PONDEROSA
BIBLE CHURCH

# What We Believe

## The Statement of Faith of Ponderosa Bible Church

## 1. Concerning the Scriptures

We believe in the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, and that it is inspired by God, both verbally (every word) and in its entirety, in its original writings (Second Timothy 3:16-17), and is therefore infallible and inerrant in all matters to which it speaks (Proverbs 30:5-6; John 17:17; Revelation 22:18-19). It was communicated through Spirit-controlled men (Second Peter 1:19-21; Acts 3:21; Hebrews 1:1-3), and is preserved in the totality f the existent manuscripts.

We believe the Bible is the complete revelation of God's will for mankind and is sufficient for all matters pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4) with salvation being its chief end (Second Timothy 3:15; First Peter 1:10-12; John 5:38-39). We believe the Holy Scriptures are the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed and opinions shall be tried, and therefore it should serve as the Christian's supreme and final authority in faith and practice.

## 2. Concerning the True God

We believe that there is only one true and living God (Deuteronomy 6:4,5; Jeremiah 10:10), infinite (Psalms 147:5), eternal (Isaiah 57:15), self-existent (Exodus 3:14), holy (Isaiah 6:1-5), perfect (Matthew 5:48), and spirit (John 4:24). He is a personal being, the creator, sustainer and ruler of the universe (Genesis 1-3; Psalms 2). God is a "Tri-unity", three persons in one Godhead. There is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Matthew 3:16-17; Second Corinthians 3:14; John 1:1; John 5:18; Acts 5:3,4). Each is equal in essence, power, glory, and every divine attribute (John 10:30; John 17:5; Philippians 2:5-6; First Corinthians 8:6), while executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (John 3:16; John 15:26).

## 3. Concerning Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate. He existed from all eternity, and is co-equal with the Father and the Spirit (John 1:1,14; Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17). He took upon himself the form of man when conceived in a miraculous manner by the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-38). From conception, he was one person, possessing two distinct natures: divine and human. He is true God and true man (Matthew 1:22-23). In his earthly ministry he never ceased to be God. He laid aside the

independent use of his divine attributes, yet he did not give up these attributes (Philippians 2:5-7; John 20:28; John 1:48; John 2:9).

He lived a sinless life that was not tainted with human depravity (Second Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; First Peter 1:19), and then died, shedding his blood on the cross, and thus making a vicarious atonement for our sins, and fully satisfying the just demands of a holy and righteous God (First John 2:2). He arose bodily from the dead on the third day and ascended into heaven (Acts 10:38-40; First Corinthians 15:4; Acts 1:9-11) where he now sits at the right hand of the Father, interceding as our High Priest (Hebrews 12:2; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 3:1), and preparing a place for us. We believe there is a future visible, personal, bodily return of Christ when he will come to rapture those who have trusted in him for their salvation, set up the throne of David, and establish his kingdom on earth (Acts 1:11; First Thessalonians 4:13-18). Jesus Christ is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

## 4. Concerning the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune God, equal with the Father and the Son, and, therefore, of the same substance and nature (Matthew 28:19; Second Corinthians 13:14; Acts 5:3-4; Hebrews 9:14; Luke 1:35), and that he was active in the creation of the universe. We believe that He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-9), bears witness to Christ, and to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony (John 15:26; John 16:13), and is the supernatural agent of the new birth (John 3:5; Titus 3:5), baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (First Corinthians 12:13). He seals (Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30), fills (Acts 4:31), guides (Romans 8:14), teaches (John 14:26), witnesses to (John 14:17), sanctifies (John 16:13; John 17:17), aids the believer (Romans 8:26; First Corinthians 12:4-11), and indwells every true child of God empowering them to do the will of God for the glory of God (John 14:17; Ephesians 5:18).

We believe the Holy Spirit sovereignly bestows spiritual gifts on every believer at the time of conversion (Romans 12:3-8; First Corinthians 12:4-13, 28-31), and that these gifts are to be used to serve others through the Body of Christ (First Peter 4:10). God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the local church so that they can do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11,16).

We believe that the sign gifts such as prophecy, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles, and healing were temporary in nature and ceased with the completion

of the Scriptures. We believe that the ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, although God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing (First Corinthians 1:22; 13:8-10; 14:21-22; Hebrews 2:3-4; James 5:14-15; First John 5:14-15).

## 5. Concerning Creation

We believe the Genesis account of creation is a literal, historical account and is not to be understood figuratively nor as an allegory or myth (Genesis 1:1, 2:25; Hebrews 11:3; John 1:3 Colossians 1:16-17; Psalms 33:6-9; Nehemiah 9:6; Revelation 4:11); that the six days of creation in Genesis chapter one, were twenty-four hour solar days (Exodus 20:11; Exodus 31:17); that all animal and vegetable life was made by the direct creative act of God and that they bring forth only "after their kind" in accordance with God's established law, (Genesis 1:11,12,21,24). Man was created in God's image by the direct act of God without any evolutionary process and did not evolve from any previous or lower forms of life (Genesis 1:26; Matthew 19:4). All men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. (Genesis 1, 2; Colossians 1:16-17; John 1:3)

## 6. Concerning Satan

We believe that Satan (the devil) is a literal and personal individual created by God as an angelic being who through pride and rebellion fell from his original estate and became the enemy of God (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:14-17). He is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), man's great tempter, the unholy god of this age, the ruler of all the powers of darkness, and the author of sin. He is a murderer from the beginning, the father of lies, and the accuser of the brethren (John 8:44; Revelation 12:10). There is absolutely no truth in him. He is a deceiver and blinds the minds of men to the end that the light of the gospel and glory of Christ may not dawn upon them (Second Corinthians 4:4). Demons are other angels who sinned and are now Satan's helpers. These evil spirits have the ability to make people sick and try to cause them to disobey God. Christians cannot be possessed by demons but they can be influenced by them. Satan was defeated by Christ on the cross and is destined to an everlasting punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

## 7. Concerning the Fall of Man

We believe that man was originally created in the image of God in innocence and without sin (Genesis 1:27, 31; Ecclesiastes 7:29). The first man, Adam, voluntarily chose to disobey God and thereby sinned, incurring a curse upon himself and the whole of his posterity (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 5:12,15-19; First Corinthians 15:22) so that all humanity is now sinful by state, disposition, and willful act (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:9-18; John 3:5; Galatians 3:22). Each is born with a sinful nature and is thoroughly a sinner in thought, word, and deed. Having sinned, man incurred the punishment of both physical death and spiritual separation from God. He is alienated from God and is utterly unable to remedy his lost condition being totally depraved and spiritually dead (Ephesians 4:18; 2:1,5). He can only obtain salvation and spiritual life through faith in Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 16:31; Titus 3:5).

## 8. Concerning the way of Salvation

We believe that man, because of his sin and lost condition, needs a Savior and cannot get to heaven on his own. Therefore, the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated, wholly of grace, and is made possible only by the substitutionary, atoning death of God's son, Jesus Christ, who having fulfilled all the righteousness of the Law died in the sinner's place (Romans 3:21-26; First Peter 1:18-19; 2:22-24). Only his shed blood and resurrection can provide the ground for our justification before God. This salvation is wholly apart from any works or good deeds performed by man, and is received through genuine repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is a gift from God (Romans 6:23) with both repentance and faith being gifts of God extended to the sinner in grace (Acts 5:31; Ephesians 2:8,9). Those who trust in the finished work of Christ on the cross are born again into the family of God by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, and become the recipients of a new divine nature. They are declared righteous before God on the basis of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them (Second Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:17,19; Philippians 3:9; Romans 3:24-26; 4:22-25; First Corinthians 1:30). Because his salvation is dependent upon God and his promises, the believer's salvation is secure, he himself being sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. He can never be separated from God (Philippians 1:6; Ephesians 4:30; John 10:27-28; First John 2:19; Jude 24-25).

## 9. Concerning the Blessings of Salvation

We believe that each who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ inherits all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3; Romans 8:32). He has a righteous standing before God (Romans 3:24-26; 4:22-25; 5:17-19; Colossians 1:13); forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14), adoption into God's family having been reconciled to God (Galatians 4:5,6; Ephesians 1:5). He is baptized into the universal Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13), and awaits to reign with him in his millennia kingdom, being a joint-heir of the Father's riches (Galatians 4:7; Colossians 1:12; Ephesians 2:7). He is in-dwelt presently by the Holy Spirit who acts as teacher, guide, and intercessor (John 14:16,17; Romans 8:26), and is thereby a partaker of the divine nature (Second Peter 1:4; Romans 8:9), and has access to commune with God through his only High Priest, Jesus Christ (First Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15-16).

## 10. Concerning the Security of the Saints

We believe that every true believer at conversion enters the protective graces of his heavenly Father. His salvation is made eternally secure by the sealing of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13,14; 4:30), and the joint efforts of the Father and the Son (John 10:28,29; First Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:35-39). The quality of salvation being eternal, and immediately received at the time of conversion argues against the view that a believer can lose his salvation. It is the privilege of believers to have a present and continuing assurance through the testimony of God's Word that they possess salvation (First John 5:10-13; John 5:24). Scripture clearly forbids the use of this assurance as a license to sin (Romans 6:1-23; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-14).

## 11. Concerning the Local Church

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head, and all regenerated persons are members. We also believe the Scriptures teach that the visible representation of this Body of Christ is a local church (Matthew 18:17; Acts 5:11) with an organized congregation of believers who have been immersed upon a credible confession of faith in Jesus Christ, having two offices (pastor and deacon), sovereign in polity, and banded together for work, worship, the observance of the ordinances, and the worldwide proclamation of the gospel; governed by God's laws (Ephesians 4:22,23); and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by the Word (Ephesians 4:11; First Corinthians 12:4). The Holy Scriptures clearly outline the qualifications, claims, and

duties of pastors and deacons, and teach that these officers are limited to men only (Acts 6:1-6; First Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

We believe the local church has the power and right within itself to confess its own faith in accordance with the New Testament (First Timothy 3:15; Revelation 2,3); and that each congregation recognizes its own democratic, self-governing structure as its highest authority for carrying out the will of the Lord Jesus Christ (First Timothy 3:1; Matthew 18:15-18; Acts 6:3-5; First Corinthians 5:4,5,13).

We believe the true mission of the local church is to glorify God through fulfilling Christ's Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39) and Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20) in each part, no part being less important than any other in doing so.

We believe the Scriptures teach the following distinctives: the sole authority of the Bible for faith and practice (Second Timothy 3;16,17), the autonomy of the local church (Colossians 1:18), the individual priesthood of every believer (First Peter 2:5,9), two symbolic ordinances – baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41,42), individual sole liberty to determine one's beliefs (Acts 5:29), a saved church membership (Acts 2:47), two offices – pastor and deacon (Philippians 1:1), and the separation of church and state (Mark 12:17).

## 12. Concerning Ecclesiastical Separation

We believe the Scriptures teach the Christian should be separated from all forms of apostasy, heresy, and theological compromise as exemplified in ecclesiastical organizations such as the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the ecumenical charismatic movement, and those who teach contrary to the Word of God and this statement of faith.

We believe Scripture teaches that true believers are to: evaluate all teachings of men to determine their compliance with Scripture, to identify those whose teachings do not conform to the Word of God, to rebuke those who embrace such false teaching, to have no fellowship with them, to withdraw from them, to receive them not, and to separate ourselves from them. We believe ecumenical evangelism which involves apostates violates the principles taught in God's Word (First John 4:1; Romans 16:17; Titus 1:13; Ephesians 5:11; Second Thessalonians 3:6; Second John 10, 11; Second Thessalonians 3:14; Second Corinthians 6:17).

## 13. Concerning Civil Government and Religious Liberty

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of society (Romans 13:1-7); and that those in authority are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed (Matthew 22:21; Titus 3:1; First Peter 2:13,14; First Timothy 2:1-3).

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to him alone in all matters of faith. Each local church is to be an independent entity that is autonomous in nature, and able to decide and govern its own affairs, free from interference by any denominational or political authority. Yet, it is also proper for biblical churches to partner and work together in order to promote the cause of Christ.

Disobedience to civil authority should only come when the civil authority demands action in opposition to the revealed will of God (Acts 4:18-20; 5:29), as the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming King of kings and Lord of lords on the earth (Matthew 23:10; Psalm 2:1-12; 72:11; Romans 14:9-14).

Also, that church and state should be separate (Matthew 22:21); having no ecclesiastical group or denomination being preferred above another by the state; nor imposing taxation for the support of any form of religion; having a free church in a free state being the Christian ideal; each has different functions and is to fulfill its own duties, free from dictation or patronage of the other. (Rom. 13:1-7; Acts 5:28-29; Acts 15:1-35)

## 14. Concerning Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe in two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper, also known as communion. We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion of the believer in water (Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 28:19), done "in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Baptism follows conversion and has no atoning merit (Acts 10:47,48). It is a picture identifying the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1-4; Colossians 2:12,13). Baptism is an act of

obedience to Christ's command and is a prerequisite to church membership. It is denied to infants who can neither repent nor believe in Christ (Matthew 28:19,20).

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a divinely ordained memorial, void of atoning merit, commemorating the substitutionary death of Christ, whose body and blood are

symbolized by the bread and fruit of the vine (First Corinthians 11:26; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20). The Lord's Supper is extended to all Christians who have solemnly examined themselves for known sin prior to partaking according to the scriptural instructions (First Corinthians 11:23-34).

These ordinances should be observed under the authority of the local church and are only symbolic memorials, and are not to be regarded as a means of salvation.

## 15. Concerning Progressive Sanctification and Christian Living

We believe that sanctification is progressive having its past, present and future aspects (Ephesians 5:26-27). There is the past aspect which was accomplished by the blood of Christ, and frees the believer from the penalty of sin (Romans 5:9; Ephesians 2:1:10). There is the present aspect which is accomplished by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God which frees the believer from the power of sin (John 14:26; 17:17; First Peter 1:22; Psalms 119:11, 133). There is the future aspect of sanctification which is realized at the believer's glorification which frees him from the presence of sin (Second Peter 3:13; Revelation 19:8,9). Then and only then does the believer lay aside his Adamic nature (Philippians 3:21; First Corinthians 15:42-54).

We believe the Scriptures teach that every believer should be separated unto God from sin, striving at all times for holiness of life and good works which are the proof and result of genuine saving faith (Ephesians 2:10), and by the aid of the Holy Spirit should walk in Christian love exhibiting qualities such as honesty, integrity, kindness and forgiveness.

We also believe the believer's body is "the temple of the Holy Spirit," and therefore should be used to glorify God (First Corinthians 6:19-20); furthermore believers are not to love the world nor the things of the world (First John 2:15, but are to flee sinful desires, avoid every kind of evil, and refrain from questionable practices which would harm one's testimony, offend one's brother, or fail to glorify God.

Believers in Christ are to "grow in grace" (Second Peter 3:18) through prayer, Bible reading, and by "putting off" the "old man" with its sinful desires and habits while "putting on" the "new man" with its God-centered focus, and by renewing their minds through the application of biblical truths to their daily lives (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:8-10).

## 16. Concerning Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

We believe men and women are spiritually equal in position before God; yet He has ordained distinct and separate functions for each in the home and church.

We believe God ordained marriage and the family as the foundational institution of human society, and that the only legitimate marriage is a sacred and permanent covenant relationship between one man and one woman, symbolizing the union of Christ and his Church. The husband is to be the servant leader in the home and is to love his wife as Christ loves the church, and the wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-25).

We believe God hates divorce and intends a marriage to last until the death of one spouse (Malachi 2:14-16). Divorce is due to the hardness of individual hearts and has no biblical grounds except in cases of sexual infidelity or abandonment (Matthew 5:32; 19:8,9; First Corinthians 7:15). Remarriage is permissible when there is genuine repentance and every effort to reconcile has been exhausted or when one spouse dies or remarries. Both divorced, and divorced and remarried persons may hold positions of service in the church, but shall be ineligible for the offices of pastor and deacon (First Timothy 3:2,12; Titus 1:6).

## 17. Concerning Human Sexuality

We believe God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity is to be engaged in outside of the marriage of a man and a woman. Any form of child molestation, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, bisexuality, incest, pedophilia, or pornography is a sinful perversion of God's gift of sex. We believe God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Genesis 2:22-24; 19:5,13; Leviticus 18:1-30; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 1:26-29; 7:2; First Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; Gal. 3:28; Ephesians 5:22-23; First Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4)

We believe children are a heritage from the Lord, and that human life begins at conception, and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well being of the mother are acceptable (Psalm 127:3; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1,5; Jeremiah 1:5; Exodus 21:22,23; Luke 1:44).

## 18. Concerning Lawsuits Between Believers

We believe Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes since it is better to suffer wrong than to harm the name of Christ. Disputes and disagreements should be submitted to the spiritual leaders of the church for resolution through binding arbitration in accord with the principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 and the guidelines of this church's policies and procedures manual. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (First Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31,32).

## 19. Concerning the Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked (Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Proverbs 12:26; Romans 6:15-18); that only those who are justified through faith in Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, are truly righteous in God's sight (Romans 1:17; 6:16; First John 2:29); while all who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked and under the curse of sin (Isaiah 55:5,6; John 3:36; Romans 6:23); this distinction holds among men both in life and after death, and results in the everlasting happiness of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the lake of fire (Proverbs. 14:32; Matthew 25:34,41; John 8:21; Revelation 20:11-15).

## 20. Concerning the Resurrection, Ascension, and Related Future Events

We believe that Christ arose bodily from the grave (Matthew 28:6,7; John 20:27; First Corinthians 15:4); that He ascended bodily to the Father's right hand (Acts 1:9-11; Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 3:21); that he is our great High Priest (Hebrews 12:17; 4: 14-18; 5:9,10); that he is coming again (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; James 5:8); and that when he comes, he will come to rapture his church before the "tribulation period" (First Thessalonians 4:13-5:11).

We believe in the resurrection of the righteous dead at the time of his coming (First Corinthians 15:42-44, 51,54; First Thessalonians 4:15-18); and that those living in Christ will be transformed (First Corinthians 15:51-53; Philippians 3:20,21; First Thessalonians 4:13-18). Furthermore, we believe that Christ will reign on earth upon the throne of David (Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29,30; Isaiah 9:6,7) for a thousand years (First Corinthians 15:25; Revelation 20:1-4; Isaiah 11:1-5), after which the wicked will be forever punished in hell (Revelation 20:11-15).

## 21. Concerning Israel and the Church

We believe that Old Testament Israel is to be distinguished from the New Testament Church. Yet both Jews and Gentiles must be saved by grace through faith in Christ alone. We believe in the literal fulfillment of the Scriptural prophecies and promises that foretell and assure the future restoration of Israel as a nation. God in His sovereign selection has chosen Israel as his eternal covenant people, though they are now dispersed because of their disobedience and rejection of Christ. They will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the Second Coming of Christ. (Genesis 13:14-17; Jeremiah 16:14-15; Ezekiel 37; Romans 11:1-32; 10:12-13)

This Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, for the sake of unity and direction this statement of faith is binding upon all members. All literature used in this church and its related ministries shall be in agreement with this Statement of Faith.