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THE MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY OF ZION CHURCH

Our Vision...

"Transformed by Grace, Poured Out for Others"

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed.

But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

-John 12:24

Our Values...

1. Christ-Centered Worship
2. Freedom in the Gospel of Grace
3. Evangelistic Impact
4. Biblical Worldview that Impacts Believers & the Culture
5. Relational Ministry
6. Investment in Children
7. Connection to the Historic Church
8. Practical Expressions of Compassion & Mercy

Our Strategy...

UP-REACH

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment." (Matthew 22:37-38)

- **Worship** is our highest and eternal calling
- **Prayer.** Drawing our hearts to God and reminding us of our utter dependence on Him
- **Worldview.** Drawing every thought captive to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5)

IN-REACH

"...be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:17b-18)

- **Gospel.** Christians are called to grow in their understanding and application of the **gospel**
- **Scripture.** Reading, study, and understanding of Scripture is crucial to discipleship
- **Doctrine.** While in many cases doctrine is non-essential, it is an expression of our desire to know God and ourselves truthfully and will eventually lead—if done with integrity—to transformation

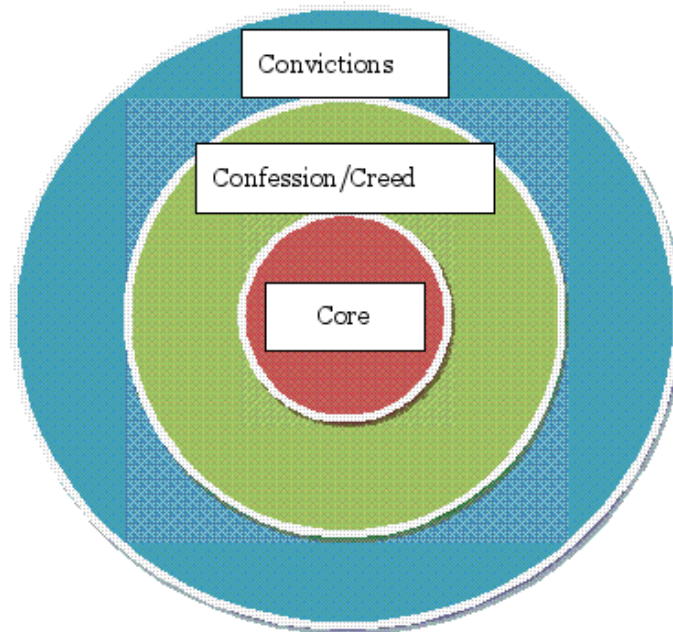
OUT-REACH

"And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:39) See also Micah 6:8, Matthew 28:19-20

- **Mercy & Justice.** Developing a godly concern for the least of these who are made in God's image.

- **Evangelism.** Presenting the gospel of Christ with an invitation to faith.
- **Missions.** Taking the message of the Kingdom and Christ's gospel to all nations.

The Target of Convictions



Core

Key issues that are central to the Christian faith that cannot be compromised or the gospel itself is compromised. A member of Zion must agree with these core issues of the faith.

Examples: salvation by faith in Christ, the truth and authority of the Bible, the Deity of Jesus Christ.

We must be willing to DIE for the core of the faith.

Confession/Creed

Our unique understanding of what the Bible teaches about important, but less central issues of faith. We can be brothers with those who share the core of faith, but do not necessarily share our confession. An officer (elder, deacon) at Zion must not only share the core issues, but also the confessional issues as found in the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) and Catechisms.

Examples: Calvinism, infant baptism, Covenant Theology.

We must be willing to DEBATE confessional issues.

Convictions

Personal interpretations of scripture that Christians will certainly differ about. We must lovingly accept convictions that are different from our own, as long as they do not go against God's word.

Examples: schooling, entertainment, use of alcohol.

We must be willing to DIALOG with those who hold opposing convictions.

DOCTRINE

I. Key Teachings of Biblical Churches: The First Circle of *Core Truths*

*We have Christian fellowship with all churches who teach these basic truths about God and His word:

A. The Authority of the Word of God

1. *The Christian and the Bible*

John 8:31-32 "To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" (see also: I Thessalonians 2:13)

2. *Inspired and Inerrant Word*

2 Tim 3:16-17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Pet 1:20-21 "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (see also: John 10:35; Matthew 5:17-18)

3. *The Spirit and the Word*

John 16:13 "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." (see also: Hebrews 3:7; I Corinthians 2:11-16)

4. *Both Old and New Testaments are God's Word*

Rom 15:3-4 "For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.' For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." (see also: I Corinthians 10:11)

5. *The Transforming Word*

Psa 119:9-11 "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (see also: John 17:17)

6. *Four Reasons Why We Believe the Bible*

- a. Testimony of Christ [Matthew 4:3-10]
- b. Self-Authentication [I Thessalonians 2:13]
- c. Confirmation by Evidence [Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:14-22; II Corinthians 12:12; Acts 2:22]
- d. Work of the Spirit [I Corinthians 2:9-10]

B. God

1. *Perfect in His Being*

- a. Holiness [Isaiah 6:1-4]
- b. Sovereign [Daniel 4:34-35]
- c. Wisdom [Romans 11:33; 16:27]
- d. Love [I John 4:8]
- e. Unchanging [James 1:17b]

Q4. What is God?

A4. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

2. *Trinity*

Mat 28:18-19 "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,'" (see also: Nicene Creed; II Corinthians 13:14)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us and our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets; and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

-The Nicene Creed, AD 325

3. *Creator*

- a. Genesis 1:26-27
- b. Psalm 100

4. *Covenant God*

- a. He created Adam and Eve perfect
- b. We all "fell" when Adam sinned [Genesis 3:1-7; Romans 5:12]
- c. God restores men to Himself through a Covenant of Grace, pictured in many covenants throughout the Bible. [Covenants with Adam (2), Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the New Covenant initiated through Christ]

C. Man

1. *Created in God's image*

Genesis 1:26-27 "God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

2. *Man's Problem: Sin*

Isa 59:2 "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." (see also: Romans 3:23, 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3; Isaiah 64:6)

D. Christ-Centered Salvation

Three key questions:

Q1. Who is Jesus?

- (a) Divine Son of God

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." (see also: John 8:58)

(b) Who became a Man

John 1:14 "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Isn't Jesus just a good religious teacher?

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him (Jesus): 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic--on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg--or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

The Best of C.S. Lewis by C. S. Lewis

Q2. Why did Jesus come?

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (see also: Luke 19:10)

Q3. How are we saved?

(a) God Initiates Salvation

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(b) Message - Christ's Work

- i. Perfect Life [Romans 5:19]
- ii. Substitutionary Atonement [Romans 5:8-11]
- iii. Resurrection - Romans 1:4, 4:29

E. Faith and Repentance go hand in hand

Mark 1:15 "The time has come," (Jesus) said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Acts 2:38 "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.'"

Do I have to work for my salvation? No!

Good works are a *result* of your faith in Christ

Romans 4:5 "However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness."

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast."

James 2:14 "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?"

James 2:17 "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

Philippians 2:12b-13 "--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."

WORKS = SALVATION (Humanism, Liberalism)

FAITH AND WORKS = SALVATION (Roman Catholicism)

FAITH = SALVATION WITHOUT ANY WORKS (Antinomianism)

FAITH = SAVATION WHICH RESULTS IN WORKS OF GRATITUDE

4. *New Life/Obedience*

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (see also: Romans 8:4)

II. Distinctive Teachings of Zion Church: The Second Circle of *Confession*

A. Our Doctrinal Standards: *The Westminster Confession of Faith*

1. *Its origin:*

*the Confession was written by over one hundred English and Scottish "divines" [pastors and theologians] in the years 1643 to 1647. It was commissioned by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for use not only for its use, but for use by reformed churches throughout the world.

2. *Its purpose:*

*the Confession was designed to promote the unity and pure teaching of the word of God. It answers the most basic questions about life and theology.

3. *Its use:*

*the Confession (as well as the companion works *the Larger Catechism* and *the Shorter Catechism*) is the doctrinal standard of reformed churches throughout the world, including the PCA and other reformed Presbyterian churches in the United States. In order to serve as an elder or deacon in the PCA you must agree with the major tenets of reformed theology, as presented in the Confession.

B. The Central Focus of Reformed Theology: *Sovereign Grace*

1. *Predestination/Sovereignty / Providence*

Prov 21:1 "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases." (see also: Proverbs 16:4, 9, 33; Daniel 4:34-35; Matthew 10:29; Acts 4:27-28; Ephesians 1:11)

*Issues Raised: God and Evil

2. *Total Depravity/Inability*

Eph 2:1 "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins." (see also: Genesis 6:5; John 6:65; Romans 3:10-12; 14:23; I Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; II Timothy 2:24-26)

*Issues Raised: Free Will

3. *Unconditional Election*

Eph 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast." (see also: John 1:12-13; Acts 5:31; 13:48; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29; II Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 9)

*Issues Raised: Foreknowledge, Justice, Born to be Damned?

4. *Particular Redemption/Limited Atonement*

John 10:14-15 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me--just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep." (see also: Matthew 1:21; John 10:26; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25-27)

*Issues Raised: Free Offer of the Gospel

5. *Election/Irresistible Grace*

What is 'TULIP' and how did it start?

A man named Jacob Hermann was a disciple of John Calvin's teaching. He began to disagree and teach his disciples that Calvin's understanding of God's sovereignty was wrong. After he died, Hermann's disciples decided to take their master's teaching to the church at the Synod of Dort (1618-19). They presented the five points of Arminianism (Hermann's name in Latin). At the Synod all five points were refuted with what came to be known as the five points of Calvinism. Later, an acrostic was created to summarize the five points of Calvinism with the word TULIP (total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, perseverance of believers). Sadly, when people hear about John Calvin they think only of the five points, which are faithful to his teaching, but were not penned by him and do not fairly summarize all that Calvin taught.

John 6:37 "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away." (see also: Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 6:44; Acts 16:14; Romans 8:29-30; Philippians 2:12-13)

*Issues Raised: Puppet, Necessity of Evangelism

6. *Perseverance/Preservation of Believers*

John 6:39 "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day." (see also: John 10:27-30; I John 5:13; 2:19)

*Issues Raised: Falling Away, Security

C. Sacraments

1. *The Lord's Supper*

- a. Presence of Christ
- b. Covenant Fellowship

Four Views of the Lord's Supper:

*Transubstantiation = Christ is physically present (Roman Catholic)

*Consubstantiation = Christ is on, with, under, by (Lutheran)

*Zwingli = a memorial, Christ is remembered (Typical evangelical)

*Calvinist = Christ is spiritually present (Presbyterian)

c. Frequency of Communion

*we celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly

*we believe that more frequent communion is an important part of our worship and keeps the cross of Christ central in our ministry.

2. *Baptism*

- a. Adult believers
- b. Children of believers

1) Are there indications that children are to be included in baptism?

*Matthew 19:13-15, Luke 18:15-17, Acts 16:31-34, I Corinthians 7:14, Ephesians 1:1; 6:1, Acts 2:38-39

2) What is the Biblical basis for pouring or sprinkling?

*Ezekiel 36:25-27, Isaiah 52:13-15, Numbers 8:7, Exodus 24:6-8, Hebrews 9:10, I Peter 1:1-2

- 3) What is the meaning of infant baptism?
 - a) The meaning points not to baptismal regeneration, or to the works of parents, but to God's sovereignty
 - b) Meaning for parents
 - *Expression of obedience to God's command
 - *Expression of dedication that their children belong to God
 - *Expression of faith that God's promise is true, and that He will call their children to Himself as they are faithful in raising them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord
 - c) Meaning for children
 - *They are a part of God's visible church
 - *They are distinguished from the world
 - *They are to be raised as Christian children, and look forward to making a profession of faith

D. Covenant Theology

Covenant Theology sees the Bible as one progressing epic of God's saving grace. The books of the Bible are merely chapters in this unified plan of salvation. A working definition of Covenant Theology could be: *An interpretation of scripture which defines our relationship with God, and unifies the Bible, in terms of God's covenants with Adam, and with the second Adam: Jesus Christ.*

*The Bible tells the story of one people of God: *Israel during the Old Covenant and the Church in the New Covenant*

- 1) Believers are made a part of Israel (emphasis mine)

This mystery is that through the gospel *the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body*, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 3:6)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28)

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until *the full number of the Gentiles has come in*. (Rom. 11:25)

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)--remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from *citizenship in Israel* and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, *who has made the two one* and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. . . . Consequently, *you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household*. (Eph. 2:11-14,19)

- 2) Believers are granted all the titles and privileges given to Israel

Titles which are given to Israel are also given to the Church. Jeremiah prophesies about the new covenant and declares that God will make this covenant with "the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." (Jeremiah 31:31) But Jesus applies that covenant to the Church (Luke 22:20). The author of Hebrews makes it explicitly clear that the prophecy

made by Jeremiah is to be applied directly to the Church (Hebrews 8:6ff). The Church is referred to as a “chosen people”, “a holy nation”, “a royal priesthood”, and “a kingdom of priests.” (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6, 5:10; Colossians 3:12) All these titles are special names God Himself had given to Israel (Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 7:6). These descriptions are correct because the believing Gentiles have been engrafted into believing Israel.

3) Believers are the true offspring of Abraham (emphasis mine)

A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, *a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly*; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. (Rom. 2:28-29a)

Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. (Gal. 3:7)

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:29)

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all *Abraham's offspring*--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. (Rom. 4:16)

For *not all who are descended from Israel are Israel*. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but *it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring*. (Rom. 9:6-8)

A Brief Background of Dispensationalism

Dispensationalism was first popularized in 19th century Britain by an Irish minister named John Darby. Darby's influence came to America through the work of C.I. Scofield. He published the Scofield Bible in 1909. This Bible included marginal notes that supported many of the tenants of Dispensationalism. This theology was developed further and better systematized by Charles Ryrie in his 1965 book *Dispensationalism Today*. Only two years later, in 1967, a newer edition of the Scofield Bible was produced. This updated version corrected some of the theological views which even dispensationalists recognized as incorrect.

One Plan of Salvation or Two?

The original Scofield Bible gave clear impressions that Old Testament saints were saved by something other than faith in God's provision of a Savior.² Modern dispensationalists are very clear in affirming that “the basis of salvation always remains the same [throughout the Bible]. Man is saved only by believing in the atoning death of Christ.”³ All Bible-believing Christians should agree wholeheartedly with this statement.

One People of God or Two?

The question remains, however, as to whether God has two purposes for two distinct peoples, or one purpose for one people. Scofield says that “what is said in Scripture concerning Israel and the Church . . . in origin, calling, promise, worship, principles of conduct, and future destiny that all is contrast.”⁴ Dispensationalist Louis Sperry Chafer puts it this way: “The dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved, which is Judaism; while the other is related to heaven with heavenly people and heavenly objectives, which is Christianity.”⁵ At Zion we disagree with this understanding.

III. Teachings About the Church

A. The Church and Ministry

1. *The Christian Life = Serving*

- a. God (Hebrews 12:28-29)
- b. Man (I Peter 4:10)

2. *Everyone is gifted and equipped by God*

- a. I Corinthians 12:7

3. *Importance*

- a. Every part of the Body is important (I Corinthians 12)
- b. Our goal is the good of the whole Body (Ephesians 4:11-16)

4. *Process of exercising*

- a. Begin by fulfilling your general ministry responsibilities
- b. Begin by serving wherever you can, wherever needs are present
- c. Define your own spiritual gifts and abilities (a spiritual gift is a God-given ability in service, through which God works with significant effectiveness to minister to the needs of the Kingdom)
- d. Ask this question: "What do I do that can really help?"
- e. Confirm your call by the godly wisdom, advice and direction of the elders and congregation; have the humility to serve in any capacity
- f. Emphasize your calling and abilities without neglecting your general ministry responsibilities

MINISTRY = Any action which serves others for God's glory

STEWARDSHIP = Any action in which we dedicate and use whatever He has entrusted to us, back to Him

B. Church Discipline: a *benefit* of church membership

1. What is it?

Mat 18:15-17 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (see also: Galatians 6:1-2; I Corinthians 5:1-2, 6-7)

2. Why practice it?

- a. Glory of God
- b. Purity of the Church
- c. Restoration of the Individual

C. Being Presbyterian

1. *Rule by Elders*

- a. Elders are men recognized as having been gifted by God to lead His people. The qualifications for being an elder may be found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- b. The elders of a particular congregation form that church's *Session*, the ruling body of that congregation.

2. *Connectionalism - Session, Presbytery, General Assembly*

- a. All the *Sessions* in a particular region form a *Presbytery*. (our Presbytery is called the *Platte Valley Presbytery* and consists of 7 churches--and one mission church--in the state of Nebraska)
- b. The *Presbytery* serves as a court of appeal for actions taken within a particular church. However, Presbytery only steps in when issues cannot be resolved on the local level.
- c. All the *Presbyteries* in the United States comprise the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The annual legislative meeting of the PCA is called the *General Assembly*. The General Assembly also serves as the final court of appeal for cases which cannot be resolved either locally or at the Presbytery level.

PRESBYTERIANISM denotes both a form of church government by elders (presbyters), and a system of scriptural doctrine. Contemporary Presbyterianism originated in the Protestant Reformation, particularly in Calvin's Geneva. The unity of Presbyterian doctrine and order appears in John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Calvin turns to Scripture to formulate principles for the order of the church as well as the doctrines of the faith of the church. In the *Institutes*, as in the later Presbyterian and Reformed tradition, the key to both the doctrine and the order of the church is found in God's sovereignty.

The doctrinal distinctives of Presbyterianism are expressed in the Reformed creeds of the 16th century, but the Presbyterian churches have adopted the Confession of Faith and the catechisms of the Westminster Assembly (1643-9). All these Reformed confessions make God's glory the supreme end of man's creation, so that all of life is in trust for him. In sin humanity is guilty before God and hostile to him; salvation no less than creation must be God's work (Romans 11:36). God's salvation springs from the free choice of his electing love. It is accomplished by the gift of God's eternal Son, who by his perfect obedience merited eternal life for God's elect, and who died on the cross as their representative, atoning for their sins and securing their salvation. The Holy Spirit, sent from the throne of the Lord Christ, applies his salvation to those given him of the Father, regenerating them so that they are persuaded and enabled to embrace Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel, and giving them grace to persevere in faith. Human choice has eternal consequences, but sinners can choose Christ only because he has first chosen them.

Presbyterians regard these doctrines as biblical, and note how the apostle Paul answered obvious objections to them (Romans 9:14, 19). They hold, therefore, that they stand in a tradition of apostolic teaching that has never been fully eclipsed in the history of the church.

In similar fashion Presbyterianism has sought to restore a biblical church order. Jesus Christ, exalted as Lord over all, is the one king and head of the church, the only mediator between God and man. He rules in his church directly by his word and Spirit, but he has ordained government in his church, revealed its principles in his word, and promised his presence in the midst of the church as the keys of the kingdom are used in his name. All office in the church exists by his appointment; he calls and equips all office-bearers for their ministry. In choosing officers, the church does not grant them authority, but recognized Christ's authority and calling. Church government must conform to the scriptural pattern. In those circumstances not specifically ordered by Scripture the church must observe the general rules of the word: all things are to be done 'decently and in order' to the glory of the Lord, for the edification of the saints, and in witness to the world. The scriptural pattern of government is necessary for the well-being of the church, but is not essential for its existence. Presbyterians recognize that many degrees of faithfulness to Scripture exist in their own and other churches; Reformed churches must be ever reforming.

Christ's rule of the church through his word and spirit required that all church power be ministerial and declarative. No church officer or council can legislate novelties of faith or worship, but can only minister the word of the Lord.

Final judgment is committed to Christ; he has not given the sword of justice to the officers of his kingdom (John 18:36). All church power is wholly moral and spiritual. Church officers possess no civil jurisdiction; they may not

inflict civil penalties nor seek the aid of the civil power in the exercise of their jurisdiction. They recognize the divine authorization of civil government (Romans 13:1-7; ! Peter 2:13-17); they support and pray for its effectiveness in keeping peace.

The church is the body of Christ: Presbyterian order reflects the fact that salvation is corporate as well as individual. The church is not composed first of clergy possessing unique gifts to dispense sacramental grace. It is a body of believers and their children, a covenantal community called of Christ and endued with the Spirit to join in a mutual ministry of worship, edification and witness. The gifts of the members differ from the gifts of officers not in kind but degree.

Those chosen by the church to join in its government are ministers of the word, or teaching elders, and others with gifts for rule, called ruling elders. Since the inspired authority of the foundational office of the apostles has not been continued, all elders rule in parity. ('Bishop' and 'presbyter' are synonymous terms in the New Testament.) The Presbyterian recognition of the ruling elder is based on the distinction of teaching and ruling gifts (1 Timothy 5:17; Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:28), and the divinely authorized role of the elders of the people in the Old Covenant (Numbers 11:16, 17), continued in the New (Acts 11:30; cf. Matthew. 13:52; 23:34).

Presbyters govern jointly in the local assembly (session, consistory), regional assembly (presbytery, classis), and in wider assemblies (synod, general assembly). This system of graded assemblies or courts reflects the unity of the church catholic, regional and local. The concern of each assembly is determined by its scope. Christ grants gifts of rule for the whole church; they may be legitimately used in broader assemblies of those acknowledged by the saints as those set over them in the Lord.

The office of the deacon is one of ministry rather than spiritual government. It is charged with the service of mercy to the poor and needy among the saints, and, as God grants opportunity, to the world. While the Pauline Epistles restrict the governing role in the family of God to male elders (1 Timothy 2:12), the place of women in ministries of mercy is clear. Some Presbyterian church appoint women to the diaconal office. (Romans 16:1; 1 Timothy 3:11).

D. Church Leadership

1. Biblical Leadership

- a. Authority of God and His Word to establish the pattern, not the culture
- b. Authority of Elders

2. Elders' Roles

- a. Teach (1 Timothy, Titus)
- b. Rule (Hebrews 13:17)
- c. Shepherd (Acts 20:28)

3. Elders' Requirements

- a. 1 Timothy 3:1-7
- b. Titus 1:5-9

4. Deacons

- a. Acts 6:1-7
- b. 1 Timothy 3:15-19

5. Role of Staff/Elders

- a. Set Agenda/Goals/Vision
- b. Teach/Equip/Train
- c. Oversee/Manage
- d. Pray

The Bylaws of Zion Church: PCA

Zion uses the Presbyterian Church in America's *Book of Church Order (BCO)* as our official bylaws. Copies of this can be attained from the denominational bookstore by calling 1-800-283-1357 or online at www.pcanet.org/bco/ .

E. The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

1. Origin

-Founded in 1973 by conservative Presbyterian Churches predominantly within existing Presbyterian Denominations which had become theologically liberal.

2. Commitments

-the PCA is committed to: *Evangelism, vital worship, church planting, and reformed doctrine* (as put forth by the Westminster Confession of Faith).

3. Goals

-the PCA currently has about 1,600 churches and 300,000 members in America. The denominational goal is to multiply the Kingdom of God through missions and aggressive church planting.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

I. Church and Ministry

A. Worship - Our Most Important Ministry

1. Eternal Role of Worship

John 4:24 "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (see also: Revelation 4 & 5, Romans 12:1)

2. Significance of Corporate Worship

- a. Psalm 100
- b. Psalm 96:8 (offering)
- c. Hebrews 13:15-17 (praise)
- d. Dialog between God and His people

3. Our Form of Worship

- a. Blended styles
- b. Confession of Sin / Assurance of Grace
- c. Active involvement (readings, music)
- d. Weekly communion

4. Attitude of a Worshipper

- a. Reverence and Awe
- b. Joy
- c. Participation

B. Stewardship

A *steward* is one who uses and invests what his Master has entrusted to him. Therefore, we are *stewards* of every part of our life. (cf. Matthew 25:14-30)

1. *Time*

Ephesians 5:15-16 "Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." (see also: James 4:13-15, Psalm 39:4-5, Psalm 90:12)

2. *Energy*

1 Corinthians 9:24 "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." (see also: Ecclesiastes 9:10, Matthew 6:31-34)

3. *Abilities*

1 Corinthians 12:7 "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." (see also: 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:11-13, Romans 12:3-8)

4. *Money*

- a. I Chronicles 29:11-12, God is the source
- b. Deuteronomy 10:14, God owns it all
- c. Philippians 4:11, Live within God's provision
- d. Philippians 4:19, Exercise faith
- e. Numbers 15:17-21, God comes first - the tithe
- f. II Corinthians 9:6-7; Ephesians 4:28, Give generously

“Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably
Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity
without discipleship is always Christianity without
Christ... Discipleship without Jesus Christ is a way
of our own choosing. It may be the ideal way, it
may even lead to martyrdom, but it is devoid of all
promise.”

The Cost of Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (p.
50)

II. Commitments of Growing Disciples:

A. Up-reach

- Worship, prayer, worldview
- Learning to see the world more the way that God does (2 Corinthians 10:5)

B. In-reach

- Gospel, scripture, doctrine

C. Out-reach

- Investment in relationships
- Service to those around us: family, church, community, workplace
- Mercy, justice, evangelism, missions

The "One Anothers" of the New Testament:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1. | "...Be at peace with each other" (Mark 9:50) |
| 2. | "...Wash one another's feet" (John 13:14;34;35;15:12;15:17) |
| 3. | "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love..." (Romans 12:10) |
| 4. | "...Honor one another above yourselves" (Romans 12:10) |
| 5. | "Live in harmony with one another..." (Romans 12:16) |
| 6. | "...Love one another..." (Romans 13:8) |
| 7. | "...Stop passing judgment on one another" (Romans 14:13) |
| 8. | "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you..." (Romans 15:7) |
| 9. | "...Instruct one another" (Romans 15:14) |
| 10. | "Greet one another with a holy kiss..." (Romans 16:16) |
| 11. | "...When you come together to eat, wait for each other" (I Corinthians 11:33) |
| 12. | "...Have equal concern for each other" (I Corinthians 12:25) |
| 13. | "...Greet one another with a holy kiss" (I Corinthians 16:20) |
| 14. | "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (II Corinthians 13:12) |
| 15. | "...Serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13) |
| 16. | "If you keep on biting and devouring each other...you will be destroyed by each other" (Galatians 5:15) |
| 17. | "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other" (Galatians 5:26) |
| 18. | "Carry each other's burdens..." (Galatians 6:2) |
| 19. | "...Be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2) |
| 20. | "Be kind and compassionate to one another..." (Ephesians 4:32) |
| 21. | "...Forgiving each other..." (Ephesians 4:32) |
| 22. | "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Ephesians 5:19; 5:21) |
| 23. | "...In humility consider others better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3) |
| 24. | "Do not lie to each other..." (Colossians 3:9) |
| 25. | "Bear with each other..." (Colossians 3:13) |
| 26. | "...Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another" (Colossians 3:13) |
| 27. | "Teach...{one another}" (Colossians 3:16) |
| 28. | "...Make your love increase and overflow for each other" (I Thessalonians 3:12) |
| 29. | "...Love each other" (I Thessalonians 4:9) |

30.	"...Encourage each other..." (I Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11)
31.	"...Build each other up..." (I Thessalonians 5:11)
32.	"Encourage one another daily..." (Hebrews 3:13)
33.	"...Spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24)
34.	"...Encourage one another" (Hebrews 10:25)
35.	"...Do not slander one another" (James 4:11; 5:9)
36.	"Confess your sins to each other..." (James 5:16)
37.	"...Pray for each other" (James 5:16)
38.	"...Love one another deeply, from the heart" (I Peter 1:22)
39.	"...Live in harmony with one another..." (I Peter 3:8)
40.	"...Love each other deeply..." (I Peter 4:8)
41.	"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling" (I Peter 4:9)
42.	"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others..." (I Peter 4:10)
43.	"...Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another..." (I Peter 5:5)
44.	"Greet one another with a kiss of love" (I Peter 5:14)
45.	"...Love one another" (I John 3:11;3:23;4:7;4:12;2Jn 5)

III. Profession of Faith

A. Content of our faith

1. *Grace*

*eternal life is a gift

Ephesians 2:8,9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast."

2. *Man/Sin*

*our sins have separated us from a holy God

Isaiah 59:2 "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

3. *God/Justice*

*God is loving, but must justly punish sin

Exodus 34:6b-7a "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished;"

4. *Christ/Provision*

*Christ willingly died to pay the penalty for our sins

1 Peter 3:18a "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

5. *Faith*

*unable to save ourselves, we look to Christ to save us

Acts 4:12 "Salvation is found in no one else [other than Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

B. The questions of a membership interview

1. *Explain your understanding of the Gospel*
 - a. Who is God? What are His chief attributes?
 - b. Who am I? How was man created? What is man's problem?
 - c. Who is Christ? What did He do to make a relationship between sinful men and God possible?
 - d. How am I saved? What role do good works play in my salvation?
2. *How has God worked in your life?*
 - i.e. How did you come to believe the Gospel?
3. *Have you been baptized?*

C. The vows of membership:

1. Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope, except through His sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and trust Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?
4. Do you promise to support this church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
5. Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of this church, and promise to strive for its purity and peace?

D. Three kinds of membership:

1. *Communing Membership (voting member upon profession of faith)*
2. *Non-communing Membership (children of communing members previous to profession of faith)*
3. *Associate Membership (non-voting membership, retaining communing membership in another PCA church)*

E. Changing membership:

*There are five primary ways your membership status can change [Book of Church Order sections]:

1. *Transfer to another evangelical church [46-1]*
2. *Death*
3. *Excommunication – discipline with process [chapters 30 to 36]*
4. *Erasure from the Membership Roll –discipline without process [chapter 38-4]*
5. *Removal from the Membership Roll (absent and residence unknown) [chapter 46-2]*

IV. More tools for Discipleship

*Christians need to be prepared to understand their faith and to share it with others. Here are some tools and practices which will help you walk faithfully with God and become thoroughly prepared to share the hope that is within you (cf. 1 Peter 3:15)

A. Scripture memory

Psa 119:11 "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

B. Scripture reading and study

2 Tim 3:16 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

C. A Reference Library

*A valuable addition to every Christian home would be some Biblical reference materials. Consider purchasing the following:

1. *An Exhaustive Concordance*

2. *A Bible Dictionary and/or Theological Dictionary*

3. *A Bible Atlas*

4. *A Bible Commentary*

[suggestions: *Matthew Henry--One volume; Jamieson, Fausset & Brown--One volume; New International Commentary on the Whole Bible--One volume*]

V. Our long-range Vision

A. long-term Goals

1. Multiple PCA churches in Lincoln

- Active engagement in church planting ("aggressive evangelism")
- Church planting is the most effective means of evangelism we know

2. A meaningful and active mercy ministry

- Building on the ministries already established
- Supporting existing ministries that have a proven track record of effective Christian witness
- Demonstrating a biblical commitment to mercy and justice

3. Multiple Nebraska Presbyteries

- Developing churches across the city of Lincoln and around the state of Nebraska
- Participating in the "Great Plains Church Planting Network"

4. Key Q: How will Lincoln/Nebraska/the Midwest or the World be different 100 years from now because Zion Church exists today?

From the Zion Cornerstone Time Capsule (opened July 15, 2007)

"...Zion Congregation was founded in Lincoln, Nebraska, on January 17, 1900. The Congregation had to enlarge the house of God after 7 years, that is in 1907, because the congregation grew through the grace of God. Hence it followed that they may build a new house for God and the cornerstone was placed on July 17, 1927. *Since the beginning the congregation has found peace in Jesus Christ their redeemer... As fathers and brothers in*

Christ we wish for our descendents that they will follow Christ's calling and the teachings of Jesus, his blood cleanses us from all sins. Till we meet in the eternal Zion.

[1](#) Copies of the WCF are available at the Zion Church office at no charge.

[2](#)In reference to the new covenant, Scofield wrote, “*no longer* legal obedience saves.” (p.1115, note 1, emphasis mine); In speaking of the Mosiac covenant, Scofield wrote that Israel “exchanged grace for law.”

[3](#)J. Vernon McGee, commentary on 2 Tim. 2:15 (p.467)

[4](#)*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p.8.

[5](#)*Dispensationalism Today*, p.45.