

✦ DIVINE HEALING

One of the provisions that comes to us through Christ's suffering is healing for the physical body. Jesus spent a large portion of His earthly ministry healing people and taught His followers to do likewise. (Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; James 5:14-16)

✦ THE MINISTRY OF ALL BELIEVERS

While some individuals are called to spend their lives in ministry to the Church, the Scriptures teach that all believers are ministers. By serving others, our lives are a witness to the Gospel, and we bring glory to God. (Matthew 5:16, 25:34-40; I Peter 2:5,9; John 13:15)

✦ THE SECOND COMING

From the time Jesus ascended back to heaven until now, believers have waited expectantly for His return. Accompanying that coming will be the resurrection of those who have died in Christ and the translation of all believers. (Acts 1:11; Romans 8:23; I Corinthians 15:51-52; I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Titus 2:13)

✦ THE SECOND COMING: MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

Jesus Christ will establish an earthly Kingdom which will last one thousand years. He will rule from Jerusalem and during His rule the whole earth will be peaceful and prosperous. (Psalms 72:3-8; Isaiah 11:6-9; Ezekiel 37:21-22; Micah 4:3-4; Zephaniah 3:19-20; Romans 11:26-27; Revelation 20:2-3)

✦ FINAL JUDGMENT

At the end, everyone will experience bodily resurrection and the judgment. Those forgiven through Christ will enjoy eternal fellowship with God. Those who have rejected Jesus Christ will be judged on the basis of their decision, and will live eternally separated from God because of their sins. (2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8)

These are brief statements of our fundamental beliefs. They serve to anchor our faith and to chart our course through the winds of deceit and confusion. We commend them to you because we are instructed (in Titus 1:9) that elders should "Encourage others by Sound Doctrine,"



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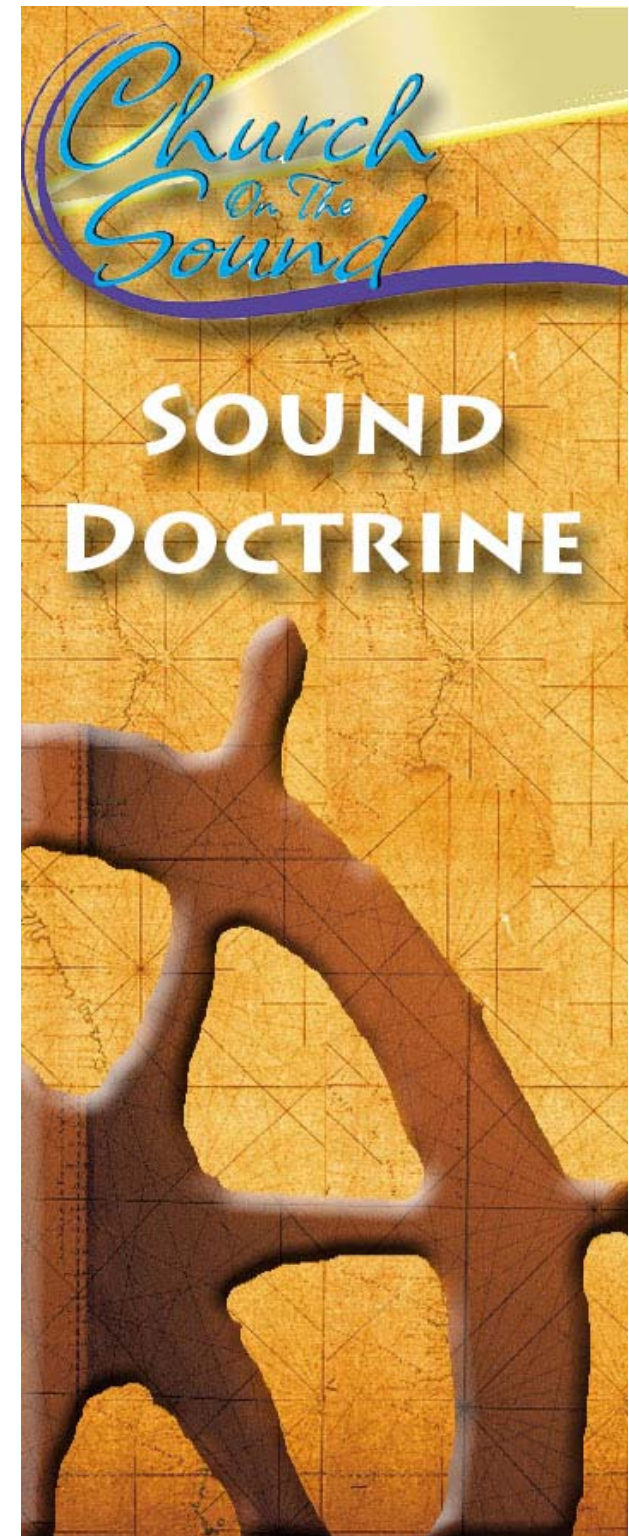
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SOUND DOCTRINE

Trying to live the Christian life without the guidance of certain fundamental doctrines is like going to sea without charts. The charts do not make the ocean any more or less real, just as doctrines do not make our experiences with God any more or less real. But the charts will get us somewhere instead of leaving us marooned in the waves and tides of the sea.

In much the same manner as we got our sea charts, many wise and thoughtful people, after carefully examining the Holy Scriptures and the experiences of millions of believers, wrote down statements which explain the Christian faith. These become Christian Doctrines. They are the basis of our beliefs, and they help us make sense out of our experiences.

Of course, many Christians have disagreed through the years about doctrines, so much so that there now exists a variety of Christian churches. Given this multitude of denominations and fellowships, and Jesus' prayer for unity, it is incumbent on us to practice tolerance toward one another. Despite our differences, all those who truly claim the name *Christian* commonly agree that:

1. There is an eternal God Who reveals Himself in three Persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit);
2. The man Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
3. Jesus died, was buried, and raised to life again;
4. Those who believe on Christ and who follow His teachings will be forgiven of their sin and will receive the gift of eternal life.

This is a fine starting place, but it is no place to stay, for there are many other issues which arise as we examine our faith and practice. The following statements address many of those issues:

✦ INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Bible is uniquely God-inspired, without error, and the final authority on all matters on which it bears. The purpose of these inspired the writings of The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, is to reveal God to us to show us how to live. (II Timothy 3:15-17; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Peter 1:21)

✦ TRINITY

There is one true God existing eternally in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, -- each possessing the attributes of deity. (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 43:10-11; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22; John 1:1, 14)

✦ THE HUMAN CONDITION

God created humans to have fellowship with Him, but by free choice they disobeyed and defied God by sinfully going their own way. As a result, they brought sin and death into the world. Therefore we need God's saving grace to end our alienation from Him. Salvation comes only through God's saving grace — not human effort — and must be received personally by repentance and faith. (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-19)

✦ SALVATION THROUGH JESUS

Jesus Christ, second Person of the Trinity, lived a sinless life on earth and voluntarily

paid for our sin by dying on the cross as our substitute. This accomplishes salvation for all who receive grace by trusting in Him alone. He rose from the dead and is the only mediator between us and God. (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7)

✦ THE CHURCH

All believers in Christ are molded together by the Holy Spirit to form His Body, the Church. While there are many local expressions, there is ONE church. Jesus Christ is the Foundation and the Head of the Church. The Church is His witness to the world. (Ephesians 2:19-22; I Corinthians 12:13; Acts 1:8)

✦ CHURCH ORDINANCES

Jesus Christ taught His disciples two distinct observances. Water baptism is a declaration by a person of their faith in Jesus. Communion is a remembrance of the substitutionary death of Jesus for our sins. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; Romans 6:4; I Corinthians 11:26; II Peter 1:4)

✦ SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

We affirm that every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. (John 3:5, I Corinthians 12:3) The "baptism in the Spirit" is an additional impartation which may be subsequent to regeneration. (see Acts 8:15-17 and 19:1-6) This gift is presently available to all who believe (Acts 2:38-39), but is not essential for salvation or regeneration. This baptism is usually accompanied by the gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, etc. The purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to impart spiritual power to the believer to be a witness (Acts 1:8, 5:32).
