesus' promise when he said that the "Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you"(John 14:26).

We know that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and recognize Jesus Christ as our only means of salvation. “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Our Lord says: “I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

With the New Testament, we teach that the experience of this salvation requires both personal repentance of sin and personal faith in Jesus Christ. We know that “godly grief produces repentance that leads to salvation” (2 Corinthians 7:10), and we proclaim, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16). We are convinced that “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17). We teach that the fruit of this new creation is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22).

And so, by divine grace working through personal repentance and faith we have been buried with Christ "by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

In connection with this spiritual baptism, we preach and practice water baptism, about which it is reported that on the day of Pentecost those who believed the Gospel “were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added” (Acts 2:41).

But after baptism, as the pilgrim people of God, we are to “press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).

As Christians, we are admonished to "be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18), and "to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

As believers, we are instructed by these words: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:1-2).

We know that as believers we are urged to present our "bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God," which is our "spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1). And, we believe that this benediction is to be experienced in this life prior to death: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this" (I Thessalonians 5:23-24).

We are convinced that God’s sanctifying grace produces wholehearted love of both God and others: “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection

in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also" (I John 4:17-21).

We believe that we are secure in our salvation so long as we remain faithful to Christ. As the faithful people of God, we take comfort in the promise of our Lord, "No one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28). We are instructed, however, of the necessity of continuing to abide in Christ and are warned, "whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned" (John 15:6). "The one who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22). "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15: 57).

THE CHURCH AND UNITY

We affirm in the words of Scripture that "there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Ephesians 4:4-7). This grace at work within us manifests itself always and without exception "so that the church may be built up" (I Corinthians 14:5).

In humility, we understand ourselves to be a continuing fellowship of what the New Testament calls "the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son" (Acts 20:28). We are convinced that the only way into this one, universal church of God is as Scripture reports: "the Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). We understand ourselves according to the proclamation: "But you are a chosen race, a royal

priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). On the day of Pentecost, the church was empowered to be Christ's witnesses "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). That empowerment took place as the Spirit was poured out on people indiscriminately so that "your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18).

In accordance with the guidelines of Scripture, we take delight in the fellowship of God's church, "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another," and all the more, as we "see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

We enjoy singing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs," "making melody to the Lord in our hearts" (Ephesians 5:19).

We are committed to the ministry of anointing "with oil in the name of the Lord," and we believe that "the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective" (James 5:14-16).

We commune at table where our Lord, with broken loaf, says, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (I Corinthians 11:24), and, with cup uplifted, says, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood" (verse 25).

As the servant people of God, we wash each other's feet in obedience to our Lord who after washing the feet of his disciples, said, "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should do as I have done to you" (John 13: 14).

We seek to be part of the answer to our Lord's prayer "that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21).

And, with glad hearts, we are earnestly committed to living out the glorious reality we have in Christ that "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

MISSION AND HOPE

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we accept his commission to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

As people commissioned "to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal" (Luke 9:2), we are committed to ministering in the name of Christ who, in the words of Isaiah, said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19).

As believers, we live in the present reality of the Kingdom, which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

It is with passion for the Kingdom and compassion for the lost that we proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom knowing that all of us face final judgment at the time of the Lord's return when to those who live in harmony with the Kingdom, the Lord says, "Come, you that are

blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34) but to those who refuse, he says, “Depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (verse 46).

And so, as people of the Kingdom, we look forward to the one and only return of the Lord, when "the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so, we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Maranatha! "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20).

MARRIAGE & FAMILY

In agreement with the historic Christian church’s understanding of marriage, we believe marriage is a provision of God where one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others, enter into a lifelong relationship that is maintained in purity. (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5-6, Ephesians 5:3, 26-27)

Marriage is the Biblical context for the procreation of children. We believe that the family is central to the fabric of society. We believe that a healthy marriage is the best foundation for families and the raising of children. We believe parents have the inherent right and responsibility to raise and educate their children. (Genesis 1:28)

God’s gift of sex is designed to be protected within the covenant of marriage. We affirm that marriage between a man and a woman is the only context for sexual activity that is in keeping with God’s will and Biblical principles. (Hebrews 13:4, Mark10:6-9, Matthew 19:5-6)

SANCTITY OF LIFE

We believe that human beings are made in the image of God, therefore all humankind has intrinsic value and significance from conception to natural death. We affirm the sacredness and dignity of all persons: male and female, unborn, aged, physically challenged, mentally handicapped, and any person who is devalued- “the least of these” – in our society. (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:13-16; Matthew 25:31-40)

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