

I. Creationistic

We Believe the literal rendering of the Creation Story as put forth in Genesis Chapters One and Two. *In 6 (literal, 24 hour) days God created the Physical Heavens and Earth and all that they contain and He rested on the Seventh Day. (Exodus 20:11)*

We believe that the Bible refutes evolution and teaches Special Creation by the One and Only, Personal, True and Living Creator God, the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We, also, believe that the Bible clearly teaches a Young Earth and a Young Physical Universe.

II. We are a Protestant Reformation - Bible Church

We seek to follow, obey, believe in, live according to, and practice that which is **ONLY** found in the Holy Scriptures of the 66 books of the Holy Bible, as a local church family, together. If Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and His apostles believed in and/or practiced something that is applicable to the New Testament believer, then we should follow and/or believe in and/or practice that, as well. Thus, if a certain teaching, doctrine, belief, and/or practice **is found** in the Bible, and it is **applicable** for the New Testament follower/disciple/believer of Jesus Christ, we will seek to follow it, as God's Holy Spirit leads us. In contrast, if something has its origins **NOT** in the Bible, but it has **clear roots in paganistic and/or idolatrous beliefs and/or practices**, and it has clearly been shown to be thus, in truth, then we, as a church family corporately and within any of our various ministry aspects, will seek to not participate in, believe in, and/or to celebrate "it" according to that or those beliefs and/or practices. Since there are no commands, principles or patterns within the entire Bible in which we are shown to "Christianize" paganistic beliefs and practices, we choose to follow God's Word in this regard, completely. Although, as an individual, each "believer" must follow the dictates of his/her own conscious before God according to His Word, and is thus individually accountable to Him... as a corporate local church family, those kinds of paganistic-rooted practices and/or beliefs we will **NOT** follow or practice, together, as a local church family ministry. This sentiment is what led to the Protestant Reformation movement, and central to that movement was the loud cry, "**SOLA SCRIPTURA**", which means, **SCRIPTURE ONLY!** Which implies that we will follow and obey **ONLY** that which is **written within the pages of Holy Scripture...** we are **NOT** called by God to follow and obey any Human traditions, myths, or fairy tales, etc. that might claim to be "Christian". Therefore, we will seek to apply God's lovingkindness, mercy, grace, understanding, and wisdom, without judgment or condemnation as we seek to **obey God fully** according to His Holy Word, without compromising His Word in the process. We will also seek to **NOT** become "**legalistic**" in what we do and how we do it. We will simply seek to obey God's Word. We are also aligned with the **Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals**.

III. We are a Family-Integrated - Local Church Family

As a biblically-based, family-integrated, local church family, we seek to pursue the following objectives and goals:

1. Proclaim the **sufficiency of scripture** for church and family life
2. Promote the **centrality of the church in God's plan for families**
3. Recover the biblical doctrines of **manhood and womanhood** in church, family and civil life
4. Identify the marks of worldliness in church and family in the 21st century
5. Explain the complimentary roles of church and family
6. Facilitate church planting and relationship building worldwide
7. Communicate the biblical doctrine of the family
8. Restore the biblical pattern of age integrated, family integrated worship, discipleship and evangelism

IV. Leadership Distinctives

We believe in the biblical model of local church leadership as shepherding overseers. We believe, based upon God's Word, that the normal pattern for shepherding oversight leadership is plural overseers. This leadership team is lead by God's Spirit, according to His Word, for the glory of Christ, and for the overall spiritual health of our local church family. We believe each local church family should have such a leadership team, as described in the New Testament documents. We believe that God calls various men who fit the criteria laid out in **1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 13:1-3; 20:28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:17-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; James 3:1; and Hebrews 13:7,17**. Shepherding-Overseers (or "elders") are to oversee the overall church family and her ministries. Typically, they are not to be involved in all the "nitty-gritty" details of every aspect of every facet of our local church's ministries. They are to "oversee", provide overall oversight, to provide doctrinal protection, and to provide overall ministry direction per the vision, purposes, and mission God has given to us (*i.e. to keep us on track toward the goals God has set for us, etc...*). As God raises up more ministry team leadership, the elders will help to provide training and equipping, as necessary, for ministry team leadership development. Delegation within the context of ministry is very important, and therefore that is, also, one aspect of the overall duties and responsibilities of the elder team. For more on what we look for in a godly, servant-hearted, humble, loving, wise, and

truthful man as a possible candidate of being an elder on the team, please view the following **document** (please **CLICK HERE** to view it [in PDF document format]).

Although it may be true that at first many of the local church families that were planted in the early parts in the book of Acts seemed to not have an eldership leadership team, it seems that Paul the apostle, later, made sure that godly men were in leadership over those churches, eventually. It seems to be the biblical normal pattern for local church family leadership, multiple elders, not just one pastor (one “shepherding-elder”).

Within our eldership leadership team (*elders*), the **Lead Pastor-Teacher** (*pastor*) has a specific role. Not only is he one of the elders, but he is given charge for the overall leadership direction of the team, as well as for the church family. He is in charge of “*leading the charge*”, so to speak, regarding the overall vision, mission, purposes, and direction of the overall ministry of our local church family. Although the pastor, as each of the other elders, has individually submitted to the local church family and to each other on the eldership leadership team for each others’ spiritual accountability to grow in the Grace and Knowledge of Jesus Christ, to live a humble, godly, and servant-hearted life, to have solid godly marriages and family lives in seeking to raise our children in a godly manner, etc... the *pastor* has a specific role of being the leading facilitator on the elder team. But, he is not surrounding himself with “YES-MEN”... that is not the point here. The pastor is given charge of overall team leadership to *facilitate* the other elders to lead the overall church ministry, together. The pastor’s role on the team is more of a “*lead facilitator*” and “*leadership developer*”, to provide shepherding care to his fellow elders, as well. The pastor does not “*call all the shots*”, as some may think, but has been given overall visional and directional leadership charge over the local church family, and the rest of the elders will work together with him to help to fulfill that vision and direction in leading the church, the pastor along with the elders, together, as a team, on the same page, following our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the overall HEAD of our local church family.

All of the elders on the eldership leadership team, including the Lead Pastor-Teacher, are first and foremost accountable to God, secondly to their wives respectively (as applicable), then to each other, and then to the local church family. The eldership leadership team is not above God’s Laws and “rules of the game” as displayed in the New Testament (1 Timothy 5:17-20; Matt. 18:15-17; Luke 17:3-4).

EXPECTATIONS...

There are many **false, unholy, unreal, and unbiblical expectations** for pastors, elders, and others who are in some sort of leadership capacity within a local church. One expectation is that the pastor must be the best friend of every member of the church he oversees... or at least, a friend in some way to everyone, etc. Of course this is completely unreal and unbiblical. Another false, unholy, unreal, and unbiblical expectation is that the “pastor” must visit every member in their homes, not to teach, but just to *“hang out” (of course, he must “invite” himself into their home)*. Again, there are no examples of this in Scripture. And still another false expectation, is that the pastor is to do the bulk of all the ministry and supply any kind of leadership to all ministries, etc... (and the rest of the congregation just sits back and “judges” his performance and preaching, etc...) Of course, these are all “traditional” expectations of many “traditional” church-goers of many churches across our nation. But these are **NOT biblical expectation NOR** are they **biblical mandates** for pastoral-related leadership of any capacity in any local church. The following **LEADERSHIP MODEL** is based, strictly, upon the biblical precepts, principles, and patterns found in Holy Scripture. These **principles** are what **we will follow** regarding leadership within our local church family.

As our ministry grows, as God provides, directs, and allows (for His Glory and Pleasure), we will seek to always follow the **“Jethro Principle”** and **“SPAN of CARE” Principle** in all that we do (for more of these principles please see **Exodus 18:13-27**; **Deuteronomy 1:9-18**; **Matthew 11:28-30**; **Galatians 6:1-5**; and **1 Peter 2:9**). [Please **CLICK HERE** to see a **“visual” illustration** of these overall principles]

The **“Jethro Principle”** espouses a **framework-model of leadership**: leaders over **“10’s”, “50’s”, “100’s”,** and **“1,000’s”**. This **godly, wise** and **servant-hearted framework of leadership** fits well within the **ministry team leadership needs** of a **New Testament-based local church family**. These **biblically-based** principles teach that the eldership leadership team **cannot** and **should not DIRECTLY** lead all areas of ministry, nor should they lead all aspects of every ministry, etc. **Ministry Team Leaders** need to be prayerfully raised up and biblically trained and equipped to cover various **specific** ministry teams of our local church family’s ministries (per the examples and criteria found in **Acts 6:1-7** & **1 Timothy 3:8-13**). Each level of leadership needs to be cared for and “covered” by the level above them. Thus a **“leader of 10’s”** would have some care and oversight by a **“leader of 50’s”**, and so on... all the way up the various levels of this framework... and then the **overall oversight** would

rest with the **eldership team**, who would **oversee** the overall **ministry team leadership system**. Thus, in this way, we will follow the **“Jethro Principle”** in our ministry team leadership development and placement process. Please **CLICK HERE** to read a great online article that explains this concept more clearly and with better detail.

The **“SPAN of CARE”** Principle is based upon the **“Jethro Principle”** but adds *the Body-Life Ministry principles* found in **Matthew 11:28-30** & **Galatians 6:1-5**. Also seeing the overall ministry thrust of **1 Peter 2:9** (every believer is a **“minister”** - the **“priesthood of the believer”**) and overall ministry principles found in Romans chapter 12, as well, we can confidently explain this **“principle”**: *each disciple of Jesus Christ needs to receive care and love within his/her local church family. And, each disciple of Jesus Christ needs to care for others within his/her local church family. Although, each disciple needs to care for others, he/she should NOT care for too many* (see **Matthew 11:28-30**). The following is a great link that explains this concept a bit clearer (please **CLICK HERE**).

V. Eschatological Distinctives

We believe in the Pre-Millennial Return of Christ, and tend to lean toward the view of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture scenario (**1 Thes. 4:13-18**). Since these doctrinal concepts relate to future events, and do not relate to the assurance of our salvation, or to the process of sanctification, we do not want to put up a barrier with those who hold to "Mid-Trib" or "Post-Trib" rapture "scenarios". As long as a person holds to a real, Pre-Millennial return of Christ, it is enough. We can agree to disagree on this subject and still pursue Ministry together.

VI. Concerning the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and The Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

A. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

We believe that this **TERM**, Biblically, relates to what happens at the point of **Salvation** by Jesus through His Spirit in which the Power of Salvation is given to a person who is being Born-Again and that New Believer is being placed into Christ's World-Wide Body of Believers, the Church.

According to **1 Corinthians 12:13**, "ALL" Christians have had this from the point of salvation. This **“experience”** is **NOT** another distinct work of the Holy Spirit separate from the Salvation Experience, nor is it a Second Work of Grace.

According to this [1 Corinthians 12:13](#), this "BAPTISM" concerns the Salvation Experience while focusing in on the aspect of Being Baptized into the Body of Christ. We believe this TERM "the Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is just similar to the terms of "Born of the Spirit" or being "Born Again." We believe this is just another term about the Salvation Experience, but in this case it has its Focus on Body Placement. From the earliest Church Fathers during the Apostolic ages, this was the view. It is not until around the 17th Century that something about a "Second Work" of the Holy Spirit was even discussed in any recorded writings.

[Romans 1:16](#) says ". . . the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile (Greek)." This is the "Power from on High" Jesus was referring to in [Luke 24:49](#) and in [Acts 1:5,8](#). In [Colossians 2:10](#) it states that in Christ we have been made complete. We do not need to look for some new experience or new blast or some new "spiritual" event after we are saved.

According to [2 Peter 3:18](#), WE are to ". . . grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..." We are to grow. We are not to look for new events and new experiences. We are to experience Him. We believe that all believers should live the Spirit-Filled Christian Life as shown in [Galatians 5:22-26](#) and [Ephesians 5:18-21](#), in full surrender to the LORDship of Jesus Christ. We believe that a Christian should ask the Lord every day to FILL him or her with His Holy Spirit. We believe this should be the normal way of Life for the Christian Believer.

[We have a Reference Link to a Research Paper on this Subject] and/or you can [download](#) Andy's "Position Paper" on this.

B. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Although, based upon the clear written Word of God, the Bible, we believe in the continuity, perpetuity, and necessity of ALL of the gifts of the Holy Spirit **according to the biblical parameters** as set forth in [Romans 12](#); [1 Corinthians 12, 13, & 14](#); and [1 Peter 4:7-11](#), and that we believe that once a person is "born again" by Jesus Christ, that person is gifted by the Holy Spirit ([Eph.1:13-14](#); [Eph. 4:30](#); [1 Cor. 12:1-3](#); [Rom. 10:8-13](#))... we would **NOT** consider ourselves Pentecostal nor Charismatic. We do not focus on the modern-day version of the "Charismatic" gifts in our worship services nor in any of our small groups or in any aspect of any of our ministries. We focus only on the God of the Bible, on Jesus Christ as our God, King, Lord, and Savior, and on learning, applying and obeying God's Holy Word, the Bible. We do not focus on nor seek to "publicly" display any "modern-day" charismatic / pentecostal related "sign gifts", which may lead to confusion and/or to a "circus-like" atmosphere. We understand that this subject may be very controversial and confusing. Thus, we tend to stay in the Biblical "Middle of the Road" regarding these issues.

Since, every born again disciple of Jesus Christ receives a gift or some gifts from God's Holy Spirit at the moment of New Birth in Christ, we believe that growth and maturity of the believer will help him/her become more effective in building up and encouraging others in the faith, according to that gift (or those gifts). In fact, since the "Gift Giver" (i.e. God's Holy Spirit) indwells the believer, the Holy Spirit can give that believer any "spiritual gift" He wants to, as the need arises, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. God's Spirit can do this for the sake of the Name of Jesus Christ, because He is sovereign. But it seems, in most cases, God gives His spiritual gifts to His children that fit them and where they are in the Body of Christ, at the time, according to the ministry He wants them to have.

Based upon the text of Holy Scripture, we cannot, hermeneutically, come to the conclusion that some of the Spiritual Gifts stopped existing or stopped being necessary in the Church when the "Apostolic Age" came to an end. We know that many have abused, faked, and even perverted certain gifts for their own personal glory. This does not mean that God doesn't use them today in the Body. We believe from the plain teaching of Scripture, the gifts are to be used in a **proper, Biblical, and edifying** way, so as to **not bring glory to oneself, but to build up others** in the Body of Christ in their Most Holy Faith. They **must** be used according to the **Biblical parameters and restrictions as set forth in Scripture**. We do not believe that any so-called "gift" should be exercised in such a way that it would be disruptive or cause disorder in any service, bible study, or any group setting that we may have.

There are those who have used **1 Corinthians 13:8-12**, and especially verse 10 - *"but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away"* - as the basis, Scripturally, to prove that certain "sign" gifts have ceased at the end of the "Apostolic Age" or at least when the canon of Scripture was finalized in the 4th Century A.D. But as one reads the verses within this section, verses 8-12, verse 12 states, *"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known."* As I have read this, in context with the rest of the passage, it gives the sense of Christ's imminent return, not the completion of the canon of Scripture. I know this, because now, we (real, genuine, born again believers in Christ) still see in a glass or mirror dimly... but we are looking forward to seeing Him face to face and to be fully known and to know Him fully, in that Day, that final Day (see **1 John 3:1-3**). Thus, exegetically, I cannot use **1 Corinthians 13:8-12** as a "proof" text to prove that certain spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit gave to the church have ceased. I would have to employ some exegetical gymnastics to accomplish this. Although there are very brilliant and loving born again Christian leaders and pastors who may hold to a "cessasionist" stance from these verses, we do not and cannot based upon our literal-grammatical-contextual-historical approach to studying the Bible.

It might be pointed out, though, that throughout Christian history, since the day of Pentecost, that certain "sign gifts", including "tongues" can be shown to have decreased in frequency in many cultures where Christianity has flourished. Many of my teachers at Biola University were missionaries, who held to a "cessationistic" stance regarding certain gifts, prior to going out to the mission field. A few explained to me that some of the new believers in some of the unreached areas on the foreign mission field where they went, experienced many of the kinds of things we see in the Book of Acts in the Bible. In these brand-new areas, where the gospel has never been planted before, the miraculous was experienced in the founding of many churches. But, as time went on, and disciples were growing, multiplying and learning God's Word, those kinds of miraculous things seemed to wane and fade into the background while evangelism, discipleship, and spiritual growth came to the forefront in ministry. It was an "eye-opener" for many of my teachers. This same kind of pattern is even seen from within the pages of the Book of Acts: lots of miracles to begin with and at the end of the book, teaching and spreading the gospel, even in chains, but not much miraculous.

One can also observe, that this topic ("sign gifts" and "tongues") is taken up at length **ONLY** in the book of **First Corinthians**, and not in any of the other apostolic epistles. It **could** be that Corinth experienced many of these gifts for quite a while after their founding due to the fact that they were literally in the cultural and linguistic crossroads (and sea ways) of many cultures. The city of **Corinth** of the apostle Paul's day could be compared to a **blending** of **San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York city, Reno, and Las Vegas...** and we might throw in **New Delhi** while we are at it. It was the polytheistic, metropolitan, and **morally decadent** "Mecca" of the Greco-Roman world of that time. Corinth was well ahead of many cities during her age. There was so much commerce and shipping going through the city, wealth literally was dropped in their lap. With this background, it makes perfect sense that the miraculous, especially the **linguistic miraculous** sustained some time there. It was a **multi-cultural / multi-linguistic society**, and thus, God's Word and the Gospel needed to be spoken to all who passed by, and God made sure that the believers there were well equipped for the task. Yet, as Paul taught in First Corinthians chapters 12 through 14, **the GIFTS that God gave should have been used for SERVICE and EDIFICATION NOT for "Self Glorification."** The confusion that **selfishness** caused was what Paul was **addressing**. Thus, in the other epistles, such as Ephesians, Philippians, Romans, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, the **"sign gifts"** were **not** addressed. It seems those regions had a more **stable linguistic base** of population. *This is my honest opinion based upon a lot of research and prayer.*

Therefore, while we believe that the Scriptures do **not** teach that certain gifts have ceased, the Scriptures seem to **indicate** that use of these gifts **vary** according to the **need** that each gift meets, and the **"sets of gifts"** within believers may differ from church to church, region to region and within various time periods of church history. **Therefore**, we do **not encourage nor** do we **focus** on the use of "sign" or "miraculous" gifts. **Instead**, we seek to **emphasize** the more excellent way of love as well as **zeal** for the more edifying gifts as His Holy Spirit provides, according to **His Will** (John 16:8-15; Titus

3:5; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; Romans 8:9-17; 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-5, 12:11-13, 12:19; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 4:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12)

Special Note: Regarding this issue (i.e.: **“the gifts of the Spirit”**), many modern denominations, church movements, etc... seem to have misinterpreted and/or misapplied many passages containing "supposed" biblical concepts regarding **“the gifts of the Holy Spirit”**. Today, there are teachings in the so-called modern-day **“tongues movement”** that teach that believers **MUST HAVE, SHOULD SEEK EARNESTLY**, and **MUST DEVELOP** a **“SPECIAL PRAYER LANGUAGE”**, that one should seek to **“PRAY in TONGUES”**, and/or that one should seek to be **TRAINED** to **LEARN HOW TO** "speak in tongues", etc. Also, some hold to **“speaking in the tongues of Angels”** (From the actual words in the original language of the New Testament Scriptures, the words *“glossa”* and *“dialektos”* refer to real, human, spoken languages and dialects.). We **COMPLETELY disagree** with these kinds of **“newer”** and **false teachings**. Although we believe that "the gift of tongues" and "the interpretation of tongues" may still exist in the Body of Christ today, based upon clear Scripture... we hold to the Scriptural **restrictions, parameters** and teachings, **properly interpreted** as set forth in the book of **First Corinthians, chapters 12 through 14**, and other related Scriptural passages in the Holy Bible. There are, also, **movements** within these *“camps”* that purport and support the practice of **“being slain in the Spirit”**, **“barking like dogs”**, **“roaring like lions”**, **“holy laughter”**, and rolling on the floor in **“Holy Ecstasy”**, etc. We believe that these kinds of beliefs and practices are **NOT** found in the record of Scripture, and they **cannot** be found historically occurring in the Body of Christ within the first 100 years following Pentecost. Thus, we **reject** these kinds of behaviors, practices, and beliefs that have gone beyond the bounds of the record of Scripture and have formed, in essence, **new doctrines** and **new doctrinal practices**. According to **Jude 1:3**, we **“need to EARNESTLY CONTEND for The FAITH, ONCE FOR ALL, delivered unto the saints...”** This means that after John the Apostle died (the last living Apostle of Jesus Christ), there are **no more** "global"-Christian revelations on par with Holy Scripture, such as what is found in the Bible. There will be **NO MORE New Doctrines, NO MORE New Doctrinal Practices**. Yes, it is true, that for an individual, a local group, or a local church regarding a certain situation, God may "reveal" direction or wisdom regarding that specific situation, but it would **NOT** be **New Doctrine** for all Christians world-wide and for all ages, etc. (see **James 1:5-8**). And we also, **reject** the **false doctrinal belief system** of the **“Word of Faith Movement”** in every way, shape, or form. This **Special Note** is **NOT** about individuals, **BUT IT IS** about **Belief Systems** that some may hold. Based up **Ephesians 4:11-16**, and especially verse **14**: **“As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming...”** - the **pastoral elders** of any church are **charged** with the **responsibility** to **hold to and teach SOUND and PURE doctrine** that is **healthy** for the Body of Christ so that the "saints" are **equipped...** so that the "saints" can **serve and obey** God **without false doctrine** being a part of "the mix", like the **leaven** of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (**Matthew 16:6; 1 Timothy 4:6-16; 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16,17; 4:1-4; Titus 1:9-2:1; 2:7,8; 1 Peter 5:1-4**).

Therefore, within this, sometimes, controversial discussion, we seek **Scriptural sanity and balance**. We do not want to *“throw the baby out with the bathwater”* and **NOR** do we want to *“just believe everything about anything.”* We must **DISCERN** it all based on the clear teaching of Holy Scripture. And that is where we will leave this discussion.