

Gary Scott Smith – Statement of Faith

I believe in the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three persons of the Trinity are eternal, infinite, and all-powerful. They are distinct but share the same essential nature and are equal in power. The Father created and sustains the world. He is sovereign over all things and directs the course of events. All His plans and purposes will be accomplished.

Jesus, the Son, is the incarnate Word of God through whom all things were created. Born of the virgin Mary, Jesus was fully God and fully man. He lived a perfect life and died on the cross to atone for humanity's sin and to reconcile us to the Father. Jesus rose bodily from the grave and after 40 days of testimony ascended to the Father. He will come again someday, which will end history, bring the final judgment, and lead to a new heaven and earth. The Holy Spirit, poured out on the church at Pentecost, convicts people of their sin, effects our new birth, dwells in the hearts of Christians, works in us to promote our sanctification, and empowers us for service.

The Bible is the inspired, infallible, authoritative record of God's self-disclosure to humanity. Every biblical passage should be interpreted in light of its context and purpose. Christians should study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to our lives.

God created men and women in His own image and likeness to have fellowship with Him, which gives us immense value. However, people rebelled against God and became estranged from Him. In our fallen state, we are sinful and unable to turn to God. Our depravity affects our intellect, will, and affections.

Jesus accomplished our salvation by His substitutionary death on the cross. He took our place satisfied the demands of God's justice to reconcile us with the Father. Salvation is God's free gift, provided solely by His grace, which we receive by faith. Those who confess their sins and accept Christ as their savior are declared righteous by God and receive the gift of eternal life.

The church is the body of Christ and the principal vehicle for carrying out God's will and purposes on earth. The church's members are called to live in the power of the Holy Spirit, guided by God's authoritative Word. The church should provide opportunities for people to worship God, teach the Scriptures, make disciples, and equip Christians to share the Gospel, minister to people's physical and material needs, and labor to construct a society based on biblical norms.

The church should administer two sacraments—baptism and communion. Baptism initiates individuals into the Christian church. In this sacrament, God promises to pour out His spirit and special blessing on infants, and parents and congregations promise to raise these infants in the Christian faith. Those who were not baptized as infants should be baptized after becoming Christians to demonstrate publicly their faith in Christ. The church should regularly celebrate the Lord's Supper. In communion, the bread represents the breaking of Christ's body for our salvation and the juice symbolizes the shedding of His blood on the cross on our behalf. By partaking frequently in the Lord's Supper, we commemorate Christ's death, receive spiritual nourishment, and demonstrate our unity with other Christians.

Christians have two mandates—an evangelistic commission as stated in Matthew 28:18-20 to proclaim the gospel and make disciples—and a cultural commission as stated in Genesis 1:28 and 2:15 to be fruitful and shape the world's culture and institutions to be consistent with scriptural norms.