

# Position Statement

Why a Position Statement? At Dansville Baptist Church we see the need to clarify our positions on certain points for the purpose of being transparent on some known and unknown points of controversy. We also hope to demonstrate the reason behind these positions and that they are not a reaction to other churches or society, but instead demonstrate our desire to stay as close as we possibly can to what God would have us do, sometimes contrasting and contradicting popular or trending thought. We also sense the need for this document and others (such as our Statement of Faith), motivated by genuine “love of the brethren.” True love does not say what others want to hear, but states what they need to hear. Much done under the guise of “compassion” is, in fact, detrimental and ultimately harmful. We strive to be accurate not for the sake of pride, but simply because there is no true benefit in “getting it wrong” when it comes to the Bible as well as our purpose on this world. (see Proverbs 27:6; Psalm 141:5 and Revelation 3:19)

## **Hermeneutics**

The hermeneutic (method of interpreting Scripture) of Dansville Baptist Church is a literal (grammatical-historical) methodology. This is important to know when considering a church, because it determines how the Scripture is handled. If texts are allegorized (sometimes referenced as “spiritualized”) they can be presented as saying a variety of different things and reach a seemingly endless amount of conclusions. This is one of the causes of so many differing perspectives and interpretations of the Bible. But we do not believe there are multiple interpretations of the Bible, and our goal is to come to understand what that one correct reading is. This is a major reason why our studies in the Scripture are verse by verse through entire books. There is a need to

understand the original intent and understanding of each text, seeing this is the most reverential approach we can have when dealing with it.

If the Bible is subject to individual perspectives, opinions, societal trends and other subjectivity, then no one could definitively conclude on any text. This has been happening for centuries and has resulted in many either avoiding it altogether (considering it as inconclusive and contradictory), or using it to authorize all sorts of personal and political agendas. Our objective is to pursue and reach what each text actually says and how it is to be understood, and from that point then go on to apply it correctly. We believe the correct interpretation methodology of the Scriptures is to find out what the author meant when he wrote, taking into account the use of grammar, context, and historical context of the time in which the writer lived. With this as our rule, we believe that it is not correct to seek out what the Scriptures mean to one personally (how an individual feels that they should be interpreted), but by figuring out what the author meant, regardless of whether or not one thinks what was written is agreeable to them.

Experience does not dictate Truth, Truth dictates experience. We believe that God created language as the chief form of communication and that it should be utilized cautiously and reverently in light of this. In summary, we believe there is one interpretation of Scripture yet many applications. So, once we have come to understand the one (single) interpretation of a passage, we are then prepared to discover its multiple applications.

## **The “Christocentric” Interpretation Methodology**

As a point of application of our hermeneutic, we cautiously disagree with a trend that has been emphasizing the need to “see Christ in every text of Scripture.” We understand and appreciate the underlying motive behind this emphasis but see it as another way in which something is imposed upon any given text and ultimately overrides what was actually stated in the passage. We do believe that all of the Bible does point to the coming and work of Jesus Christ, but this is not

dealt with in every text. We believe that God is a Trinity, three persons in one essence, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that all are unified in their work and purpose throughout Scripture. Because of this, we believe that the Bible is to be seen as “Theocentric” (a major focus on God and the Godhead) and not just Christ. Part of this motivation is seen in Jesus’ stated purpose to glorify the Father and to do His will. He “points to” the Father while the Holy Spirit “points to” the Son.

## **Bible Translations**

Given the limitations of language, we understand that no translation can be inerrant (and some can be wrongly influenced by personal or societal bias). We believe it is one of our fundamental goals to come to an understanding of the original intent of the written Scriptures, regardless of our own personal or societal biases (see our section on Bibliology in our Statement of Faith). Many of the Apostles quoted in their writings from the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint (also known as the LXX). Our expectation is founded on the realization that the Holy Spirit will “guide us into all truth” just as the Lord stated in John 16:13. (see also I Corinthians 2:10-13) On our part, we do realize there are discrepancies between the translations and expect that it is part of our responsibility to utilize the resources and training that God has provided to conclude on solid answers to each instance. We currently use the NASB in our services and appreciate its reputation for being literal (“literal” meaning seeking the original intent as and when written).

## **Six Day Creation**

We believe that the Bible teaches that God created the world out of nothing in six literal 24-hour days, not ages or longer periods of time. We believe that the interpretation of the Hebrew term for “day” as a literal 24-hour day is confirmed by the fact that the Scriptures tell us that each 'day' had an evening and a morning. There has been a growing trend for this position to be abandoned

based upon the interpretation of scientific data and is an example of something external to the Scriptures affecting and thus changing a normal, literal handling of Genesis 1-2. We believe that God created the earth with “apparent age” seeing this as a necessary result of having for instance, the stars already in place (their light already reaching the Earth), trees and other vegetation at a mature level of growth and Adam and Eve as adults. We are not against modern science and its scientific endeavors, but we do believe that the interpretation of their findings has been biased with the presupposition that there is no evidence of God (a creator). As a result of this conclusion, we do not believe that man evolved from lower life-forms over an extended period of time and that the universe is relatively young in comparison to the estimates being touted by many in modern science.

## **Marriage**

God made out of mankind two sexes, male and female as described in Genesis 1:27. In history and as we are facing today there have been some who have attempted to try to contradict (in varying degrees) the differences between the sexes. Some have also attempted to make a case that they were born the wrong sex and have sought to take on the persona of the opposite of their God-given design. We are taught in Scripture that mankind is born in sin and that, as a result, will have a bent toward various inclinations away from God’s standard toward one of their own making. Just as one can make a claim they were born with an inclination to homosexuality, so any could also lay the same claim to any sin. This does not make it acceptable before God, and the answer to it is not the justification of it, but rather a need to confess it as the sin it is and repent. We recognize also a common thread throughout the history of mankind, seeking to live in contradiction of God’s design looking to redefine it altogether. This has had an impact on the definition of marriage as well.

Marriage was instituted by God and finds its actual definition in Scripture. Contrary to popular thought, it is not created or made legitimate by love or

physical attraction, nor is it subject to change by the definition of people, government or culture at large. We see the detrimental effects of adultery, divorce and even remarriage upon this institution and how they have lent to the debates currently happening in our society. We at Dansville Baptist Church hold to the reality that God created marriage as a union (covenant relationship before God) of one man and one woman for life (see Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6).

Any relationship that denies or discounts God's definition of marriage is sin. A man and a woman who live together in a physical relationship out of wedlock are sinning, because they reject God's design that a physical relationship is only righteous before Him in the lifelong commitment of marriage. The divorce of a married couple is permitted in the case of the adultery of one of the two persons, but the divorce and/or adultery do not end the marriage before God. The remarriage of a divorced person whose spouse is still living is a sin because it denies that God is the One who made the first marriage and that the marriage is to be lifelong. If there is divorce and remarriage, though the remarriage was a sin, the new marriage must not be annulled and is to be lifelong. It must be noted also that though polygamy was practiced by some in the Bible, it does not serve as an endorsement of the practice. (see I Corinthians 7:2)

Because we recognize the Bible as our sole authority of faith and practice, we at Dansville Baptist Church do not support couples living together out of wedlock, remarriage after divorce (when the spouse of either of the couple is still living) nor "homosexual marriage". Homosexuality is sin because it goes against God's design in sexuality, and the pursuit to legitimize it in the formation of a "marriage" contradicts that God created marriage as the union of a man and a woman. The practices of Homosexuality are sin as seen in Romans 1:18-32, I Corinthians 6:8-10, I Timothy 1:10 and other texts. All sin leads to eternal condemnation before God, and because of this we must not stand in support of it nor endorse it in any way.

We also must clarify that we seek to follow the instruction found in I Corinthians 5:9-13 which acknowledges the reality that Christians will need to interact with unbelievers who are practicing sin in varying degrees. Paul clarified to these believers that they should avoid those sexually immoral, "...not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world." Based on this, we recognize that our business dealings (individually) and general life interactions with unbelievers are not an endorsement of their lifestyle nor their conduct overall. But, there is to be a separation and avoidance of those openly claiming to be Christian while openly practicing and espousing sin. The Apostle Paul went on to clarify, "...not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one." We strive to live consistently with all aspects of this instruction. (see also Ephesians 2:1-10 and 5:3)

Based upon these truths, we are not permitted by God to perform the marriage (nor allow our church building to be used) for someone who has been divorced and their spouse is still living, nor for those actively living in immorality (living together out of wedlock and/or sexually active in their relationship), nor for the so-called "marriage" ceremonies for those of the same sex. This stance is not taken for condemning purposes, but for the purpose of holding to a God-given standard, to promote repentance in those living in sin, and the restoration of fellow believers. In summary, we are only permitted to perform the ceremony for a man and a woman who are both regenerate believers in Christ and who are both living in obedience to Him. (see II Corinthians 6:14)

## **The Church**

The Scriptures clearly identify the true Church as consisting of groups of genuine believers (in various locations) who have publicly identified themselves with Christ by baptism, and who assemble together as brothers and sisters in Christ (Acts 2:41-47). While not a closed assembly, the primary participants are to be genuine believers (not the general public) gathering with a common bond

in Christ. Those who oppose God's Word in speech or conduct, or disrupt the assembly are not to be allowed to continue with the congregation (I Corinthians 5:9-13; Titus 3:10-11; II John 1:7-11). We must remember that before becoming believers we were also enemies of God, and should regard those in opposition as potential recipients of God's mercy and grace (Romans 5:6-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 2:1-10; II Timothy 2:25-26). Realizing this, we are to be prepared to properly share the hope that we have (Colossians 4:3-6; I Peter 3:15-16). We should assemble to exhort each other (Hebrews 10:25).

God has given various positions and responsibilities to believers in the church body to function as one with Christ as their Head. This functioning is to be in unity of The Faith and the knowledge of Christ for the purpose of maturing, ministering, and edifying the body of Christ in love (Ephesians 4:11-16; I Corinthians 12:1-13:31).

The one source for this unity and knowledge is "all Scripture" (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21). It is to be taught to faithful men who will also teach it (II Timothy 2:2). The apostle Paul modeled this and pointed it out to the Ephesians (Acts 20:27-30). Philosophy, tradition, and other sources can take you captive and make you their slave (Colossians 2:8; I Timothy 6:20; II Timothy 4:3-4), therefore careful research and study are necessary to handle accurately the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15). Those casually reading the Scripture or relying on any particular translation without referencing the definitions and grammar of the original texts for the original intent, can easily and unwittingly be in danger of making their own (wrong) interpretations by assuming they know what it says and means; our doctrine, dogma, and emphasis should echo that of Scripture to maintain the purity of its message (II Peter 1:20-21). Those who pervert God's truth are doomed (Galatians 1:6-12; Revelation 22:18-19).

There are numerous examples and instructions for behavior, conduct, and function of genuine believers as individuals and congregations which pertain to personal, social, and congregational matters. These include: sharing the Gospel in our daily living (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8); devotion to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42); renewing our minds (Romans 12:2-21; Ephesians 4:23-5:21); being reminded of what we

already know (II Peter 1:12; II Timothy 2:14); stimulating each other to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24); cleansing ourselves to be honorable, sanctified, and useful vessels for the good works of the Master (II Timothy 2:20-21); obeying God submissively - doing the good works of true spiritual value which He has prepared for us to carry out (John 3:21; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:12-13), rather than doing mankind's self-righteous "good works" for the saving of one's soul which are of social value only and are worthless to God (Isaiah 64:6); worshipping in spirit and truth by living The Faith (John 4:23-24; Romans 12:1); bearing with, forgiving, teaching, and admonishing (Colossians 3:12-16; I Corinthians 6:7); correcting self before correcting others (Matthew 7:3-5); admonishing / reproofing them strongly (II Thessalonians 3:6-15; Titus 1:13); consistently preaching, reproofing, rebuking, and exhorting with doctrine from The Word (II Timothy 4:1-4); not condemning but discerning (Matthew 7:1-6); testing the spirits / "teachers" (I John 4:1-6; Revelation 2:2); examining ourselves, not just preachers and teachers (II Corinthians 13:3-6); contending earnestly for the faith (Jude 1:3-4); loving one another (I Corinthians 13:1-13; I John 4:7-21); loving God and fellow believers more than earthly family who are not believers (Matthew 10:35-37, 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21, 12:51-53, 14:26); deferring to others as more important / self-sacrificing for others (Romans 12:1-21, 14:1-19; I Corinthians 8:1-9:27; Philippians 2:1-8); sharing our worldly goods with fellow believers in need (James 2:15-16; I John 3:16-17); serving one another (Galatians 5:13-14); being subject to one another (Ephesians 5:21; I Peter 5:5-6); settling differences and disputes between fellow believers (I Corinthians 6:1-8); confronting and church discipline when personal confrontation has not been productive (Matthew 18:15-17); church discipline of a professing believer living in open sin harming the testimony of the body of Christ (I Corinthians 5:1-13; Ephesians 5:3-17); restoration of a repentant saint who was sin and who was inconsistent with the testimony of the body of Christ (II Corinthians 2:6-8; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20); we also seek to preserve the local church and the correct teaching and living out of the God's Word by rejecting apostates (II Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 16:17-18); rejecting false teachers (Titus 3:10-11; II John 1:7-11); not associating with so-called brothers openly living in sin (I Corinthians 5:9-13).

The world highly esteems great personalities, programs, and organizations, viewing them as the correct means by which good results are obtained. Many churches appear to be falling prey to this view, and looking to these means to accomplish what God says that He Himself does through His servants. As we have shown in the above paragraphs, God prefers to work through His servants which the world disregards. (Philippians 2:12-13; I Corinthians 1:12 –4:21).

## **Abortion and Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide**

We believe that intentional abortion of babies is a sin, that it is murder (the unlawful taking of human life which is sacred because these little ones are made in the image of God). We firmly hold to the understanding that life begins at conception as referenced in texts such as Psalm 139. God is the Creator and Giver of children and people do not have the moral right to kill these infants in the womb (or shortly after leaving the womb). We do not believe that conception by rape or the endangerment of the life of the mother in pregnancy makes the killing of the child legitimate before God (no matter how “early-term”). Human life is cherished because it is from God, not because it comes in a way that agrees with a general consensus.

We believe the Church should oppose abortion at its root, living in such a way as to oppose, by our lives, the thoughts and ideas that are used to make the practice (in varying situations) appear to be legitimate or justified. Christians should cherish children and acknowledge each one as from God. In conjunction with this, the Church should look upon disabilities as part of God’s design and not define “quality of life” as the absence of these handicaps, sufferings and deformities. God defines and determines quality of life and this often includes situations such as these.

In conjunction with this, we also are firmly against euthanasia and assisted suicide for any reason. These are often looked upon as “mercy killings” but disregard the grace of God “in time of need” as well as discount His sovereign

power and purpose over all things, even the most difficult and painful points of life (see Hebrews 4:16, II Corinthians 12:8-10).

## **Israel**

We believe that whenever the term “Israel” is used in the Bible it is always speaking, one way or another, of the physical descendants of Jacob/Israel. We do not hold to “Replacement Theology” or “Fulfillment Theology” where the term “Israel” or the “true Israel” is believed to be in reference to just the church made up of saved Jews and Gentiles. We believe the term “Israel” only refers to Jews, whether their ethnic group as a whole or as a select part of them who are saved and are thus a part of the “Israel of God” (saved ethnic Israelites).

## **Citizenship**

As those whose faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ, we recognize that our citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20). Secondary to this, we also recognize and see ourselves as privileged to be citizens of the United States of America, and believe it is a nation that was founded upon Christian principles and Biblical ideologies. We do not believe though, that it is the purpose of the church to strive to affect change in our nation (as a church). This responsibility lies in our individual obligations and responsibilities as U.S. citizens. We look, by teaching and encouraging the observance of Biblical instructions, to make good citizens as taught in Romans 13:1-7, I Peter 2:13-17 and Titus 3:1 (See also Jeremiah 29:4-7). But we do not believe this involves the church as an organization becoming politically active; there is no Biblical parallel to that. We encourage each other to utilize the responsibility, and the unique opportunity we have with our form of government, to be active individually, using the power of our vote and voice to hold a Godly standard and stand with morals and legislation that agrees with God’s Word. So, there is a distinction between the work of the church as a body of believers and that of individual citizens exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

There does seem to be a confusion forming that is causing many believers to see their primary responsibility to be that of pushing a conservative political agenda. No matter their political affiliation, all people are under eternal condemnation unless they come to repentance and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We, along with those listed in Hebrews 11, look for a city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10). This must remain our primary focus in our life and work to avoid confusing political conservatism with Biblical Christianity (However, we firmly believe that our beliefs as Christians will, and should affect our political views). Scriptures reveal to us that God is the One who ultimately chooses our leaders (even in a representative republic) and we acknowledge that our present leaders have been set up by God and, in light of this knowledge, we as a church and as individuals seek to be submissive and respectful of these God given authorities, no matter what political party they may be a part of.

We believe our country was founded not by Churches creating a new government, but citizens of England creating a new government. With this clearly evident, we must not allow our local church to become a venue for political purposes. We do recognize that as a church body, we may need to respond to the overall effects of political and judicial decisions, but we will not do so in a political manner.