ARTICLE III - DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

**Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct**

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Iglesia Bautista Betania’s faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our board of directors under the leadership of its senior pastor is Iglesia Bautista Betania’s final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

**Bible**

We believe that the Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, is God's Word, that it is verbally inspired by God, and without error in the original writings; and that it is the one supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:19-21; I Peter 1:25.

**Trinity**

We believe in one God, perfect in holiness, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30; Acts 5:3-4; Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8.

**Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal and only begotten Son of God, that He was begotten by the Holy Spirit, was born of the virgin Mary, that He was sinless in His life, and is true God and true man. Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1, 18; Colossians 2:9; I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:26; I John 5:20.

**Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment to come, and who regenerates, sanctifies, and comforts the believer. We believe that the Holy Spirit immediately takes up His permanent residence within the believer at the moment of salvation. We believe the Holy Spirit's office was not to glorify Himself, but to glorify Christ Jesus. John 3:5-8; 14:16-18, 26; 16:7-14.

**Resurrection**

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ arose bodily from the grave, ascended bodily and visibly into Heaven, and is bodily present there for us as High Priest and Advocate. Acts 1:9-11; I Corinthians 15:1-4, 20-25; Hebrews 7:25.

**Second Coming of Christ**

We believe in the "blessed hope", the personal, visible and bodily, imminent, pre-tribulational return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the clouds to rapture the believers, and His subsequent Millennial enthronement in an earthly kingdom, in fulfillment of His promise. Acts 1:10,11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:9; Matthew 24:44; John 14:1-3; Revelation 20:4-6.

**Creation**

We believe in the Bible account of creation, as accomplished in six successive, literal, 24-hour days of creative activity, with God resting on the seventh day. We disavow as unscriptural any form of atheistic OR theistic evolution, and the gap theory. Genesis 1:1-2:3.

**Nature of Man**

We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and are now sinners by birth and by choice, positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, in a literal Hell, without defense or excuse. Genesis 1:26-27; 2:17; Romans 5:12-21; Psalm 58:3; I Corinthians 2:14; Romans 1:20; Revelation 20:14,15.

**The Atonement**

We believe that the Lord Jesus died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him and receive Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood, the once-for-all sacrifice for sin. John 1:12; Romans 5:8,9; I Corinthians 15:1-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:12; 10:10; I Peter 1:18-19; 2:24.

**Justification by Faith**

We believe that all who accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and are thereby children of God, and are eternally saved. John 1:12; 3:3-6; Galatians 3:24-26; I John 5:13.

**Eternal Security of the Believer**

We believe that all born-again believers, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, are eternally secure in Christ and shall never come into condemnation for sin. While it is the believer's privilege to rejoice in the assurance of salvation, this is not cause for license or liberty as an occasion to the flesh. John 10:28-29; Romans 8:38-39; Ephesians 1:13-14; Galatians 5:13.

**Satan**

We believe that Satan is literal and personal, the agent of man's initial fall from innocence, the god of this world, the prince and power of the air, and that he will be judged and eternally punished. Genesis 3:1-7; II Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:1-4; Revelation 20:1-10.

**Eternity**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead; both of the just and the unjust. We believe in a literal heaven and a literal hell; that the spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until the final day of judgment (Luke 16:19-31; II Peter 2:9), at which time their bodies shall be raised from the grave, they shall be judged according to their works, and be cast into the place of final and everlasting punishment. Mark 9:43-48; I Thessalonians 4:16-18; Jude 13; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8.

**The Ordinances**

We believe that the ordinances of the church are two (2) in number, and that these offer no special grace or merit, they are simple acts of obedience. These two ordinances are baptism and the Lord's supper. We believe that immersion, one-time-immersed, pictures Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and is the only form of baptism revealed and commanded in the Scriptures, that it has no power to wash away sin--NO SAVING POWER WHATSOEVER, but is only for those who are already saved. We do not practice infant baptism. Matthew 3:16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; Romans 6:3-7. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a MEMORIAL of the death of Christ. It HAS NO SAVING POWER; it is NOT A SACRAMENT. Only those who have been saved through faith in His atoning blood and are walking in obedient fellowship with Him ought to partake it. We do not believe in closed communion. I Corinthians 11:23-32.

**Church**

We believe that a New Testament church is a local body of baptized believers, fellowship, and the spread if the Gospel into all the world. We believe that a New Testament church is a voluntary and independent, self-governing group, who are a body with Christ as its head; that it is a pure democracy, which has the power and right within itself to confess its own faith in accordance with the New Testament; that each congregation recognizes its own democratic self-containing government as its highest authority for carrying out the will of God. Acts 1:8; 2:41-47; Matthew 28:19-20; 18:17; I Corinthians 5:1-5; 12:12-27; I Timothy 3:1-16.

**Officers**

We believe that the officers of a church are two (2) in number: PASTORS (elders and bishops being different names for the same office), and DEACONS. I Timothy 3:1-13; Acts 6:1-7; 20:17, 28. We believe that the Bible teaches that the following offices of the church should be held by men only: Pastor, Assistant Pastor(s), and Deacons. I Tim 2:12; 3:2, 12; Acts 15. We do, however, believe that women play a great role in the church. Women can hold several positions in the church, such as church clerk, deaconess, treasurer, Sunday School Superintendent or Teacher, member of different committees, and others.

**Separation**

We believe that all the saved are called into a life of separation (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1). This separation is in at least three (3) areas: moral, personal and ecclesiastical.

a. Moral: The Ten Commandments are God's perfect standard for a perfect man. We are commanded to perfect holiness in the fear of God (II Corinthians 7:1). The believer is never to suffer as an evil doer (I Peter 4:15), but is commanded to be clean in body and mind (II Corinthians 10:5).

b. Personal: Romans 14 explains that there are going to be areas where the believers are going to disagree in matters which they call sin. The weaker will do things which the stronger will not. In matters of eating, holy days, etc., every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind. Romans 14:5.

c. Ecclesiastical: While recognizing the unity of all true believers, it is also evident that unbelief and error in many organized fellowships has developed to the point where recognized and indisputable apostasy exists. We, therefore, associate with associations and fellowships that would be in full agreement with our Doctrinal Statement (see Article III). We stand in opposition to the Ecumenical Movement and cooperative evangelistic programs between churches and people not of like precious faith. II Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:11-12; Luke 12:51.

**Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

We believe that God gives spiritual gifts to all believers. Some gifts of the Holy Spirit are permanent and are to be used throughout the Church Age. Other gifts were temporary and were given in the Apostolic Age for the purpose of founding the Church. Having fulfilled their purpose, they are not necessary and are not given today. We believe the temporary gifts include the gifts of apostleship, prophecy, miracles, healings, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. We do believe that God continues to heal, but do not believe that this gift is present today. Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:13-14; 13:8-11. 14:33, 40; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4; Mark 16:20)

We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, according to His own will, for the sick and afflicted 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Ephesians 4:7-12; 2 Corinthians 12:12; James 5:15.

**Sanctity of Human Life**

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139.)

**Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Iglesia Bautista Betania as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Iglesia Bautista Betania’s members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Iglesia Bautista Betania in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Iglesia Bautista Betania.