

CHRIST'S MERCY CHURCH - DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

"In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty..."

The Bible

The Bible was written by men who were inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is authoritative, true and sufficient for our lives as believers. However, the Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to a personal encounter with God.

God

We believe in one God who is infinite and perfect, existing and expressed in three persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three existing eternally and equally as one. The trinity is a practical expression of how God has and does exist and act within human history.

Jesus Christ

Jesus is the son of God, and both fully human and fully divine. He was a real person who died on a Roman cross as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. By his death, he paid for mankind's debt and made a way for us to restore our relationship with God. Three days after his death, he resurrected and is alive today. Because of his sacrifice and power displayed in his resurrection, we proclaim him as our Lord.

The Church

The Church is God's new covenant people, formed by submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the filling of the Holy Spirit. God has done away with the old barriers and created a new people, the Church, to bring his Kingdom on earth. We are saved into a personal relationship with God, but also in a new community, the family of God, which is the Church. Thus, every believer is called to be apart of the Church and involved in a local church, for we are not called to live the life of faith alone. To do so is to disobey God's word and purpose for our lives.

Mankind

Mankind was created in the divine image of God, which was marred once sin entered the world through mankind. Thus, mankind is fallen and needs God's grace, which is provided through Christ, to restore their relationship with God. God's mission is to "recreate" mankind, starting with individuals, back into his divine image. This salvation only comes through faith in Jesus Christ, and not by works. However, authentic faith will produce genuine change in the individual's life. These are the fruits and results of salvation, not the requirements for it.

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. After Jesus' death, Christ sent the Holy Spirit to infill believers. A person cannot be a Christian without the Holy Spirit, for that is what constitutes a Christian. Therefore, when a person repents and gives their life to Christ, they will receive the Holy Spirit.

*However, Christians can neglect the Spirit, through sin and/or simply not abiding in Christ, thus growing dull in their faith and not experiencing the power of God in their lives. There are times after salvation where a person can be "filled with the Spirit" in order to live in holiness, edify others and perform the work of the Gospel. While this can be evidenced by spiritual gifts, such as tongues, it is not necessary nor normative. We do not deny later and repeatable fillings

and equipping (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; Eph 5:18), but there is only one initial spiritual baptism into Christ in which believers identify with Jesus' death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12)

Spiritual Gifts

The spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament are still in operation today, and are intended by God to edify believers, meet people's needs, and further the gospel of Jesus Christ. The public exercise of spiritual gifts should be done in an orderly fashion, as defined in scripture, that does not inhibit the growth of others (1st. Cor. 12:7-11, 14:1-40). There is no hierarchy of gifts.

Baptism

We believe in full immersion baptism of believers. Baptism is not the mechanism for salvation, but a faith event, which symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of the believer as he or she identifies with Christ's own experience (Rom. 6:7-9; Col. 2:12).

Baptism was an example set by Jesus (Matt. 3:13-18), commanded by Jesus (Matt. 28:19), and continually taught by the early Church to show forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16) and union with Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). Baptism was also required for membership in church (1st Cor. 12:13); the New Testament knew nothing of unbaptized believers. Thus, all believers should be baptized after their repentance and confession of faith to his lordship. If we do not we disobey the command of Christ, showing a lack of true repentance and submission to his lordship.

Communion

Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is a symbolic reminder of Jesus' suffering and death for us on the cross. As we partake of the bread and wine (or juice), we show that we accept Jesus' sacrifice for us and commit to follow him with our lives. Communion is to be taken by all members of the Church (as a whole, not just Christ's Mercy), and because we do not define who constitutes God's entire Church, we allow all to partake in communion according to their own conscience. In taking communion, we also show that we unite with the rest of God's family to live and die for our King, as he lived and died for us.

DENOMINATION

We like to say we are an "open-minded" Baptist Church. We acknowledge that Baptist' do not have a flawless record. In some cases, Baptist' can be legalistic and dull to the Holy Spirit's work. We know we aren't perfect, but we also want to clarify that we don't care what color the carpet is or the order of the chairs in our Sanctuary. Also, we completely believe in the Holy Spirit's power that can be evidenced today in every believer's life. So then, why be apart of a denomination at all? Here's our reasons:

1. **Support With Independence** - We don't want to be a solo Church plant without connection to other bodies of believers. While we don't limit it to only Baptist Churches, being apart of the Baptist denomination provides us with an immense support system to help us continue moving forward in who we believe God has called us to be. We particularly favor the Baptist denomination because it is founded on each Church having independence and free-will. Thus, while we can receive support when needed, we aren't forced to believe or act a certain way to be apart of the denomination. This gives us some sort of security, while not removing any of our liberty.

2. **Missions** - The Baptist denomination has long championed missions across the world. By being apart of the Baptist denomination, we contribute to the Cooperative Program. The Cooperative Program pulls funds together from Churches all over the world to support various mission programs. Only 2.9% of the Cooperative Program goes to operating costs, while the rest funds missions and theological training across the world. We are happy to be apart of the largest world-wide mission program.
3. **Clarity** - Being Baptist brings a sense of clarity into our belief system. Baptist Churches all over have different beliefs and we would disagree with some beliefs typically associated with Baptist. However, being Baptist provides a general framework for our core belief system, with a few twists. We believe that it confirms our strong foundation on God's word and our pursuit to hold to his standards for our Church.