

February 2006



Hessel Church

Doctrinal Statement: What We Believe

Since our earliest beginnings in 1909, Hessel Church has enjoyed a rich spiritual legacy. The faithful saints of our fellowship have demonstrated a never-ending dependence and reliance on the Word of God. Our forefathers understood that God revealed Himself, His plan, His great love and all that is necessary for us in the pages of Scriptures.

Today we humbly embrace our rich heritage and desire to pass it along to all who will follow. We understand that though we are living in a day of rationalism, God's Word will not change, let us down or ever lead us astray. For this reason, we look to it for direction, comfort, help and wisdom. Jesus' words in John 17:17 that God's "... word is truth" is a promise we hold dear and accept as we practically apply it's message to our generation.

The following articles are the doctrine of Hessel Church. Each is based upon our study and understanding of Scripture. According to our *Constitution and By-Laws* (Art. 6, Sec. 2), ***all members must accept this doctrinal statement*** (Articles 1-10 of this document). We believe that sharing these beliefs is vitally important to our ongoing ministry. (See the

introduction of Article 11 of this document to ascertain the role of our Position Statements).

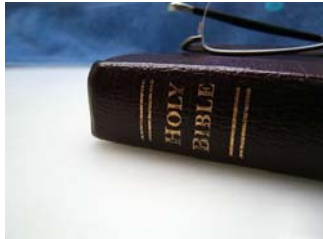
While it is clearly understood that we (finite) followers of Christ will never fully understand our (infinite) God, we embrace these basic doctrines together. ~ *Board of Elders*

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ARTICLE 1

The Bible (Bibliography)



Sec. 1 Revelation

We believe that God in loving, merciful concern for mankind, has taken the initiative to reveal and communicate truth about His existence, His attributes and His will through the incarnation of Christ (Heb. 1:3); the Scriptures (Jn. 5:39); creation (Rom. 1:18-21, Ps. 19:1-6); providential dealings (Dan. 4:35); preservation of the universe (Col. 1:17); miracles (John 2:11, Heb. 2:3,4); direct communication (Exodus 3:4); and conscience (Rom. 2:14, 15, 16).

Sec. 2 Inspiration

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scripture. By this we mean that all Scripture is "God-breathed" and that holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the very words of Scripture (verbal inspiration) 2 Pt. 1:20, 21. We further believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings--historical, poetical, doctrinal and prophetic--in their original manuscripts (plenary inspiration) 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. We believe that the Bible is both inerrant (it perfectly communicates what the author intended) and infallible (its words accurately communicate truth).

Sec. 3 Scriptures

We believe that all the Scriptures center about the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work in His first and second coming, and hence that no portion, even of the Old Testament, is properly read or understood, until it leads to Him. We also believe that *all the Scriptures* were designed for our practical

instruction and are to be the Christian's *final authority in faith and practice* (Mark 12:26, 36; Luke 24:27,44; John 5:39; Acts 17:2-3, 18:28, 26:22-23, 28:23; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 10:1-10; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

We believe that the 66 books of the Bible represent the complete canon, which has been tested, found satisfactory, and proven to be inspired.

We follow a grammatical-historical form of Biblical interpretation. By this we mean that all interpretation must be gleaned through study of the grammar (how it appears in the sentence and context) and the historical setting and genre of the text.

ARTICLE 2

Godhead (Trinity)

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - and that these three are one God, the Trinity. They have precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same honor, confidence, and obedience (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 3:16-17; 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-14; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 1:4-6).

We believe that God has both non-communicable and communicable attributes. His non-communicable attributes (those possessed by God alone) are: omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-12), omniscience (Jer. 23:23-25, Is. 46:9-10), omnipotence (Job 42:2, Matt. 19:26), and immutability (Mal. 3:6 and Jam. 1:17). His communicable attributes (those which can be assumed by man through God's Spirit) are essentially four: holiness (Lev. 11:4, 1 Pet. 1:15), righteousness and justice (Ps. 89:14), truth (John 17:3), and

goodness (Mark 10:18), which includes qualities such as: love (2 Cor. 13:11), benevolence (Ps. 145:9), mercy (Jam. 5:11), and grace (1 John 2:2).

ARTICLE 3

God the Father (Theology Proper)

We believe that, according to the Scriptures, the First Person of the Godhead is the One who designed the program of redemption through His Son (Eph. 1:3-6; John 3:16, 14:16; Ps. 2:7-9). He is the ultimate object of all praise, worship, homage and glory (John 15, 17). Scripture also identifies Him as the One by whom both the Son and the Holy Spirit were sent. In the fall of man, it was the Father's divine will which was violated (Rom. 3:23).

ARTICLE 4

God the Son (Christology)

We believe that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, created all things, "both in the heavens and on earth" (Col. 1:16). We believe that He was "before all things, and in Him all things hold together." (Col. 1:17).

We believe that the Son of God, though eternally co-existent with the Father, and fully God (Col. 1:19) came into this world in precisely the way planned by the Father and prophesied in the Scriptures (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 11:1-5; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Psa. 22:6-18; Zech. 12:10; Isa. 7:14; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; 49:6; 50:6; 52:53; 60:3; Mal. 5:2; Jn. 1:1-2, 1 Jn. 4:14;

Ezekiel 36:25-27). He came that He might manifest the Father to men, fulfilling prophecy, and become the Redeemer of a lost world (Luke 4:17-21, Heb. 1:3, 1 John 2:2). To these ends He was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14, Matt. 1:23) and was given a human body and a sinless human nature (Luke 1:30-35), yet He continued to be God.

We believe that, though He faced the same trying, tempting situations that mankind has always faced, He lived sinlessly, becoming the only One qualified to offer the supreme sacrifice for sin demanded by His righteous Father (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:19).

We believe that, in infinite love for the lost, He voluntarily accepted His Father's will and became the divinely provided sacrificial Lamb, the Messiah, taking away the sin of the world, and making a life pleasing to God possible for all who would trust in Him (Phil. 2:5-8; John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:14-15).

We believe Christ lives today, having risen bodily from the grave, and that all believers will receive a resurrected body like His (Matt. 28:6; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20).

We believe that, on departing from the earth, He was accepted by His Father and that His acceptance is a final assurance to us that His redeeming work was perfectly accomplished (Heb. 1:3).

We believe that He became head over all things to the church which is His body. He is seated at the right hand of His Father, performing His intercessory ministry on behalf of all those who have believed in Him for salvation (Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1). He will return to earth in the same bodily manner in which He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:11).

ARTICLE 5

God the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third co-equal member of the Godhead, though omnipresent from all eternity, took up His abode in the world in a special sense on the day of Pentecost. According to divine promise, He dwells today in every believer, uniting all believers in Christ into one body (the church), and is the source of all power and all acceptable worship and service (John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 12:13, 6:19; Rom. 8).

We believe that the Spirit will never depart from the church, nor from the weakest of saints, but will always be present to testify of Jesus Christ, seeking to fill believers with Himself, and not with themselves or their experiences (Eph. 4:30, 5:18; John 16:7-15; Ezekiel 36:25-27).

We believe in the Holy Spirit as the particular divine author of the Scriptures, and as the divine interpreter of the Word (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Certain well-defined ministries are committed to the Holy Spirit today, including: restraining evil in the world; convicting the world in respect to sin, righteousness, judgment; regenerating, indwelling, baptizing, and sealing all believers at the moment of their salvation; and subsequently filling, comforting, and guiding those who subject themselves to His will (John 16:7-13, 2 Thes. 2:7, Titus 3:5, 1 Cor. 3:16, Rom. 8:14).

We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is giving life to the Church (all who believe) and giving to its members gifts for the purpose of edification.¹ We believe that

no gift (i.e. speaking in tongues) is a sign of salvation. No gift is a sign of the baptism or of the filling of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12-14).

ARTICLE 6

Man (Anthropology)

We believe that mankind (both male and female) was created by God in His own image, and therefore is, like God, a personal, rational, and moral being. God has endowed man with dominion and personality, and has given to him the capacities for love, God-consciousness, and holiness (Gen. 1:26, 27).

We believe Adam was created morally and spiritually perfect, but untested. In his time of testing, and in the exercise of his own free will, he fell from his created position before God, casting the entire human race to follow into the bondage of the sin nature, with Jesus Christ Himself the only exception (Gen. 3:1-19, Rom. 5:12-19).

This sin nature not only possesses no spark of divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably evil apart from God's grace. As a consequence of his sin, man is separated from God, dead in trespasses and sins, subject to Satan's power (Is. 64:6; Jer. 17:9).

¹ See Position Statement on Sign Gifts / "Tongues" (Article 11, Section 2).

ARTICLE 7

Salvation (Soteriology)

We believe and teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Sec. 1 Regeneration

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

Sec. 2 Election

We believe that election is the act of God by

which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We believe that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

We believe that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2).

Sec. 3 Justification

We believe that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the placing of our sins on Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness

to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

Sec. 4 Sanctification

We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2).

We believe that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25;

Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

Sec. 5 Security

We believe that all the redeemed once saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

Sec. 6 Eternal State

We believe that at the death of a person who has trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, he goes immediately to heaven to be in the presence of the Lord. Though his body is in the grave and decomposes, his soul and spirit (the immaterial part, the real person) goes immediately into the presence of the Savior (2 Cor. 5:6-8).

We believe that in like manner as Christ was raised from the death, so too, Christ's body the church will experience resurrection.

At the return of the Lord for the church² the dead in Christ return with Him and their bodies are raised so that their souls and spirits are joined with their resurrected, glorified bodies (1 Cor. 6:14). At the same time, those who are alive when Christ returns are simply transformed into their glorified bodies like that of the Savior's. There is *no* intermediate place

² See Article 11, Section 1.1.

purgatory or condition of soul sleep. Rather, believers are in heaven with the Lord and very much aware of His presence (Philippians 1:21-23; John 14:1f; 12:26)

ARTICLE 8

Church (Ecclesiology)

We believe that all who are united by faith to the risen and ascended Son of God are members of His Church. The Church is universal in nature and is the body and bride of Christ. The Church began at Pentecost (Acts 2:2-4).

Affiliation with the organized churches of the world in no way affects one's qualification to be a member of Christ's body, the Church (1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:2-4).

We believe in the local assembly, which is organized for: the study of the Word of God, the worship of Jesus Christ, fellowship with other believers, administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, discipline, and the promotion of the work of Christ throughout the whole world (Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:3-10; Col. 3:14-15).

We believe that by the same Spirit all believers in this age, whether Jews or Gentiles, are baptized into, and thus become, one body that is Christ's (1 Cor. 12:12-27). Having become members one of another, they are under solemn duty to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all petty differences, and fervently loving one another with a pure heart (Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:3-10; Col. 3:14-15).

ARTICLE 9

Angels (Angelology)

We believe that God created an innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings, known as angels. One of them, "Lucifer, son of the morning" -- the highest in rank-- sinned through pride, was cast out of Heaven and became Satan (Is. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19). A great company of the angels followed him in his moral fall. Of these, some demons are active as Satan's agents and associates in carrying out his unholy purposes, while others who fell have been "committed ... to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 1:6).

We believe that Satan is the originator of sin, and that, under the permission of God, he, through subtlety, led Adam and Eve into transgression, thereby accomplishing their moral fall and subjecting them and their posterity to his own power (Gen. 3:1-19; Rom. 5:12-14).

We believe that at the moment of salvation, the new believer is rescued from Satan's domain of darkness and transferred into Christ's kingdom of light (Col. 1:9-14; 2 Cor. 5:17). While the believer may struggle with ongoing temptation and sinful habits, Satan's control is removed (1 John 5:18).

Satan is the enemy of God and the people of God, opposing and exalting himself above God. In his warfare, he functions as an angel of light and as a devouring, roaring lion, even counterfeiting the works of God by fostering religious movements and systems of doctrine, which in most cases are characterized by a denial of the efficacy³ of the blood of Christ and of

³ Efficacy: Power to produce effects

salvation by grace alone (2 Cor. 4:3-4; 11:13-15; ; 2 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 1 Pet. 5:8, Eph. 6:10-12).

We believe that a great company of angels kept their holy estate and are before the throne of God. From there they are sent forth as ministering spirits for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Luke 15:10; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 7:11, 12).

We believe that man was made lower than the angels; and that, in His incarnation, Christ took for a time this lower place that He might lift the believer to His own sphere above the angels (Hebrews 2:6-10; Philippians 2:5-11, Psalm 8:4).

ARTICLE 10

Christian Walk

We believe that we are called with a holy calling, to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. We are to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit in order that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. The flesh, which in this life is never eradicated, needs to be kept by the Spirit constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence in our lives to the dishonor of our Lord. (Rom. 6:11-13, 8:2, 4; 12-13; Gal. 5:16-18; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 John 1:4-7, 3:5-9; Eph. 2:8-10).

ARTICLE 11

Position Statements

For the sake of unity and harmony within the Body of Christ, Hessel Church embraces the following position statements. These are not on equal footing with the above mentioned doctrines, however, they are none-theless very important to the church's continued ministry, fellowship and unity.

While teachers are free to state the various views on a given passage and topic, they will not promote a doctrinal position that is contrary to the church's stated positions.⁴ Questions for clarification may be directed to the Board of Elders.

Sec. 1 **Future Things: Eschatology**

Sec. 1.1 *Rapture*

We believe that, according to the Word of God, the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the coming of the Lord in the air to receive into heaven both His own who are alive and remain unto His coming, and also all who have died as Christians. This event which we term the Rapture of the Church is the blessed hope set before us in the Scripture, and for this we should be constantly looking (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14).

Sec. 1.2 *Judgment Seat of Christ*

We believe that when all believers enter heaven, they will be forever with their Lord. In heaven, they will be righteously

⁴ This includes both the doctrinal (Articles 1-10) and position statements (Article 11).

judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ which focuses itself on the life works of each believer as to motives, whether motivated by the flesh or by the Spirit of God. Each believer will receive rewards for that which he has done as he was led by the Holy Spirit. Each believer will be denied rewards for those things motivated by pride and the flesh (1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Sec. 1.3 Tribulation

We believe that the rapture of the Church will be followed on earth by the tribulation. This is the fulfillment of prophecy spoken of as Daniel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 6:1-19:21) during which the church will be in heaven. This whole period of seven years (divided into two halves three and one-half years each) will be a time of judgment on the earth. The latter half will be a period of unprecedented judgment, which our Lord called the great tribulation (Matt. 24:15-21).

We believe that universal righteousness will not be realized prior to the second coming of Christ to the earth, but that every day the world is moving toward judgment (Matt. 24:21).

Sec. 1.4 Second Coming of Christ and Millennial Reign

We believe that the period of great tribulation on the earth will be climaxed by the triumphant return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. He will return with His saints as He went, in person on the clouds of heaven, and with power and great glory (Lk. 21:27) to introduce

the millennial age. He will temporarily bind Satan and place him in the abyss (Rev. 20:2-3) and will lift the curse which now rests upon the whole creation (Is. 65:25).

At the end of the thousand year millennial reign of Christ, Satan will be loosed for his final deception of the nations (Rev. 20:7-8), only to be met by Christ's judgment. Satan will be condemned and bound to the eternal punishments of hell (Rev. 20:10).

Sec. 1.5 Eternal State

We believe that at death the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and there remain in a conscious state until the resurrection of their glorified bodies when Christ comes for His own (Luke 16:19-26; 23:42-43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23).

The souls of the unbelieving remain after death conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the millennium. Then soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting torment separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (Phil. 1:23; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15).

Sec. 2 Sign Gifts: Tongues Position

Sec. 2.1 We believe that some gifts such as speaking in tongues, miracles and healings are temporary (1 Cor. 13:8).

Sec. 2.2 Hessel Church is not a “charismatic” nor a “tongues movement” organization.

Sec. 2.3 We acknowledge that God is sovereign and can give the gift of tongues whenever He pleases. But:

Sec. 2.2.1 We believe that the gift of tongues was a gift of foreign languages for the purpose of telling the Gospel to others, mainly Jews. (Acts 2:5-11, 1 Cor. 14:21-22).

Sec. 2.2.2 We believe that such a gift was neither a requirement to prove the presence of the Holy Spirit nor an indication of deep spiritual experience. (1 Cor. 12, 13, 14).

Sec. 2.2.3 We do not see “tongues speaking” as a normative experience for all believers in the first century church, nor for believers today (1 Cor.12:4-11, 28-31). Nor do we believe that Christians should be urged to adopt a stereotypical “tongues” experience, but rather we believe that those not having this experience are complete and “full gospel” Christians (1 Cor.12:13).

Sec. 2.2.4 We believe that Christians are commanded to be filled with (controlled by) the Holy Spirit, not to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Being baptized in the Spirit (identified in the body of Christ, the Church) is accomplished in people’s lives by the Holy Spirit the moment they accept Christ Jesus as their personal Savior (Eph. 5:18; 1 Cor. 12:13). We believe that “speaking in tongues” does not need to accompany the baptism of the Holy Spirit, especially as regards it being proof of salvation, and that insisting on this is divisive and unscriptural.

In the same chapter in which we are informed that all are baptized by the Holy Spirit we are told that not all speak in tongues, nor are they supposed to do so (1 Cor.12:1, 12:30).

Sec. 2.2.5 We believe that no single gift of the Holy Spirit is the indispensable sign that a believer is filled with the Spirit. It is the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23), that gives greater evidence of the Spirit’s control. The gifts of the Spirit enable us to expound the Word of God and to expand the work of God (Rom. 12:5-8; Eph. 4:11-16).

Sec. 2.2.6 We believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are just that — gifts; and that one cannot tell another what gifts he must receive. The Holy Spirit is the sovereign Giver and He will distribute “to each one individually just as He wills.” (1 Cor. 12:11). Neither does The Holy Spirit need human intervention in order to bestow His gifts.

Sec. 2.2.7 We believe that the silence of almost all of the New Testament writers concerning “tongues speaking” is significant. Whereas there are many references to the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, there is comparatively little information given to “tongues”. There are only three references to this in the Book of Acts (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-46; 19:1-6), and in only one Epistle (1 Corinthians) is the subject discussed.

Sec. 2.2.8 We believe that “speaking in tongues” is not an “instant entrance” into deeper spiritual life. It is a false assumption to contend that this experience is an evidence of a

person's faith or of spiritual maturity. A mature Christian experience involves worship, a relationship of trust, confession of sin, prayer, Bible study, witnessing, love-filled service, etc. It would appear that seeking sign-gifts often indicates a lack of faith (1 Cor. 14:22; Matt. 12:38-39; John 10:24-30).

Sec. 2.3 It is very important to emphasize that Hessel Church is *non*-charismatic rather than *anti*-charismatic. We see our charismatic brothers as fellow Christians, and therefore love and seek to live in harmony with them.

Sec. 3 Spiritual Warfare

Sec. 3.1 We believe that Satan exists and that he and his demonic forces are continually waging war against all mankind (Eph. 6:10-18; Revelation 12:9).

Sec. 3.2 We believe that it is the desire of Satan and his demonic forces to wreak havoc in the life of the believer (Job 1:7; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 Thess. 2:18) and non-believer (Matthew 13:4, 19; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:2) alike.

Sec. 3.3 We believe that while Satan is powerful, he is ultimately in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:24-29; Col. 1:13-16).

Sec. 3.4 We believe that the Christian's authority and strength in a confrontation with satanic influence is based entirely upon his position in Christ (Eph. 1:3, 6:10). The believer is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), he is a child of God (Eph. 1:4-5), and he is God's own possession (1 Peter 2:9). "We know that no one who is born of God sins [continually]; but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not

touch him." (1 John 5:18) Our position is a privilege that should not be abused.

Sec. 3.5 We believe that Christ's atoning death and His resurrection gave Him the victory over Satan (Rev. 12:9-11), and that through Christ, we have victory over sin and death (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

Sec. 3.6 We believe that although Satan's fate is sealed (Rev. 20:2-3, 10), God has, in His sovereignty, allowed Satan to rule as the "prince of this world," and the "god of this age" (John 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4).

Sec. 3.7 We believe there is proper terminology that should be used when referring to an individual whom Satan is influencing. This term is "demonized," or "diamonizomai," as it appears in the Greek. Because our language is adaptable and connotation of words is constantly changing, the term "demon-possessed" currently seems to cloud our understanding in the matter of spiritual warfare. "Demonized" ("diamonizomai") refers to one under the power of a "daimon," (or a demon). (Abbot-Smith, Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, 1981, p. 97).

Sec. 3.8 We believe that Satan can influence believers when they are willing to listen to him or when they give him the opportunity (2 Cor. 2:10-11; Eph. 4:26-27). This is also seen in Ananias' & Sapphira's giving in to Satan's urging to lie (Acts 5:3), and in the report of Satan speaking through Peter to urge Christ to forego the cross (Matt. 16:21-23).

Sec. 3.9 We believe that although the believer can be and is tempted by Satan (Luke 4:1; 1 Cor. 7:5; 1 Thess. 3:5), the devil is not the only source of temptation. The believer may be enticed by his own flesh (James 1:1-4), and by the world (James 4:4-5; 1 John 2:15-16, 5:3-5).

Sec. 3.10 We believe there are three main methods used by Satan to attack believers:

- temptation (Matt. 4:3-10; 1 Thess. 3:5)
- deception (Rev. 12:9, 13:13-4)
- accusation (Rev. 12:10)

Sec. 3.11 We believe that while there is a heightened awareness of demonic activity today, there are also many problems which can be solved by basic Biblical counseling and insight. Here are four concepts to remember when dealing with spiritual warfare:

- a. There are few absolutes; stay away from concrete statements and snap decisions (“He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him” – Prov. 18:13).
- b. Work within a logical progression—don’t assume the worst right away (“The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.”- Prov. 15:28).
- c. Work through the appointed church staff when sensing spiritual warfare (see Hebrews 13:17).
- d. Our church staff and leadership will seek additional guidance when the need for them to do so arises.

Sec. 3.12 We believe that the weapons that are to be used in spiritual warfare are truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God (Eph. 6:10-17).

Sec. 3.13 We believe that nothing (including Satan and his forces) can ever separate the believer from the love of God (Rom. 8:35-39).

Sec. 3.14 We believe that Satan never has the right to seize control of the believer. The believer is no longer under the authority

of Satan and his forces (Col. 1:13; Eph. 1:1-7; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 John 10:27-29).

Sec. 3.15 We believe that there is a strong scriptural admonition to stay away from all forms of the occult (Duet. 18:9-14; 1 Tim. 4:1). Some modern examples of occult activities would be horoscopes, palm reading, ouija boards, and demonic beckonings.

Sec. 3.16 We believe that generally speaking, demonic forces are only permitted to influence the life of a believer who surrenders his will to Satan in some way. Occult involvement, an unforgiving spirit (Matt. 18:23-25), bitterness (James 3:14-15), or habitual immorality (1 Cor. 5:1-5). This is a nebulous issue and yet Scripture states that “we can only serve one master” (Matt. 6:24). If a person willingly surrenders himself to the influence of satanic forces, trouble is imminent.

Sec. 3.17 We believe that most counseling cases involve problems other than demonic forces. There may be emotional scars in a person’s life that are causing problems, or there may be sin that needs to be dealt with. In either case, God’s Word and obedience to it offers freedom and relief. “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7) We shouldn’t assume that demons are responsible for every emotional problem we have; instead, we are to submit to God and resist the devil.

Sec. 3.18 We believe the following is the Biblical method of gaining victory over demonic influence:

Sec. 3.19 We acknowledge the truth as stated in God’s Word, (“Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” – John 8:32).

Sec. 3.20 We will move in a direction of obedience to the truth (“taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ”- 2 Cor. 10:3-5), and pray (“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”- Eph. 6:18).

Sec. 3.21 We believe there are no Biblical examples of demons of “lust”, “envy”, “anger”, etc. Hence, we should avoid confusing demons with works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). When such sins are present in a person’s life, we should deal first with the sin directly.

Sec. 3.22 We believe that while there is nothing intrinsically wrong with specific warfare prayers, there is a danger in perceiving them to be a “magic potion” (i.e. “If your marriage is struggling then “try” this one; if your children are rebellious “try” this one”). God is interested in our heart, not a “word for word” prayer. A note of caution should be heeded when using any model prayer; “And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, ...” (Matt. 6:7).

Sec. 3.23 We believe that God’s Word provides us with the only reliable spiritual information. The Bible is the basis for the believer’s instructions relating to spiritual warfare. Therefore, we avoid establishing doctrines based upon experience or any demonic sources.

This Biblical Study on Spiritual Warfare will be an ongoing investigation of what the Scriptures mean, in light the present day heightened demonic activity. This paper is by no means the final word on this issue. We

leave ourselves open to the Spirit and His teaching. (1990)

Sec. 4 Affiliation Position:

Hessel Church shall remain an independent, non-denominational fellowship.

Sec. 4

We shall affiliate ourselves with the American Missionary Fellowship (AMF), formerly known as the American Sunday School Union. This church-planting mission provided the leadership for our early Sunday School and church development. We cooperatively work with A.M.F.'s leadership in providing our Church with Christian camp and conference programming. We shall support AMF with our finances and our fellowship. We shall be free to have fellowship with other evangelical Churches and their missionaries.

Hessel Church will not affiliate with the *National* or *World Council of Churches*. We believe that both of the above organizations are not true to the teachings in the Word of God and, therefore, we deliberately separate ourselves from their movement.

This *Doctrinal Statement* document will only be amended after thorough study, deliberation and prayer by the board of elders. Any changes will be immediately communicated and explained to the membership in written and oral form.