



Identity Church

Statement of Faith & Doctrinal Reflections

GOD

Identity Church believes that there is only one living and true God, who exists in three distinct persons- God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three, the Trinity, are equal in essence and distinct in function (*Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19*).

THE FATHER

The first person of the Trinity orders and directs all things according to his purpose and pleasure. He has created humanity to bring him glory and honor, through his grace. While he is transcendent, he is also actively involved in his creation- offering an eternal relationship with us through his Son Jesus Christ (*Matthew 6:9; John 5:19-24; Ephesians 1:3-6; 2:1-10*).

THE SON

Jesus Christ is both the eternal Son of God and virgin-born Son of man. Fully God, fully man, He surrendered nothing of His deity during His earthly life. His sinless, sacrificial offering on the cross satisfied the Father's justice, offering atonement for all of humanity's sins, for all time. Identity Church believes in his bodily resurrection, His physical ascension, and His visible return back to earth to establish His earthly kingdom (*John 1:14-18; 1 Corinthians 15; Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 2:9; Revelation 20:11-15*).

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The third person of the Trinity executes the will of God in this world through humanity, by leading, guiding, filling, teaching and convicting. The Holy Spirit is not merely an impersonal force, but is a person, displaying the qualities of personhood (intellect, emotions and will). He equips believers upon conversion by giving them gifts to be used for the building up of the church, and by bearing fruit through their yielded lives (*John 16:5-16; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 2:10; John 3:1-8; Ephesians 1:1; Galatians 5:16-25*).

HUMANITY

We were created in the image of God, destined to enjoy an intimate relationship with God, fulfilling his will here on earth. But because of Adam and Eve's willful sin in the garden sin entered into the world and has infected all of humanity. Therefore, because of our inherent sinful nature received from our father Adam, we are all separated from God, spiritually dead, and destined for physical death and an eternity removed from God (*Genesis 1-3; Romans 1:18-32; Romans 3; Romans 5; Ephesians 2:1-3*).

SALVATION

Identity Church believes that Jesus Christ died for our sins as the only sufficient sacrifice, offering the atonement of sins for all mankind through his death, burial and resurrection. While salvation is available to all, it is only experienced by those who respond to his gracious gift by faith apart from works. For those who do respond we are regenerated and baptized by the Holy Spirit, becoming children of God, given a new nature and placed into the universal body of Christ, making us eternally secure in Him. As a result of our new relationship with God through His Son Jesus, we are now called to a life of submission to the Holy Spirit, manifesting spiritual fruit, and walking in good works that God has prepared beforehand for us to do (*John 14:6; Titus 3:4-7; Acts 4:12; John 1:12; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-9; Hebrews 10:10-12; I John 5:11-13; Galatians 3:26; John 3:16*).

THE SCRIPTURES

Identity Church believes that every word in the original writings is inspired by God and is without error. The Word of God reveals God's nature and will for all of humanity, and because of this it is to be the foundation of faith and practice. I affirm that while the Scriptures are accurate in all matters it was never given to be an end in and of itself, but rather a means to a relationship with God. Because of this the authority and teaching of Scriptures is of utmost importance. (*II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 4:12; John 17:17*).

THE CHURCH

For all who have placed their faith in God through His Son Jesus Christ, they are a part of the universal body of believers known as the church. This placement of the believer into the universal church requires an association of the believer with other followers of Christ in a local assembly. The purpose of the local church is to lead people to Christ and to bring them to maturity in Christ. The members of the local church are to live their lives in humble submission to other Spirit led believers, and to the God appointed leaders of the church. (*Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Matthew 28-18-20; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17*).

THE FUTURE

Identity Church believes that the next great event in human history will be the return of Jesus Christ for God's children. This is the blessed hope for all followers of Jesus Christ. While this event is a prophetic truth of Scripture, we acknowledge that the point of Christ's return is not for the believer to passively await this event, but to labor with all our might in the power of the Spirit to fulfill His will in our lives through righteous living, evangelism and discipleship. After the return of Christ those who accepted God's gracious gift of salvation will worship God forever in the new Heavens and new Earth. (*Matthew 24:36; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; John 14:1-3; Matthew 24-25*).

DOCTRINAL REFLECTIONS:

Authority of the Scriptures:

Identity Church believes that the Bible is the written authority for the Christian faith. With full belief that Jesus Christ is both Lord and Savior, his authority and compassion is displayed through his life and the testimony of it. Jesus says in John 5:39 and Luke 24:27 that all scripture testifies to him. As the Scriptures are purposed to testify of Jesus Christ, his authority

reigns in that testimony, making the Bible the ultimate authority for the Christian. This means that there can be no contradictory living or leading. I also affirm that God's word is infallible and perfect in its original form. (*2 Tim. 3:16*)

Gospel-Centered/ Christ-Centered

To be Gospel-Centered is resting, reflecting and rejoicing in the truth of Jesus graciously offering a way to eternal salvation and fellowship with God through his life, death, burial and resurrection. This orientation of resting reflecting and rejoicing is applied to every area of our lives and determines our views, decisions and aspirations. All of life is rendered in view of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- **Church Government and role of elders**

Elder-led

As it pertains to ecclesiastical polity or church government, my views are most impacted by the study of both NT and OT examples in the Bible that reflect the *presbyterian* view. Through the scriptures I see many examples of God's use of men who are faithful overseers to those that they have been given to lead and care for; first to their immediate family and also to their local church body. This faithfulness in character is exemplified in the actions that produce fruit in his life and the spiritual disciplines, both empowered by the Holy Spirit. The church led the Holy Spirit then the established elders select and confirm these men through prayer and careful observation. (*Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5*)

The role of an elder is to provide the primary oversight and leadership to the church body (*1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:1-2*). Identity Church believes that within a group of elders, there may be "ruling elders" (laymen who provide leadership) and "teaching elders" (ordained pastors). All elders must be able to teach (*1 Tim. 3:2*) but I acknowledge that teaching elders may be trained in that gifting.

Role of women in church ministry and leadership

As a church, we encourage and celebrate women serving in leadership and service roles, just as men serve, in numerous areas of gospel ministry. We also acknowledge that God uses men and women in miraculous ways in history that bring about the clarity of the gospel and the truth of his word. The only exception we see in Scripture comes in the ordination of men who will be leading the church as an elder and the regular preaching role in our worship gatherings. We believe that the role of elder is designed to be held by a qualified man within the congregation (*1 Timothy 3:1-16; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:6-9*). Furthermore, we do believe that

women can lead and serve as deacons as well as teach in a non-elder role (i.e., Bible Studies, Devotionals, Conferences, etc.)

Church Discipline

Disciplining in the church is first and foremost done out of love (*Hebrews 12:1-11*) for Christ, His Church and the soul of the member in need of discipline. Identity Church believes that the scriptures give us two distinct examples of discipline that is enacted by the church, formative and corrective. Formative discipline is for all believers and it manifests itself most in the teaching of the word and discipleship. Corrective discipline is used when a covenant member of the church body is in sin and needs to be disciplined in hopes of bringing repentance and restoration back to the church body. Jesus gives us the best example of church discipline in Matthew 18:15-20 when he uses the method of member to member, member and witness to member and then church to member confrontation when dealing with matters of sin. The result of a resistance to repentance is separation from the fellowship of the local church. Church discipline is done out of love and to provide a steady example between covenant believers of spiritual accountability. It is a means to enact an interim judgement that helps the church determine if the member in need of discipline is truly in right relationship with Jesus Christ.

Social Justice and racial reconciliation

Social Justice: Identity Church believes that as Ephesians 1:7-14 teaches us, the purpose of God's eternal plan is to unite all things both in heaven and on earth in Christ Jesus. This reunification is a reestablishing of perfect creation, glorifying God in all things. With this in mind, the Christian should live his life with a heart for restoration, reconciliation and justice. Those things that can be mended or healed should be in the life of the Christian. (2 Cor. 5:18). The Bible gives us a number of thorough examples of how to deal with issues of justice; all of which take an active approach (*Isa. 1:17; Zech. 7:9-10, Prov. 31:8-19; Mic. 6:8; Psa. 82:3*). In this Identity Church believes the Christian is given power and responsibility to play a part in justice being served to those who are oppressed. This may look different in every situation and should be guided by spiritual overseers.

Racial Reconciliation: Humanity has divided itself racially for centuries, however the Bible and the Church display a unique mosaic of believers of all types being bonded in Christ. The Bible gives us examples of tension and discrimination fueled by race, but it also gives us ways to address these things (*Acts 10; Matt. 15:21-28*). With God's will to have all things united in Christ displayed in passages like Rev. 5:9 and 7:9, we must embrace God's desire for there to be unity in all no matter their differences (*Gal. 3:28*). This means that race-based sin should be addressed and treated like any other sin; establishing the offense, calling to repentance and seeking forgiveness and restoration of the disjointed parties. In many cases though, there cannot be reconciliation where there has been no conciliation. Racial Conciliation is the process of providing initial gospel mediation for estranged parties. The Christian should seek

to do these things, not out of obligation but out of love for Christ and the desire to be united to all who are in Him.

Sanctity of Life

Identity Church believes that in God's original design, human beings were not purposed to be subject to death, yet sin inflicted that consequence on our lives (*Rom. 6:23*). As Christ is restoring the world and establishing his Kingdom, He will eliminate sin and death forever (*1 Cor. 15:26; Isa. 25:8*) and because of this reality, we shall embrace life, both physical and spiritual. With this in mind, I do not affirm any act of intentionally taking the life of another human being; no matter the age, race, nationality, or inability to function. The sixth commandment prohibits all intentional acts of murder, this would include suicide, abortion and euthanasia. All who violate this command must be brought to repentance and just punishment for the offense.

Sexuality, Sex and gender.

Sexuality

- In Creation, God established his authority and sovereignty over all things, and this includes humanity and its sexuality. If God is sovereign then his sovereignty should affect the things He has created, therefore as Christians, those who have submitted themselves to the glorification of God in all areas of life by worship and ministry, we submit all of our sexual identity to Him and his purpose. Whether desire, orientation or activity, all facets of sexuality should be in submission to God. The basis for all things that pertain to Christian sexuality should be taken from Genesis 1 & 2; God's creation and purposing. Genesis 1 displays the intentional creation of complimentary image bearers (1:27) that are encouraged to glorify him through their intercourse. Genesis 2 gives more detail to this by giving instruction on who (man & wife) and why (unification through becoming one flesh). Every other scripture that pertains to sex deals with desires, activities or identifications that aren't reflected in Genesis 1 & 2.

Sex

Identity Church believes that sexual intimacy and/or intercourse was designed exclusively for those adjoined in marital bonds through Christ as it is first displayed in Genesis 2. Sexual intercourse is only seen as holy within the context of marriage in the Bible and is purposed for procreation, pleasure and a symbolism of unity amongst a husband and his wife.

Gender

Along with sexuality and sexual activity, Genesis gives us a purposeful explanation of the distinction between God's image bearers. Genesis 1:27 and 5:1-2 both say that

man (humanity) was made in the image of God and then further explains that ‘male and female he created them’. God’s image is found in the creation of both male and female. With the distinction, God has given instruction of relationship and roles (*The relationship aspect was expounded upon above*). The roles that are established are given by God and are understood to maximize the amount of glory God is given by our lives. Both masculine and feminine attributes are those that are created by and exhibited by God and work together to complement each other. Ultimately, gender and its roles are established in creation as well. Man being formed (Gen. 2:7) and purposed him for service (2:15). God in his own wisdom gave man what he called a ‘helper fit for him’ and taken from him. This establishes a created order. God, man, woman, living creation. It is my view that all other scriptures pertaining to gender are simply parameters to clarify that created order which was obstructed in Genesis 3 in the Fall. With that being said, Man is designed to be a steward of God’s creation and overseer of those entrusted to him. The role of the woman is not one that is displayed best as an assistant but an equal complementary partner that is submitted to God’s plan of authority and responsibility; there to help the man fully glorify God in his work and worship.

Christian Liberty and Responsibility

Christian liberty and responsibility work hand-in-hand in that both are given to reflect God’s glory in the life of the maturing Christian. As it pertains to responsibility, God has given us his Spirit to help us live yet makes us responsible over our day to day lives. This can also be seen in the view of stewardship. God’s gifts (money, housing, transportation, children, amenities) are given for our enjoyment but must be used responsibly to honor him. Liberty meets responsibility in that our freedom gives us the ability to enjoy and our responsibility gives us the ability to limit from sin. As said in 1 Peter 2:16, ‘Live in freedom but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil...’. Christian responsibility says that if one exercises his freedom, he must do so humbly (Rom. 14:22) and in an effort to honor God and uplift your fellow Christian (1 Cor. 6:12). The Christian should take the spiritual life and maturity of others into account as well when exercising those liberties (1 Cor. 8:13).

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Identity Church believes that Scripture shows us that baptism of the Holy Spirit happens at the time of salvation. Romans 8:9 says “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.” and Ephesians 1 teaches that the Holy Spirit is the seal of salvation. Upon salvation, the Spirit takes residence in us which allows us to be continually filled with the Spirit.

The gifts of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the authenticator of Jesus message and the source of empowerment to obey, grow and serve in Him. We affirm that the Holy Spirit distributes gifts to

members of the body of Christ to equip for mission, encouragement, and service. All of the gifts given are for edification of the Body (Eph. 4:12). We affirm that 1 Corinthians teaches us not only that there are numerous amounts of gifts (1 Cor. 12), but they are to be sought and used until Jesus Christ returns (1 Cor. 1:7). Lastly, we believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are still active in the church today and should be used (1 Corinthians 4:1-5) for edification, encouragement and care.

BAPTISM & THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself and reserved for believers. (Acts 2:38, 4:12, 8:12; Matthew 3:13-15, 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32). The former is connected with entrance into the new covenant community, the latter with ongoing covenant renewal. (Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25). Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things. (*1 Corinthians 11:26; John 6:53-57; Romans 6:1-10; Colossians 2:12*).