

# Midtown Messenger

Volume 1

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Issue 9

## OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

Ronnie Scherffius

A relatively new practice among protestant churches that has become very popular is the use of *statements of faith*. As with other denominational practices, some churches of Christ have begun to adopt the procedure by implementing the practice within their “their own fellowship.” What exactly is this practice of statements of faith and is it biblical in nature?

**What is a Statement of Faith?** In simplest terms, a statement of faith is a public acknowledgment or declaration of the traditions, doctrines, and beliefs of a particular church and/or religious organization. Some religious institutions refer to their statement of faith as *Core Beliefs* or even *What We Believe*. Often there is included a *Mission Statement* that highlights the principle goals and work of the particular church or organization.

While the idea of a *statement of faith* may on its face sound appealing, it is little more than a means by which Protestant Denominations summarize their disciplines, manuals, confessions of faith, or whatever they call their creed book. For example, one of the larger denominational groups here in Victoria has the following as their introduction to their *Core Beliefs* page on their website:

As you look into our doctrine, you will find that while we are progressive with our ministry practices we hold true to long held beliefs. As such, we accept the Scriptures as our only authority in matters of faith and practice and our interpretation of Bible doctrine leads us to believe:

Following this brief introduction to their doctrine they continue by summarizing eight specific *core beliefs* which include: God; Jesus Christ; Holy Spirit; Bible; Human Beings; Salvation; Eternal Security; Eternity. As would be expected, under each heading one find’s their

*statements of faith* regarding each summary heading, which statements often reveal their error. Concerning *salvation* we read, “Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith.” Referring to *eternal security* (which on the face is a false doctrine) it is stated, “Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security.” And of course, at the end of each *statement of faith* of the *core beliefs* is a list of Scriptures, most of which are grossly misunderstood, misused and misapplied.

Thus we see that a statement of faith is little more than a summary of the traditions, doctrines, and beliefs of a particular church or religious organization.

**What is the purpose of a Statement of Faith?** While we may consider that such statements of faith are limited to websites and are purely for the purpose of information, it should also be noted that many religious groups require members to sign a *Statement of Faith* in order to be a part of “their fellowship.” An immediate response to such a request might (and should) be — Why? Why should one sign a statement of faith and what is its functioning purpose?

After some research on various websites (some which actually guide you on the do’s and don’ts of a statement of faith), the following stands as some of the given reasons/purposes for a church writing a statement of faith. First, a statement of faith serves can be used **to promote unity among church members**. The explanation given by 9marks.org is that statements of faith “provide unifying language to explain complex doctrinal truths.” Strange that the idea to require churches in the first century to draft unifying *statements of faith*

never crossed the mind of the apostle Paul. He did admonish the Corinthians “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). He also instructed the Ephesians that they should endeavor “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). Yet, those “same things” that were to be spoken and in which unity was to be found were those things which inspired men had commanded either in letter or in word (1 Cor. 14:34; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14) NOT statements of faith which serve to simplify the complexity of manmade traditions! In fact, Jesus stated that truth can be known (John 8:32) and Paul instructed the Ephesians that by reading his letters they could understand (Eph. 3:1-4)—without a statement of faith!

Another highly touted purpose of statements of faith is **to establish doctrinal essentials**. Again, at first this may seem like a reasonable and worthy idea, but upon further review it is discovered that “doctrinal essentials” is code for fundamental beliefs of Christianity that all professed “Christians” readily acknowledge (faith in the existence of God, deity of Christ, faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, etc.). Biblical teachings such as baptism for remission of sins, a cappella singing in worship, Lord’s Supper, etc., are nonessentials. Even some members of the churches of Christ who identify themselves as progressive (a.k.a. liberal) have adopted this denominational philosophy of essentials/nonessentials referring to them as “the core gospel.”

One illustration given under the idea of unity and essentials is as follows: “For example, if one member of the church is a strict Sabbatarian, but Sabbatarianism is not among the tenets in that particular church’s statement of faith, the Sabbatarian and the non-Sabbatarian can practice (or not practice) their conviction in freedom and love.” In other words, they can agree to disagree since *the statement of faith* allows for such as long as the *essentials* are agreed upon.

Another stated purpose for statements of faith is **to protect the future of the church**. The idea here is that the acknowledged and accepted statement of faith will *fortify the church* against shifting cultural and denominational

beliefs; *train potential members* in basic Christian doctrine and distinctives of the church, and become a tool in the *discipline process* for those promoting false doctrine. It is simply mind boggling that the Holy Spirit did not see the wisdom in statements of faith! All He left us was the inspired written word of God which “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The truth of the matter is that statements of faith quickly become a replacement for the inspired written word of God which is given to fortify us (Acts 20:28), train/teach us in the doctrine of Christ (2 Tim. 2:2; 2 Tim. 4:2-6; Titus 2; et al), and is to serve as our standard for discipline (2 Thess. 3:6, 14; 1 Cor. 5; Mt. 18:15ff). Indeed, it would be interesting to hear one who endorses “statements of faith for the protection of the church,” discuss how the church has endured persecution, heathenism, apostasy, and the rise of protestantism over nearly two-thousand years **before** manmade statements of faith were ever produced!

But the ultimate question to be asked about statements of faith is simply, **what is the authority for a Statement of Faith?** IF the Bible is God’s inspired, inerrant revelation to man and the final authority to all matters of faith (which most statements of faith include under: Bible), then shouldn’t we have Bible authority for developing a statement of faith and especially for requiring the signing of it as a condition for fellowship/membership?! Where is the biblical authority for statements of faith? There is none!

Special Note: simply because a website has a link to a “What We Believe” page does not necessarily direct you to a denominational *statement of faith* page. The University Church of Christ has an excellent resource regarding the New Testament church under this link. ([univcofc.org/page/180020615/180106937/What-We-Believe](http://univcofc.org/page/180020615/180106937/What-We-Believe))

Online Resources:

[parkwaychurch.tv/pages/page.asp?page\\_id=316401](http://parkwaychurch.tv/pages/page.asp?page_id=316401)

[9marks.org/article/adopting-and-choosing-a-statement-of-faith/](http://9marks.org/article/adopting-and-choosing-a-statement-of-faith/)

[thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/thabiti-anyabwile/what-does-your-churchs-statement-of-faith-protect/](http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/thabiti-anyabwile/what-does-your-churchs-statement-of-faith-protect/)

[livingleadership.org/teaching-learning/2014/9/26/our-church-statement-of-faith-why-do-we-need-it-what-do-we-do-with-it](http://livingleadership.org/teaching-learning/2014/9/26/our-church-statement-of-faith-why-do-we-need-it-what-do-we-do-with-it)

## PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of May 13, 2018

### **Sunday Morning:**

Announcements: Bryant Siegel  
Scripture Reading: Sammy Scherffius

### **Lord's Supper & Offering**

Bread: Lupe Escojido  
Fruit of the Vine: Will Cleveland  
Offering: Anthony Scherffius  
Assist: Jeff Cannady, Isaac Jobs, Brant Jacobs

**Sunday Evening:** Lupe Escojido, Will Cleveland

### **Prayer**

A.M. Opening: Doug Jobs  
A.M. Closing: Dennis Bryson  
P.M. Opening: Steve Randle  
P.M. Closing: Ron White

**Ushers:** Steve Randle  
Allen Clifton

**Wednesday Devotional:** Ronnie Scherffius

**Open/Close Building:** Steve Randle

**Sound System:** Will Burleson

### **Greeters:**

Will Cleveland  
Allen Clifton  
Steve Randle

**Prepare Communion:** Connie Kasper



Congratulations to Steve Randle and Letty Hernandez who were married Saturday, May 5, 2018.



Christian Sneeringer will be honored at the Sunday Fellowship on May 20th. Please bring sandwiches, chips, and drinks. A cake will be provided and there will be a basket for your cards and best wishes.

## IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

DELLA RAMPLEY, who is having testing for more information about her cancer; CLARK WITHERS, who is in ICU; SANDRA MARIE, who is recovering from a broken arm; ROY ARNOT, who has pneumonia.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

May 15: Men's and Ladies Bible Classes @10am  
May 20: Fellowship meal honoring 2018 graduate  
May 24: Singing @ 7pm at the Morales home  
May 27: Teacher appreciation get together—more details to follow  
June 3: Don Walker kicks off Midtown's Summer Series  
June 3: 55+ group meeting at 3:30 pm @ the building  
June 6: Wednesday Summer Series—Daniel Garza  
July 28: Midtown hosts Summer Youth Series @ 5pm

## IN THE AREA

May 15: Preachers' and Men's lunch @11am in Corpus Christi  
May 23-28: Young Men's Development Conference @ Bryan-College Station  
June 7: Summer Youth Series @ 7pm—Riverside  
June 21: Summer Youth Series @ 7pm—Mathis

## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Millie Jamison (13)  
Happy Anniversary: Don & Debbie Lynn (17); Roy & Marguerite Arnot (19)

## KEEP IN PRAYER

### MIDTOWN MEMBERS

Jeff Cannady	Sandy Malone
Les Daltry	Ann Pantel
Pat Davis	Glenodine Pitts
Dee Gilpatrick	Bob Smith
Lucille Hawkins	Clark Withers
Faye Henderson	

### FRIENDS & FAMILY

Bert Haynes (father of Pam Stryker)	Cole Ohrt (friend of Ann Pantel)
Victor Benitez (brother of Virginia Escojido)	Vikram Gottam (brother-in-law of Archana Verma)
Kim Neel-Farthing (daughter of Joyce)	Mary Younglove (grandmother of Naomi Flonnory)
Scarlet O'Neill (friend of Yvonne Smith)	Cynthia Sneeringer (mother of Angela)
Sarah Randle (mother of Steve)	Antonio Benitez (brother of Virginia Escojido)

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

# MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Elders:**

Will Cleveland  
Tom Pitchford

**Deacons:**

Adrian Cannady  
Mark FitzSimmons  
Doug Jobs  
Bryant Siegel

**Minister:** Ronnie Scherffius**Secretary:** Nina Siegel**TIMES OF SERVICES**

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM  
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM  
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM  
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

**RECORD OF ATTENDANCE**

Week of May 6, 2018

Bible Class.....103  
A.M. Worship.....133  
P.M. Worship.....82  
Wednesday Bible Study.....103

Offering      \$4,614

**QUICK REFERENCE**

Use this quick reference to help you grow in knowledge:

**Bible**

Inspired, complete.....2 Tim. 3:16-17  
Christ speaks now.....Heb. 1:1-2  
Psm. 119:89; John 8:32; James. 1:25

**SUPPORTED WORKS**

India - Mani Pagidipalli  
New Zealand - James & Emily Cammock  
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore  
Southwest School of Bible Studies - Cody Kilgore

**GO PAPERLESS!**

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**MidTown Church of Christ**

5901 N. Main  
Victoria, TX 77904  
(361) 573-0030  
[midtowncoc2017@gmail.com](mailto:midtowncoc2017@gmail.com)

