

AVOWED

Actively **V**isiting **O**rphans, **W**idows, **E**lderly and **D**isabled

“This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”
(James 1:27, NASB)

Statement of Faith

The staff and board of AVOWED believes and trusts in God and the Bible. They strive to practice as a Christian ministry, honoring God. As such we want to let everyone know that God loves you and we love you!

Some may want more details. In anticipation for any that may desire more information and details, we have provided what the staff and board of AVOWED believe.

AVOWED does not require any that we minister to agree in order to minister, nor do we require any in the body of Christ with whom we partner to hold certain positions on many of the doctrinal or theological debates that take place within the church. While we do believe that these issues are significant, our primary concerns are putting in practice our understanding of Scripture as we lovingly carry out compassionate ministry to others. We strongly believe that this ministry is of God and it crosses the various lines others may use as a litmus test or marker before engaging with others.

We are not ashamed to explain our beliefs, but gladly do so, because without them, we would not be in ministry to others. It is our understanding of the truth of Scripture and trust in the One who is Truth that spurs us on in kindness, compassion, love and worship.

What We Believe

1. We believe in truth, namely:
 - a. Truth about reality is knowable.
 - b. The opposite of true is false.
 - c. It is true that the theistic God exists.
 - d. If God exists, then miracles are possible.

- e. Miracles can be used to confirm a message from God (i.e., as an act of God to confirm a word from God).
 - f. The New Testament is historically reliable.
 - g. The New Testament says Jesus claimed to be God.
 - h. Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:
 - i. His fulfillment of many prophecies about Himself;
 - ii. His sinless and miraculous life;
 - iii. His prediction and accomplishment of His resurrection.
 - i. Therefore, Jesus is God.
 - j. Whatever Jesus (who is God) teaches is true.
 - k. Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God.
 - l. Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God (and anything opposed to it is false).
2. We believe that the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments is inspired by God, inerrant, and that it is of supreme and final authority in faith and life.
3. We believe that there is only one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- a. We acknowledge the Creator – God as our heavenly Father, infinitely perfect, and intimately acquainted with all our ways.
 - b. We claim Jesus Christ as Lord – the very God who came in human flesh – the object of our worship and the subject of our praise.
 - c. We recognize the Holy Spirit as the third member of the Godhead, incessantly at work convicting, convincing, comforting; and regenerates with divine life and personally indwells the believer upon his faith in Christ for salvation.
4. We believe in creation, not evolution; that man was created by the direct act of God and in the image of God.
5. We believe that Adam and Eve, in yielding to the temptation of Satan, became fallen creatures.
6. We believe that all men are born in sin. Adam's fall into sin left humanity without the hope of heaven apart from a new birth, made possible by the Savior's death and bodily resurrection.

7. We believe in the incarnation, the Virgin Birth, and the Deity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
8. We believe in the vicarious and substitutional atonement for the sins of mankind by the shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross.
9. We believe in the resurrection of His body from the tomb, His ascension to Heaven, and that He is now our Advocate before God.
10. We believe in His power to save men from sin.
11. We believe the offer of salvation is God's love-gift to all. Those who accept it by faith, apart from works, become new creatures in Christ. Salvation is by grace through faith, plus nothing, minus nothing, in the atoning blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
12. We believe that anyone who trusts in Christ by faith is a new creation in Him – clothed in His righteousness and fully loved and accepted by God.
13. We believe that a person once born-again is always saved. He can never be lost, for he is born of an incorruptible seed. He is given everlasting life, is sealed unto the day of redemption, and his life is hid with Christ in God. There is no condemnation nor separation from God.
14. We believe that God expects our lives to reflect that we belong to Him and that we are pursuing a holy life.
15. We believe that the true Church is composed of all persons who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit through the saving faith in Jesus Christ; that they are united together in the body of Christ of which He is Lord and Head; and are commissioned for the God-given tasks of worshiping, fellowshiping, teaching, evangelizing and exercising the spiritual gifts.

As such, we believe in the spiritual emphasis for “church” from the Bible, rather than any modern cultural, physical, legal or tax form. We recognize, but do not readily embrace the ideas for the cultural, physical, legal and tax forms behind the concept for “church”. The emotional and spiritual implications are key to the demographics of those we minister to in that they cannot get to a traditional building with all the religious trappings; however, we are bringing them the church.

The church is the called-out assembly, from the Greek term in the New Testament, the *ekklesia*. It is a Church which does not depend on forms, ceremonies, cathedrals, buildings, chapels, pulpits, fonts, vestments, organs, endowments, money, kings, governments, magistrates, or any act of favor whatsoever from the hand of man. The church or *ekklesia* is composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus. It is made up of all God's elect-of all converted men and women of all true Christians.

As the spirit of God resides in us, we are His temple. We believe we need to be mindful of the Apostle Paul's rhetorical question, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Activities within the confines of a building are not somehow more sacred and right with God than those outside the building walls. This is of primary importance with AVOWED as we take the “church” to people, rather than taking people to a building.

As we see in 1 Corinthians 12:12-25, we as Christians have a function as part of the body and it is not necessarily within the confines of an organization or building.

If the spirit resides in us and we are a temple of God and “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20), the question of “going” to church does not make any sense.

As the church is the called out ones, it is the people, and the people are the church – not a location. The below bullet points of Scripture point this out where the “church” was gathering in specific physical locations - houses. Not that the people “go” to “church” – they **are** the church.

- “also **greet the church** that is in their house.” (Romans 16:5)
- “Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with **the church that is in their house.**” (1 Corinthians 16:19)
- “Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and **the church that is in her house.**” (Colossians 4:15)
- “And to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to **the church in your house:**” (Philemon 1:2)

But if you take it at face value that we can only meet God in a building (or perhaps salvation is only best obtained in the building, or only grow or minister at that location), then it leads to many wrong views away from Scripture.

We are all justified by faith, not something based from a building. “But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Galatians 3:25-29)

We need to be salt and light, not just in a building: “Let your **light** shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16) We do not believe the meaning of the light is that we are to only shine and do good works in a building or from an “approved” program from a building.

We as believers should be trying to build each other up for ministry work. In the sense that people are being equipped to actually lovingly minister to needs of other people, “For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,” (Eph. 4:12).

16. We believe that Satan, under the sovereign permission of God, tries to destroy the faith of believers and that drawing near to God is the only way to resist him.

17. We believe that as new creations in Christ we will continue to wrestle with our sin nature. We will, however, continue to grow in grace and become more like Jesus. Ultimate perfection and freedom from sin, however, will only come when we finally stand in the presence of the Lord.
18. We believe that, having embraced Jesus Christ by faith, we are to make Him known to non-Christians in our sphere of influence.
19. We believe and anticipate in the bodily, personal, visible, pre-millennial and imminent return of Jesus Christ. This will be accomplished in two stages:
 - a. The Rapture – Christ’s coming for His saints – when Christ will descend into the air to catch away His waiting bride, the Church.
 - b. Christ’s descending with His saints to establish the long promised kingdom and to reign upon the earth for a thousand years.

Between these two stages the great tribulation judgments (7 years) are visited upon the apostate and rebellious world.

20. We believe in judgments:
 - a. We believe that the believer’s sins are judged in Christ on the cross and that his works will be judged for rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ at the time of His coming.
 - b. We believe that those not trusting Jesus for eternal salvation will be raised at the Second Resurrection of the dead to stand in judgment before the Great White Throne of God. This takes place after the thousand year reign of Christ (Millennium). These will be sent to the Lake of fire (Hell), there to suffer torment forever together with the Devil, Antichrist, and False prophet. We believe the souls of the impenitent dead are now in a state of conscious suffering in Hades awaiting the second resurrection.
21. We believe that after all God’s enemies are consigned to their place of eternal punishment (Hell), the present order of things will be dissolved and the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, shall be brought in as a final state in which the righteous shall dwell forever.