

## STATEMENT ON WORSHIP

The Lord's Day worship is our highest privilege, our greatest duty, and our deepest joy.<sup>1</sup> God has created us for just this purpose: to worship Him, and to be transformed by Him as we worship.<sup>2</sup>

That in worship the people of God are engaged by the Spirit and drawn into the Father's presence as living sacrifices in union with the Risen Christ.<sup>3</sup> In Lord's Day worship, God renews His covenant relationship with His people by serving them and them serving Him.<sup>4</sup> He draws near to us to draw us near to Him.<sup>5</sup>

That in Lord's Day worship, we are gathered together in the presence of the living God among a glorious assembly consisting of angels, the church militant on earth, and the church triumphant in heaven.<sup>6</sup>

That each week in worship, through the Lord's service to us and our service to Him, our Triune Creator and Redeemer gives us the covenant gifts of glory, knowledge, and life, in and through the assurance of our forgiveness, the preaching of the Word, and the partaking of the Lord's Supper.<sup>7</sup> While bestowing these gifts upon us in worship, at the same time, He graciously accepts our praise and thanksgiving of Him.<sup>8</sup> In re-orienting us around His covenant,<sup>9</sup> He empowers and calls us to live in terms of His new creation.<sup>10</sup>

That God uses our worship to change us and the world.<sup>11</sup> We are transformed by the grace of God's presence,<sup>12</sup> and leave worship with a renewed sense of, and commitment to, mission,<sup>13</sup> discipleship,<sup>14</sup> and community.<sup>15</sup> Biblical worship results in changed lives, Spirit-empowerment, and impacts the world for Christ. Furthermore, God is pleased to hear and answer our prayers, particularly those that ascend in the Lord's Day worship of the Church.<sup>16</sup> He hears our prayers for the nations and in answering us makes manifest His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.<sup>17</sup>

That worship should be informed and governed by the Bible in its entirety.<sup>18</sup> In constructing our liturgies, we are to pay particular attention to those portions of God's Word that are specifically given to inform us of what God desires in worship. These portions include, but are not limited to, descriptions of patriarchal worship, Levitical worship,<sup>19</sup> and Tabernacle of David worship,<sup>20</sup> which all point toward the glorious advent of Jesus Christ, whose self-offering and victorious resurrection accomplished our salvation.<sup>21</sup> This final work of our Savior provides the basis for the resultant transformation of worship spoken of by the Apostles in the New Covenant.<sup>22</sup> We are, of course, prohibited from returning to the practices of animal sacrifices, for this would deny our faith in the perfect and complete sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That these portions of the Bible give us a divine pattern and sequence of worship,<sup>23</sup> and provide us a detailed understanding of the benefits of Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.<sup>24</sup> These benefits include purification from our sins,<sup>25</sup> transformation of our persons,<sup>26</sup> acceptance of our work and tribute,<sup>27</sup> and peace with God and men.<sup>28</sup> Through Biblical worship, the

Lord assures us of the forgiveness of our sins,<sup>29</sup> the Holy Spirit's ongoing work of renewal in our lives,<sup>30</sup> the requirement and acceptability of vocation,<sup>31</sup> and the promise of the increase and maturation of Christian community.<sup>32</sup>

That these portions of the Bible also teach us that each of these glorious aspects of worship are to be set in the context of beautiful music that is maturing in both voice and instrument, to the praise of Christ the King.<sup>33</sup>

That the proper implementation in love of the above requires a practical understanding of all that Scripture teaches, including an understanding of lesser and greater matters, Christian forbearance with our brothers, liberty in worship which is not self-willed, an avoidance of an over-scrupulous zeal, and a desire to maintain a Biblical catholicity as we build on the work of the historic church.<sup>34</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES:

1. Ex. 20:8-11, Heb. 4:9; Heb. 10:25, Deut. 26:10, Ps. 29:2, Ps. 27:4, Ps. 65:4, Ps. 73:25; Heb. 4:16
2. Isa. 43:21; 1Cor. 6:20, Rev. 4:11, Rom. 12:1-2; Jn. 4:23
3. Lam. 3:41; Ps. 25:1; 28:2; Eph. 2:12-22, Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 12:18-25; Heb. 8:5; Rev. 4:1
4. Is. 66:20-22, Lk. 22:19; Lev. 1-5
5. Deut. 4:7; Rev. 3:20, Ex. 24:12; 2 Cor. 6:16b-18; Heb. 10:19 with Heb. 9:11,12
6. Rev. 9-12, Heb. 12:22-24, Eph. 2:6
7. Rom. 3:23; 8:30; Jn. 17:22; Rom. 1:21-23; Jn. 17:17; Jn. 17:2,3; Ro. 2:7-10; 1Jn. 2:20, 27; Ps. 115, Rev. 21:11, Jn. 6:53-58, 1Pet. 1:23
8. Ps. 51:17, Ezek. 20:40-41
9. Ps. 50:5; Mt. 26:28; Heb 8:6; 12:24
10. Mt. 28:16-20; Jn. 20:19-23
11. Ps. 22:25-27, Gen. 22:9-18
12. Rom. 12:1,2; 2 Cor. 3:18
13. Mt. 28:19a
14. Mt. 28:19b, 20a
15. Is. 55:12, Rom. 15:13-14; Mt. 28:20b
16. 1Kg. 8:26-53, Mt. 18:19-20; Rev. 8:3-6
17. Mt. 9:38, Mt. 6:9-10
18. 2 Tim 3:16-17; Isa. 8:20; Ex. 20:4-6; Heb. 8:5
19. Lev. 1-7
20. 1 Chr. 16:1 ff; 1 Chr. 25; 2 Sam. 6; 2 Chr. 15:14,15; 23:18; 29:25-30; 35:15; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:45,46; Acts 15:16,17
21. Jn. 1:29; 1Cor. 5:7; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 9:11-14
22. Acts 15:16,17; Heb. 7:12, Heb. 8:5; 10:19-22; 9:23, 24
23. Lev. 9:22
24. Jn. 1:29
25. Lev. 4,5; Heb. 9:26; 10:12

26. Lev 1; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 4:16; Gal. 6:15
27. Lev. 2; Eccl. 9:7
28. Lev. 3; Rom. 5:1
29. Lev. 4,5; Col. 1:14
30. Lev. 1; Rom. 12:1,2
31. Lev. 2; 2 Thess. 3:10-12; Rom. 15:27; 1 Cor. 9:13,14
32. Lev. 3; 1 Cor. 10:17; Eph. 4:11-13; Jn. 17:20
33. 1 Chr. 15:16, 25:6,7; Ps. 98:4-6; 144:9; 150; Rev. 5:8; 14:2,3; 15:2,3
34. Col. 3:16, Eph. 5:2