

Everybody has a confession of faith. The leaders of SGC believe it wise to have such a confession in writing. We have chosen to have a two tier confession: one for every member of SGC to affirm, and an additional one for all the elders and deacons to affirm. The rationale for two is because we don't want to exclude from membership some brothers and sisters who haven't come to understanding on some of our distinctive beliefs and to give them time for them to do so. But also a larger confession for those serving as elders/deacons to ensure the future fidelity and direction of SGC. The Apostolic model for passing the baton of truth is found in

2 Timothy 2:2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

A confession helps clarify the boundaries and content of what we teach.

The elders teach and the deacons affirm:

General Statement of Faith:

Bible

We teach that the 39 books of the OT and 27 books of the NT are God-breathed, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient for all matters of doctrine and obedience (Ps 19:7-11; 2 Tim 3:16-17).

God

We teach there is one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, equal in essence, but distinct in person, holy, eternal, unchanging, independent, omnipresent, absolutely sovereign over all things, omnipotent, omniscient of past-present-future, judge, good, gracious, loving, and merciful (Ps 139, 145). We teach that the chief end of God is to glorify Himself and enjoy Himself forever (Ex 20: 5; Num 14:20-1).

Person of Christ

We teach that the Son of God is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He took upon Himself a human nature, born of a virgin woman, perfectly obeying the Law, was obedient to death on a cross and rose from the dead. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man (John 1:1-2, 14; Gal 4:4-5; Phil 2:5-8).

Man

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We teach that Adam was created upright, material and immaterial, but sinned in Eden and the human race was plunged into sin and ruin (Gen 3). Every person is accountable to God's Law, but constantly violates it. Every aspect of man is tainted by sin: will, mind, affections, and actions (Rom 3; 8:7); so that man

by himself is morally unable to repent and believe the gospel and merits the just wrath of God.

Salvation

We teach that God saves sinners by grace alone, through Christ alone (Jn 14:6). Before the foundation of the world (Eph 1), for His own glory, God freely chose some sinners unto salvation. His choice was not based upon foreseen faith, choice, or merit (Rom 9:11), but according to the kind intention of His will (Eph 1:5). Christ died efficaciously as a substitute, propitiation, redemption, and reconciliation for His elect people (John 10:11; Rom 8:32; Eph 5:25). Christ took the wrath of hell-deserving sinners and imputes His righteousness to them by His death and resurrection (2 Co 5:21). The Holy Spirit applies the work of Christ to sinners through regeneration and the elect are efficaciously drawn to Christ. All righteous living in the believer is produced by the God's grace working in them (Ph 2:12-13; Col 1:29). All regenerate believers in Christ must and will persevere in the faith to the end (Mt 10:22; 24:13).

Responsibility of Man

We teach that God commands all people everywhere to repent and believe the gospel (Mk 1:15; Acts 17:30). A sinner is justified before God by faith alone. This faith is a penitent faith and will produce good works that are in no sense meritorious toward his justification (Romans 3-4; Eph 2:10; James 2).

Church

We teach that the Head of the church is Christ (Col 1:18), consisting of believers throughout the world. He appoints elders to lead the local church (1 Tim 3). The purpose of the church is to edify one another and evangelize the lost (Mt 28:18-20). We teach that two ordinances were given to the church symbolizing the saving work of Christ: baptism by immersion, and communion. Only those who have repented and believed the gospel should participate in the ordinances. We teach that church discipline is to be practiced in obedience to Christ (Mt 18:15ff).

End Times

We teach that Christ will come gloriously and powerfully to deliver His own and judge the unrepentant. There will be a resurrection of both the righteous believers and the wicked unbelievers. The righteous shall enjoy eternity in heaven worshiping the Triune God, but the unrepentant and unbe-

believing shall be cast into the lake of fire and shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever (Mt 25:46; Rev 20:10, 15)

Sex and Marriage

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) God’s good purposes in sex are to glorify Himself through ratification of the marriage covenant (Genesis 2:24), expression of love inside of marriage (Song of Solomon), procreation (Gen 1:28; 9:1-7), pleasure (Prov 5) and prevention of adultery (1 Co 7:1-5). Adultery, fornication, polygamy, incest, bestiality, pedophilia and homosexuality are all condemned as sinful in the Bible. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.) We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Believing sexual perversion to be sinful does not condone any sinful attitudes or behavior towards such persons.

Statement on the Sufficiency of Scripture (taken from International Association of Biblical Counselors):

1. Affirmation-We affirm that biblical truths are sufficient, when presented in the power of the Holy Spirit, to enable the Christian to love and obey God and to seek to please Him in every way.

Denial-We deny that man's wisdom (secular theories and practices) can enable the Christian to love and obey God and to seek to please Him in every way.

2. Affirmation-We affirm the Bible to be the indispensable textbook on human and divine relationships and behavior.

Denial-We deny a lesser role for the Bible in addressing all aspects of human behavior and relationship to God.

3. Affirmation -We affirm that the Bible establishes the norms for right and effective living.

Denial-We deny that secular sources are sufficient to establish norms for right and effective living.

Statement from 1978 Chicago Statement on Inerrancy:

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms: obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

Danvers (1987) Statement of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18).
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21-24; 1 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:12-14).
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Gen 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Cor 11:7-9).
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen 3:1-7, 12, 16). In the home, the husband's loving, humble

headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility. In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15).
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse. In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7). In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim 2:11-15).
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2).
8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21).

10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

Statement on the Doctrines of Grace from the Synod of Dort (1619):

Total depravity

Therefore, all people are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin; without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature, or even to dispose themselves to such reform. (Human Corruption, Conversion to God, and the Way It Occurs, Article 3)

Unconditional election

The fact that some receive from God the gift of faith within time, and that others do not, stems from his eternal decision. For "all his works are known to God from eternity" (Acts 15:18; Ephesians 1:11). In accordance with this decision he graciously softens the hearts, however hard, of his chosen ones and inclines them to believe, but by his just judgment he leaves in their wickedness and hardness of heart those who have not been chosen. And in this especially is disclosed to us his act--unfathomable, and as merciful as it is just--of distinguishing between people equally lost. This is the well-known decision of election and reprobation revealed in God's Word. This decision the wicked, impure, and unstable distort to their own ruin, but it provides holy and godly souls with comfort beyond words. (Divine Election and Reprobation, Article 6)

Limited atonement

For it was the entirely free plan and very gracious will and intention of God the Father that the enlivening and saving effectiveness of his Son's costly death should work itself out in all his chosen ones, in order that he might grant justifying faith to them only and thereby lead them without fail to salvation. In other words, it was God's will that Christ through the blood of the cross (by which he confirmed the new covenant) should effectively redeem from every people, tribe, nation, and language all those and only those who were chosen from eternity to salvation and given to him by the Father; that

he should grant them faith (which, like the Holy Spirit's other saving gifts, he acquired for them by his death); that he should cleanse them by his blood from all their sins, both original and actual, whether committed before or after their coming to faith; that he should faithfully preserve them to the very end; and that he should finally present them to himself, a glorious people, without spot or wrinkle. (Christ's Death and Human Redemption Through It, Article 8)

Irresistible grace

The fact that others who are called through the ministry of the gospel do come and are brought to conversion must not be credited to man, as though one distinguishes himself by free choice from others who are furnished with equal or sufficient grace for faith and conversion (as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains). No, it must be credited to God: just as from eternity he chose his own in Christ, so within time he effectively calls them, grants them faith and repentance, and, having rescued them from the dominion of darkness, brings them into the kingdom of his Son, in order that they may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called them out of darkness into this marvelous light, and may boast not in themselves, but in the Lord, as apostolic words frequently testify in Scripture. (Human Corruption, Conversion to God, and the Way It Occurs, Article 10)

Perseverance of the saints

Because of these remnants of sin dwelling in them and also because of the temptations of the world and Satan, those who have been converted could not remain standing in this grace if left to their own resources. But God is faithful, mercifully strengthening them in the grace once conferred on them and powerfully preserving them in it to the end. (The Perseverance of the Saints, Article 3)