

# CORE BELIEFS:

## A Summary of Personal Beliefs by Rev. Anthony Scalfani August 1, 2017

- **Scripture**
  - God breathed out **the writings** of Holy Scripture through human agency – plenary, verbal inspiration; the human writers **ultimately** made no contribution of their **own**, all of Scripture is the Word of God's Special Revelation (66 books, all words of the same Authority). God supernaturally superintended this process such that His work product (The Holy Bible) perfectly embodied His Authorial intention. He has providentially cared for His Word and His Church, assuring that, in the normative sense, the Elect of God truly have His Word in every generation.
  - Infallibility – because Holy Scripture is nothing less than the Word of God and because it is impossible for God to fail, in any sense, so too His Word can not fail.
  - Hermeneutics
    - God desires to make Himself known to all, to some degree, and most especially and personally and intimately to be known by His Elect.
    - He created us in His own Image and Likeness, among other reasons and purposes, so that He could make Himself known to us and we could come to know Him, at the level of understanding that He intended. Part of what it means to be a creature made in the Image and Likeness of God is that we are: spiritual creatures, moral creatures, reasonable/rational/intelligent creatures (with sentience and memory), with conscience and are linguistically advanced creatures.
    - The proper purpose/objective of study and interpretation of the Bible is to come to an understanding of the Authorial intent of the writings and **The Writer Himself**, in order to know, love, obey, worship, praise and give thanksgiving and witness to Him and His great acts (e.g. Creation, Salvation, Provision of Providence and Judgment), and to enjoy Him in the communion of an eternal living covenantal relationship, to and for the Glory of God.
    - The proper prerequisites/methods for interpretation of the Bible involve the following:
      - Regeneration (including, but not limited to, faith/belief, a hunger for God Himself/truth/righteousness)
      - Illumination by the Holy Spirit
      - Humility/Teachability
      - Prayer
      - Skillful and careful use of the rules of language including such elements as word definitions, grammatical construction, genre of literature, context, and etc.
      - Consideration of the historical context, culture (manners and customs), geography and etc. of the original recipients.
      - A treatment of the Scriptures which recognizes a special hermeneutic, appropriate in singularity to the Divine Literature which it is.
      - Scripture viewed in its intrinsic unity, coherence and consistency, thereby taking seriously the need to understand it in the context of the whole.
      - **Taking very seriously the Fall/Spiritual Death of man, its consequences and implications in the construction of one's theology.**
    - Awareness of and respect for the Historic Orthodox/Evangelical/Confessional expressions of the Faith by the Church.
    - Reading and understanding in the community of the contemporary Body of Christ, most especially in the local church ingathered.
- **God**
  - **ONE, TRUE, LIVING, HOLY, ETERNAL, GOD**, in the Persons of **The Father, The Son (Jesus Christ) and The Holy Spirit**. Creator of **EVERYTHING** from **NOTHING** by Himself, for Himself and to Himself.
  - Christology – The God/Man, two complete natures Divine (eternally begotten) and Human (human, at the incarnation/virgin conception and forever more), yet one person – Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior, Great Shepherd, King of kings, Lord of lords, Great High Priest, Prophet, Lamb of God, Redeemer, Mediator, Intercessor, The Perfect Adam, Head of the Church/Body of Christ, The Resurrection and The Life, The WORD . . .
  - **Glory of God/Exaltation of His Name/Worship** (in every sense of honor, praise, thanksgiving, awe, love, obedience and Covenant Living) – underlies all of the purposes and decrees of God, because He alone is worthy and it is true and right.
  - Holiness – absolute otherness from creation, absolute essential moral purity and righteousness in all His being, actions and relationships.
  - Sovereignty – absolute through all time, in all places, in all Persons of the Godhead, over all Creation.
  - Eternality – eternal self subsistence.
  - Eternal Covenanter.

- **Man**
  - Created by God very good, in the Image and Likeness of God, initially innocent, materially and spiritually alive and in full communion with God and thereby possessing life and under both an Eternal Covenant of Redemption (Unilateral and Unconditional) and a Covenant of Works (Unilateral and Conditional) under which he was able to keep covenant but also able not to keep covenant.
  - Man, in Adam and Eve freely chose to break covenant with God, which was an egregious and catastrophic moral failure, resulting in sin and its consequent spiritual and material death, as a just wage.
  - Man's nature was, by man's act of disobedience, directly changed to a state of corruption which although it did not obliterate the Image and Likeness of God, radically marred it. This sin nature was passed on to all of ordinary generation such that all are sinners by nature as well as sinners by their acting or their failure to act.
  - The elect of God, are all and each regenerated before they die and normatively begin to make manifest more clearly the Image of God in man, the Kingdom of God, **which is predominantly a spiritual kingdom**, on the earth, and a kingdom which is most especially and significantly manifested in **The True Church, the company/assembly of God's Elect**, as is the Lordship of Christ manifested and God glorified, in this age. The elect are given the gifts of faith, repentance, godly sorrow, spiritual life with God, the righteousness of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the atonement of all their sins, all by the grace of God, by virtue of Him uniting them **in Christ**.
  
- **Salvation**
  - All the DOCTRINES of GRACE, the solas of the Reformation, all the points of TULIP. The Historic and Orthodox Confessions of the Reformed Church, regarding soteriology.
  - Salvation by NO OTHER NAME THAN CHRIST.
  - The work of God through The Father, The Son (Jesus Christ) and The Holy Spirit is the only, perfect, satisfactory and sufficient work, with any efficacy whatsoever, for Justification (NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH/ORDINARY HUMAN WORKS OF THE LAW).
  
- **Ecclesiology**
  - **The Church** (Community of Faith/Assembly/True Israel/True Believers/Body of Christ/etc.) is the collection of all the Elect of God through all time and in all places.
  - It now appears as local assemblies/ingathered by the Holy Spirit, congregating under the Headship of Jesus Christ, the Scriptures and the under-shepherds of Christ, i.e. the Elders.
  - It is currently a mixture, in the **visible** church, of the true children of God (believers) and of the children of the devil (unbelievers).
  - **The Elect of God are a fractional component subset, containing few elements, of the universal set of all mankind.**
  - The main activities of the Church, in this age, are the:
    - Worship of God.
    - Discipleship of Believers in Jesus Christ.
    - Fellowship with Believers in Jesus Christ.
    - Evangelism and Missionary Activity to those separated from God.
    - Ministry to the needs (in whole – spiritual and material) of the brothers and sisters in Christ **and** to those separated from God.
  - The True Church is comprised of individual true Believers, which are its members/parts of The Body of Christ and therefore the call on the Church (singular) and the call on Believers (in plural/corporate) are one in the same. This call is clearly taught in the Bible for both Believers and the Church as one manifesting self-sacrificial living to the Glory of God, where the true child of God is mainly occupied with Christ and His eternal **spiritual** kingdom, spiritual treasures, spiritual glory, spiritual rule, spiritual comfort, spiritual inheritance and etc. The insignificant material things of this world, although rightly enjoyed in their time and context, which are passing away and reserved for destruction/judgment, are held loosely and are not cherished by the true believer.
  
- **Eschatology**
  - We **are now** in the Last Days, but **are not yet** at the **End** of This Age/Return of Christ.
  - Upon Christ's Return, He will ingather His Church/Body/Bride, perfecting and consummating its Salvation.
  - There will be a General Resurrection of the dead; the Elect of God, in Christ, to an Eternal Life of great joy with Him and the Administration of God's Justice to all the non-elect, as they are judged by Christ, and found wanting under the Law and thereby condemned to the personal, eternal wrath of God upon them, which torment is eternal, conscious, bodily, and spiritually Hell.
  - The Elect of God will be separated from all evil/temptation/sin and will be with God and like God (not/never divine) and will remain forever in an eternal steady state of perfect communion with Him, to His Glory.

- **Unity**
  - There is a **core of more essential beliefs**, which constitute a faithful expression of biblical Christianity, which is required for unity in assembly, worship, ministry and fellowship. These center on doctrines such as, but not limited to: Nature/Scope of the Holy Scriptures, Who the One, True Living God of the Bible is, What is the biblical Gospel and The Glory of God. There are other lesser doctrines with which we can differ, on this side of the grave, which should not be allowed to divide the Body of Christ.
  - Our differences of belief with the world and **MOST ESPECIALLY** with other believers should be communicated and examined with humility, kindness/tenderness, love, grace, patience and encouragement. There is **never** a place for prideful, inflammatory, mean-spirited, condescending, patronizing, derogatory language in speech or in writing with either those we know well or those we don't, whether in the public or private forum.