

CHAPLAINCY ENDORSEMENT COMMISSION

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND CHURCHES OF CHRIST

OUR COMMON POINTS OF SHARED FAITH

The Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission (CEC), an agency of the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, provides endorsement and pastoral care of chaplains and counselors in ministry who serve in a variety of using agencies such as the military, hospitals, prisons, and corporations. The CEC expects that its endorsed chaplains and counselors will perform their chaplaincy ministry in a manner representative of local churches affiliated with the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ as they minister to all persons. We are committed to the Church as revealed in the New Testament, to the unity of the church for the purposes of world evangelism, and to the principles of our Christian Church heritage as expressed by phrases like these:

- Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.
- In essentials, unity; in opinions, liberty; and in all things, love.
- We are not the only Christians, but we are Christians only.

We hold dear the basic beliefs of Christianity as expressed in the Bible while allowing for freedom for believers to make their own decisions on matters that are not core Christian beliefs. We consider the following to be basic biblical positions to be held by all persons representing us as chaplains:

The Bible

The basis for our belief is the sixty-six books of the Bible, which are uniquely God-inspired and are the final authority on all matters of faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21).

God

There is one true and living God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), who is perfect in all His attributes. God is one, but exists in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14) – each possessing all the attributes of deity and deserving of our worship and obedience. In the beginning God created the universe and everything out of nothing. By His sovereign power, He continues to sustain His creation. By His providence, He is operating throughout history to fulfill his plan of redemption.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is equal with God (John 10:30; Philippians 2:5-8), but surrendered the privileges of deity and came to earth to pay the debt for the souls of people. Jesus was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23-25). He lived a sinless life, and so was qualified to pay for our sins by dying on the cross as our Substitute (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 1 Peter 2:24). He physically rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father where He now mediates as our Advocate

and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1). Jesus will return to earth visibly to fulfill history and judge all mankind according to the eternal plan of God (John 5:22-23; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Corinthians 5:10). He will return in a majestic and triumphant second coming. We do not hold to any particular position on how the second coming will happen.

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a divine person, coequal with the Father and the Son in all the divine attributes (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14). He convicts the minds of sinners, awakens in them recognition of their need for a Savior and offers them new life in Christ. At the point of salvation, He permanently indwells every believer and equips him or her for personal growth and service to the church (John 16:7-9; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22). The indwelling of the Spirit is a divine guarantee of a believer's salvation until the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14).

The Holy Spirit endows Christians with spiritual gifts. These gifts are intended to strengthen the Church and glorify Christ (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Most churches and individuals affiliated with the Chaplaincy Endorsement Commission do not participate in public expression of supernatural gifts. We recognize that some of our fellow believers have strong convictions about special giftedness. We acknowledge their freedom to practice private worship as God so leads them, but ask that they not be openly evangelistic about their convictions in this area.

Our Greatest Need

The central purpose of God's revelation in Scripture is to call all people into fellowship with Him. God originally created human beings to have fellowship with Him and to glorify Him (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16) but they defiled God by sinfully choosing to go their own way. As a result, people suffered alienation from God and the corruption of human nature (Psalms 51:5; Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:1-4). The salvation of humankind, therefore, is completely a work of God's free grace, not the result of human works or goodness. This salvation is a gift, made available through faith in Jesus Christ and Him only (John 1:12; John 10:18-27; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Eternal Security

A Christian can be secure in his or her salvation. Jesus promises that no one can snatch us "out of his hand" (John 10:28). However, while Christ does not give up on us, we can give up on Christ. Salvation is by grace not works, but believers live in a manner worthy of Christ's calling on our lives. The same grace that saves will also sustain the believer.

The Church

All Christians are part of one united spiritual body, the church (Ephesians 4:4), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2), of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18). The Scripture directs believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, the Lord's Supper, fellowship, service to the body, and outreach to the world (Acts

1:1-8; Acts 2:38-42; Ephesians 4:12). Wherever God's people meet regularly, this is the local expression of the church (Acts 20:17; Galatians 1:2; Hebrews 10:25).

Baptism

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus instructed His disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Furthermore, in Acts 2:38, Peter told the crowd, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." This gift of the Holy Spirit ensures that the Christian has the spiritual power to live for Christ. (See section "The Holy Spirit" above.) In Acts 2:38-41, Acts 8:35-39, and Acts 16:31-33, baptism occurred soon after confession of faith. Paul taught in Romans 6:3-4 that "all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death" and that "We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." As in the case of other Bible doctrines, we base our practice and teachings on these and other clear teachings from God's word. Therefore we regard baptism by immersion as a part of the means by which we accept God's grace and receive His salvation.

The Lord's Supper

The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remember Christ's death until He comes, and should be preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). Even though the loaf and cup are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ, who is present in a spiritual way, in fellowship with his people (1 Corinthians 10:16). In the example of the early church, we offer the Lord's Supper weekly.

Human Destiny

Death seals the eternal destiny of each person (Hebrews 9:27). For all humankind, there will be a resurrection of the body into the spiritual world and a judgment that will determine the fate of each individual. The saved will be raised to eternal life and will be rewarded their faith (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29).