

Article XII.E.3. District Conference: Ministers: Core Affirmations

3. Core Affirmations

The document entitled, *Our Partnership in the Gospel*, serves as the core affirmations of the Missionary Church. The core affirmations exist to give clarity to who we are and what we believe as credentialed ministers within the Missionary Church.

In contrast, the Articles of Faith and Practice serve as the doctrinal definition of the family known as the Missionary Church. Credentialed ministers shall respect and uphold these articles for their historic value and present description. Wherever credentialed ministers may hold beliefs at variance with any aspect of these articles, they shall consult with their local and district/regional leadership concerning such points of doctrine and not give undue attention to these variations in their proclamation or publication ministries.

Position papers serve various purposes. These papers usually enlarge on specific sections of the Constitution or address some other position of the church that needs to be elucidated for the constituency. Some are for application or amplification of our basic doctrinal positions. Some documents tend to be developed as the direct result of a culturally pressing problem which needs clarification. Some position papers apply biblical principles where no specific Scripture may directly mention that issue. All position papers address situations that are relevant to the day in which we live and add to the denominational stance amidst a broader ecclesiastical dialogue.

The document entitled, *Our Partnership in the Gospel*, serves as the essential and non-negotiable doctrines of the Missionary Church. Credentialed ministers shall therefore wholeheartedly embrace and annually reaffirm this summary in order to maintain their denominational credentials. Credentialed ministers who preach, teach or otherwise publish doctrines at variance with this summary shall forfeit their credentials.

Our Partnership in the Gospel

As reflected in our name, the Missionary Church is unashamedly committed to the worldwide spread of the **gospel** of Jesus Christ, which is “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16, NIV).

As leaders in the advance of the gospel, every Missionary Church pastor needs to be thoroughly **evangelical**, and therefore is expected to embrace without reservation the following biblical truths which are central to the **evangel** (gospel). These core essentials of our theological convictions are all aspects of the gospel we have been called to guard and proclaim.

1. The GOSPEL originates in and manifests the holy love of the eternal, triune God.

We believe that the only true God eternally exists in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This one God, the Creator and Sustainer and Ruler of all things, is all-powerful, everywhere present, and possesses exhaustive knowledge of everything—actual and possible—including the future free acts of humans.

2. The GOSPEL is authoritatively announced in the Scriptures.

We believe that God has spoken through the Bible, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. The entire Word of God was given by divine inspiration and is inerrant in the original writings. The Bible remains the unchanging authority in all matters of Christian faith and practice, illuminating and presiding over every realm of human knowledge. It is true and reliable in all matters that it addresses.

3. The GOSPEL alone addresses our deepest human need.

We believe that God created human beings in His image to glorify and enjoy God forever. However, the first humans, Adam and Eve, were tempted by Satan and fell into sin, distorting the divine image they bore. As a consequence of their disobedience, all of humanity has been corrupted. As sinners by nature and by choice, the entire human race is alienated from God and stands under His just condemnation. Fallen humans can be rescued, restored and reconciled to God only through His gracious, redemptive work in Jesus Christ.

Since human beings are God's image-bearers, we also believe that every human life should be protected and valued from conception until death. Furthermore, since our Creator made humans male and female, and brought the first man and woman together for a one-flesh relationship, we believe that sexual union is required by God to be experienced only in the context of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

4. The GOSPEL is revealed supremely through the person of Jesus Christ.

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, one Person in two natures—fully human and fully divine—having been conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus lived a sinless life, was put to death on a Roman cross, bodily arose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

5. The GOSPEL is accomplished through the work of Jesus Christ.

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our Representative and Substitute, voluntarily offered Himself to die on the cross as the perfect, complete and sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and triumphant resurrection are the only ground for the salvation of the world. With His redemptive work on earth now finished, Christ continues his ministry on our behalf in heaven, where He serves as our High Priest and Advocate.

6. The GOSPEL is appropriated and experienced through personal repentance and faith.

We believe that individuals must turn from their sin in order to turn to Jesus Christ for forgiveness. When God's requirements of repentance and faith have been met, He justifies and regenerates the sinner. It is through penitent faith in Christ alone that anyone is made spiritually alive and right with God, and this faith must be active throughout the life of the believer, expressing itself in obedience and good works.

7. The GOSPEL is applied and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Holy Spirit brings glory to Jesus by convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment and by drawing sinners to the Savior. The Holy Spirit regenerates, indwells, and unites believers into the body of Christ. He teaches, comforts and guides them as well as equipping them for ministry and empowering them as witnesses for the gospel.

We also believe that, as His name suggests, the Holy Spirit actively engages in the divine work of making God's people holy. From the moment of our conversion until we are called to heaven, we must surrender to His sanctifying power in our lives as we battle the opposing forces of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Our progressive growth in holiness will be accelerated and deepened through the decisive experience of submitting to Christ's Lordship in every aspect of life.

8. The GOSPEL is now embodied in the new community called the church.

We believe that the invisible and universal church is composed of all believers in Christ. This one, true church, of which Christ is the Head, is manifest on earth in local churches where Christ's followers join together for worship and prayer, for learning to live God's Word, for fellowship and for evangelism. Therefore the church is to incarnate the gospel's transforming power in the areas of government, culture, society, and the environment in seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

We also believe that the two biblically mandated ordinances of the church—water baptism of believers and the Lord's Supper—visibly and tangibly express the gospel, and strengthen our faith. They are not means of salvation, but signs and seals of its reality.

9. The GOSPEL will be brought to its divinely intended fulfillment at the end of the age.

We believe that the second coming of Jesus Christ is the hope of the church and will be personal, bodily, visible, and glorious. His return, for which we must be constantly prepared, is a source of encouragement and consolation, a motive for pure and holy living, and an inspiration for ministry and mission.

10. The GOSPEL's acceptance or rejection determines the eternal destiny of every person.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead to one of two eternal destinies: heaven or hell. Ultimately, those without saving faith in Christ will appear before God for final judgment and condemnation, and will be justly sentenced to eternal conscious punishment in hell. All believers in Christ will have their lives and works judged for rewards and will live forever, experiencing eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and new earth—to the praise of his glorious grace.