

Appendix

Statement of Faith for Gospel Fellowships

[Editor's Note: After the Lord's leading to use the name *Gospel Fellowships* there was a word search preformed on the internet and this statement of faith from one of the larger Chinese house Church networks called: China Gospel Fellowship was found. This was a surprise and great blessing for before we were never aware of this underground house Church name. After reading their statement of faith, there was an immediate burden to make this statement of faith available to *Gospel Fellowships* and to any other house Churches or groups that would like to identify with the statement. We believe it is a tremendous way for believers to be in unity worldwide with precious brothers and sisters in China who are experiencing a great revival and expansion of the Church. Below is the statement of faith found on the China Gospel Fellowship page]:

For the purpose of making known the true faith of the Church, some house Church leaders joined together on behalf of all house Churches and composed the Statement of Faith of Chinese house

Churches in November 1998. The following is the complete statement.

Introduction

In order to establish a common, legitimate criteria of faith for house Churches in China, in order to lay a foundation on which overseas Christian Churches can enjoy fellowship with us in unity, in order to help our government and people to understand our faith, and in order to draw a clear distinction between us and heresies and cults, a group of key leaders from several major Chinese house Church movements met together in a certain location in north China in *November 1998*. They prayed together, studied the Bible together, and together drafted the following statement of our faith.

1. The Bible

We believe that all 66 Books of the Bible are God-breathed.¹¹⁸² They were inspired by God through the Holy Spirit to the prophets and Apostles who composed them.¹¹⁸³ The Bible is complete and inerrant truth. It has the highest authority. Nobody is allowed to distort it in any way.¹¹⁸⁴

The Bible clearly states God's purpose of redemption of mankind.¹¹⁸⁵ The Bible is the highest standard of our Christian life and ministry. We are

against any denials of the Bible; we are against any teaching or theories that regard the Bible as out of date, or as erroneous; we are also against the practice of believing only in selected sections of the Scripture.¹¹⁸⁶ We want to emphasize that the Scriptures must be interpreted in light of their historical context and within the overall context of scriptural teachings. While interpreting the Bible, one must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the principle of interpreting the Scripture by the Scripture.¹¹⁸⁷ The interpretation should be coherent and consistent, but not based on isolated verses. Biblical interpretation should take into account the orthodox faith that has been taken as the heritage of the Church down through history. We are against interpretation of the Scripture merely according to one's own will, or by subjective spiritualization.¹¹⁸⁸

2. Triune God

We believe in the only one true God,¹¹⁸⁹ the eternally self-existing triune God who is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁹⁰ While sharing the same nature, the same honor and the same glory, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons who have differently functional roles in the work of redemption. The Father planned salvation; the Son fulfilled salvation; while the Holy Spirit applies the salvation.¹¹⁹¹ However, the Father, the

Son and the Holy Spirit are not separate and independent of each other. They are one in unity. The Son reveals the Father;¹¹⁹² the Holy Spirit reveals the Son;¹¹⁹³ the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are together worshipped and praised. We pray to the Father through the Holy Spirit in the Name of the Son.¹¹⁹⁴

We believe that God created the universe and all things, and He created man in His own image.¹¹⁹⁵ God has all things in His own control and sustains all things.¹¹⁹⁶ He is the Lord of human history. The almighty God is a righteous, holy, faithful and loving God. He is omniscient,¹¹⁹⁷ omnipresent¹¹⁹⁸ and omnipotent.¹¹⁹⁹ He manifests His sovereignty throughout human history.¹²⁰⁰ The Son and the Holy Spirit are eternal: the Son has the relationship of Son to the Father, but is not created;¹²⁰¹ the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son.

God is spirit. He has no visible form or shape. Christians should worship Him in spirit and in truth.¹²⁰² Christians have no other object of worship apart from this triune God. We reject wrong explanations of the trinity, such as: one body with three forms (like water, ice and vapor), or one body with three identities (like the sun, light and heat; or the son, the father and the husband).

3. Christ

We believe that Jesus is God's unique Son, that He is the Word who became flesh and came to this world.¹²⁰³ In His perfect humanity He was tempted yet never sinned.¹²⁰⁴ He gave Himself to the death on the cross, and shed His blood to redeem everyone who has faith in Him from sin and death.¹²⁰⁵ He rose from death, ascended to heaven, was seated at the right hand of the Father, received Holy Spirit from the Father, and sent the Spirit to those who believe in Him.¹²⁰⁶ At the end of the age, Jesus is going to come back to judge the world.¹²⁰⁷

Christians receive the status of sonship from God, but they remain human; they never become God.¹²⁰⁸

Nobody knows the exact date of Jesus' return, but we are confident that Jesus will return, and we can also know some of the signs of His return.¹²⁰⁹

We are against any teaching that says Jesus has come the second time in His incarnated form.¹²¹⁰ We are opposed to anyone who claims himself to be Christ.¹²¹¹ Any teaching that claims Jesus has already returned is a heresy.

4. Redemption

We believe if a person has confessed his sin and repented,¹²¹² if he has believed in Jesus as the Son of God who died for our sin on the cross and resurrected from death on the third day¹²¹³ to pardon our sins,¹²¹⁴ and if he has received the Holy Spirit¹²¹⁵

that God has promised, then he is born again and saved.¹²¹⁶ It is by grace and through faith that we are saved.¹²¹⁷ By faith we are justified; by faith we receive the Holy Spirit, and by faith we become the sons of God.

We believe that God can keep His children completely in Jesus Christ,¹²¹⁸ while the believers are obligated to hold on to their faith firmly till the end.¹²¹⁹

We believe that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is an evidence of salvation, and that the Spirit of God testifies with our spirits that we are children of God.¹²²⁰

We are against the practice of taking any specific phenomenon or personal experiences as common criterions of salvation for all.

We are against any doctrine that teaches a saved person is allowed to freely sin under God's grace.¹²²¹ We are against the teaching of multi-salvation (that one can lose but then gain back his salvation many times); we are also against salvation by keeping the law.¹²²²

5. The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Godhead. He is the Spirit of God,¹²²³ the Spirit of Christ,¹²²⁴ the Spirit of truth,¹²²⁵ and the Spirit of holiness.¹²²⁶

The illumination of the Holy Spirit convicts man of his sins, brings him to the knowledge of truth, leads him to faith in Christ and therefore to being born again and salvation. The Holy Spirit leads believers into the truth, teaches them to understand the truth, and guides them to submission to Christ as well as to the fruitfulness of the abundant life. The Holy Spirit bestows upon believers all kinds of power, and witnesses the powerful deeds of God with signs and wonders.¹²²⁷ The Holy Spirit searches all things.¹²²⁸

In Christ, God grants a diversity of gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church so as to manifest the glory of Christ.¹²²⁹ With faith and desire, Christians can experience the pouring down of the Holy Spirit on them and be filled with the Holy Spirit.¹²³⁰

We deny any doctrine that teaches the cessation of signs and wonders or the termination of the gifts of the Holy Spirit after the age of the Apostles.

We don't forbid the speaking of tongues,¹²³¹ neither do we force people to speak in tongues, or insist that speaking in tongues is the evidence of salvation.

We refute the view that the Holy Spirit is merely a kind of inspiration instead of being a personal member of the Godhead.

6. The Church

We believe that the Church is composed of all who are called by God in Jesus Christ.¹²³²

Christ is the Head of the Church. The Church is the body of Christ,¹²³³ the house of God, and the pillar and foundation of truth.¹²³⁴

The Church is both regional and universal. It consists of all Churches of sound faith currently existing around the world, as well as the Churches of the saints down through history.

The Church should be governed according to Biblical principles. Its spiritual ministry should not be controlled or dominated by secular powers.

Brothers and sisters in the Church are members of one body, with each fulfilling its roles.¹²³⁵ The body builds itself up in love, and grows into Him who is the head. The universal Church should reach unity in the faith and in the Holy Spirit, and be united into one in Christ.¹²³⁶

The purpose of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel, to teach and shepherd believers, to build and send missionaries, to denounce heresies and uphold truth, and to defend the Word. As Christians gather together in the Name of the Lord, the number of people meeting together or the location of the meeting should not be limited. Each believer is a priest,¹²³⁷ and each has the right and obligation to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth.¹²³⁸

We are against the alliance between the Church and politics, or any politics intermingled into the

Church. We are against the Church's dependence on foreign political powers for its growth.

We are against the Church's participation in any activities that undermine solidarity of national people groups or the unification of the state.

7. The Last Days

We believe Christ will return, but no one except the Father knows the date of His return.¹²³⁹ On the day when Christ returns, He will come in glory and power on the clouds with the angels.¹²⁴⁰ On that day, the angels will blow the trumpet, and those who were dead in Christ will rise first. After that, all born again Christians who are still alive will also be transformed.¹²⁴¹ Their bodies will all be glorified, and they will all be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.¹²⁴²

The saints will then reign together with Christ for a thousand years,¹²⁴³ during which Satan will be cast into the Abyss. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released temporarily and will go out to deceive the nations until he is finally thrown into the lake of burning sulfur.¹²⁴⁴ After that, Christ will sit on the great white throne to judge men from each nation, tribe and people. Everyone will rise from the dead and be judged before the throne. If anyone's name is not found written in the Book of life, he will be thrown into the lake of fire. The former heaven

and earth will be consumed by fire. Death and Hades will also be thrown into the fire.¹²⁴⁵

Those whose names are found written in the Book of life will enter into the new heaven and the new earth, living there with God forever.¹²⁴⁶ We believe that while waiting for the coming of the Lord, believers should serve the Lord with great diligence, preach the Word of life,¹²⁴⁷ and bear abundant fruits in their words, actions, faith, love and holiness. We also believe that those who do this shall receive all kinds of rewards.¹²⁴⁸

As for whether the rapture happens before, during or after the great tribulation, we recognize that each denomination has its own conviction, and therefore there is no absolute conclusion in regard to this. The duty of each Christian is to be alert¹²⁴⁹ and prepare himself for the coming of the Lord.¹²⁵⁰

Concluding Exhortations

We give our thanks and praise to our Almighty Heavenly Father who has led us to draft this Statement of Faith. Our desire is that the Holy Spirit will move brothers and sisters in more Churches to accept and identify themselves with this Statement, and to read the Statement in the Churches so as to strengthen the faith of the believers in resisting heresies and cults, so that together we can welcome the great revival of the Church.

May the Lord bless the Church in the world.

May the Lord bless the peoples of all Nations.

May praises and glory be unto our true and triune
God. Amen!