DOCTRINAL STATEMENT
of Vincent Sawyer

1. **Scriptures.** I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were verbally (every word) and completely inspired of God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are the only authority for faith and practice (II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16-17).
I do not believe that Christians should be divisive or have a critical spirit over differences of opinion regarding particular Bible translations, but can agree to disagree (with a Christ-like spirit) on this issue (Romans 16:17; I Cor. 1:10; II Tim.2:14). I believe in interpreting the Bible by applying sound exegetical & hermeneutical principles which seek to understand the actual, plain, contextual & grammatical meaning of Scripture. I also believe in expository teaching & preaching which exegetes Scripture, exposes authorial intention and sets forth the correct interpretation and proper application of the Sacred Text. The Bible is the exclusive trustworthy source and foundation of everything Christians believe and live.

2. **God.** I believe the Godhead eternally exists in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - that these three are one God, having precisely the same essence, nature, character and attributes (Genesis 1:1; 1:26; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20; Romans 8:9; II Corinthians 13:14).

3. **Jesus Christ.** I 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). I believe that Jesus Christ exclusively fulfilled Messianic Prophecies of the promised God-anointed Son, Servant, Prophet, Priest, King, Sacrifice, Savior & Judge (Psalm 2:12; 110:1; Prov. 30:4; Micah 5:2; Daniel 9:25; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 48:16; 53:1-12; 61:1; Zec.12:10; Luke 24:27; Hebrews 1).

4. **Holy Spirit.** I believe that the Holy Spirit is the third eternal Person of the Godhead possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10 13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternality (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7 10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13 14), and omnipotence (Romans 15:13). I believe that the Holy Spirit convicts men of sin (John 16:8), regenerates, indwells, seals (I Cor. 3:16; Ephesians 1:13-14), and sets believers apart unto a holy life; that He keeps and empowers believers day by day; that He is the author and teacher of the Word of God and guide into truth for our daily life. (II Peter 1:21; John 16:13). Anyone who does not have the Spirit living in him is not a child of God (Romans 8:9).

5. **Creation.** I believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, not allegorically or figuratively (Genesis 1-2; John 1:1-3; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3). I believe that God created everything in the cosmos in six literal days without the aid of evolution, long periods of time, pre-existing materials or impersonal random chance (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17; Isaiah 44:24; Hebrews 11:3).

6. **Man.** I believe that God created man in His own image and that man sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is conscious and eternal separation from God in Hell (Hades) and then the Lake of Fire (Gehenna). I believe that all men are born with a sinful nature, evidenced by sinful acts; that man is totally depraved; and that if he is not born again he is eternally lost (Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Luke 16:23; Romans 3:10-23, 5:12; I Corinthians 15:21-22; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:8). The Bible teaches that God ordained marriage to be the heterosexual and monogamous union of one man to one woman for life (Matthew 19:4-6).

7. Angels

Holy Angels
I believe that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9 14; Hebrews 1:6 7, 14; 2:6 7; Revelation 5:11 14; 19:10; 22:9).

Fallen Angels
I believe in the reality and personality of Satan. He is not omnipotent nor omnipresent (Job 2:3; Matthew 4:1-11; James 4:7; I Peter 5:8). The Bible teaches that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12 17; Ezekiel 28:11 19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1 14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1 15). Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13 14; Matthew 4:1 11; Revelation 12:9 10); the prince of this world, who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20); and he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12 17; Ezekiel 28:11 19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

8. Salvation. I believe:

a. that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished (provided) our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, (substitutionary) propitiatory (satisfactory), and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:24 25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).
I believe that our justification is made sure by Christ's literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38 39; Acts 2:30 31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).
b. that salvation is offered freely & solely by grace (God's unmerited kindness and favor) and is obtained through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ the Son of God (I Corinth. 15:1-4; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5);
c. that all who personally believe on (receive) Jesus Christ are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are born again, becoming children of God (John 1:12, 3:1-7; Romans 8:14, 16; Ephesians 1:13-14; I Peter 1:2).

1) **Sovereignty –** I believe that God sovereignly draws lost sinners to himself (John 6:44) and opens their heart (Acts 16:14), granting them repentance (Acts 11:18; II Timothy 2:25), and the new birth through His Word (I Peter 1:23) with the special regenerating work of His Holy Spirit (John 3:1-8). God in His sovereignty chose the plan of salvation and based on the foreknowledge of His will and purpose chose a people for himself (I Peter 1:2; Ephesians 1:4-7; Acts 13:48; II Timothy 1:9). God's sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18 19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22 23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10 12; Revelation 22:17). This saving work of God is not based on man's merit (Titus 3:5).

2) **Regeneration** - I believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists of a change of attitude toward sin; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life. Regeneration (which includes Illumination) and Saving Faith occur simultaneously (John 3:3, 8; II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:16-23; Ephesians 5:9; I Peter 1:22-25; Titus 3:5-6).

3) **Repentance and Faith** - I believe that repentance and faith are wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God, whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn from sin to God for mercy; and at the same time we heartily receive Jesus Christ as our Lord, and rely on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38, 11:18; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8).

4) **Justification** - I believe that justification is God's declaration that the believer is righteous, based on the free (gracious) imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness to everyone who trusts the Gospel message. Justification includes the pardon of sin, the promise of eternal life, and peace with God (John 1:16; Acts 13:39; Romans 4:4-5, 5:1-2, 9).

5) **Sanctification** - I believe that sanctification refers to the believer as being set apart or made holy by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. At the moment of salvation, the believer is sanctified positionally through the death of Christ; throughout his life the believer is to be sanctified progressively (by Godly living and obedience to the Word of God), and at death the believer will be sanctified perfectly (completely) when he goes to be with Christ (Romans 8:5; Philippians 2:12-13; I Thessalonians 4:3; I John 2:29).

6) **Security & Perseverance of the Saints** - I believe that genuine (real) believers will endure in their faith in Christ unto the end; that their persevering faithfulness to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors of salvation; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (those who are saved are eternally secure) (John 10:27-28; Philippians 1:6; I Peter 1:4-5; I John 2:19, 25; 5:11-13).

9. The Church. I believe:

a. that the local church membership should be composed of regenerated, baptized believers, voluntarily united together for the purpose of worship, edification, fellowship of believers, spiritual growth, and service (Acts 2:41-47, 4:33-37, 5:1-20).

b. that it has been commissioned by Christ to propagate the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

c. that the local church has absolute right of self-government (autonomy) and independence (free from interference of any other hierarchy of individuals or organizations) and that the one and ultimate "chief Shepherd" of the church is Jesus Christ (I Peter 5:4).

d. that each local church should (in accordance with its growth) have a plurality of Elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) and that the local church should be Elder-governed (Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24, I Tim. 5:17). Elders must lead the church with faithfulness to God's Word, love for the people they serve and be mutually accountable to each other and to the local church body. The Elders should regularly meet, pray, plan and make decisions as a unified leadership team. They should report those decisions regularly to the church. They should also welcome questions, ideas and service from the church body.

e. That the Local Church should be:

Congregation-affirmed: The Senior Pastor/Elder and Elders are affirmed in their gifting and calling and appointed to their position by way of a Church vote. They are accountable to serve the Congregation according to Biblical standards and in keeping with the principles of the Church Constitution.

Pastor-led: In this model, the Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader of the Church and is responsible to see that the Staff and Congregation promote the Church's purposes and vision. All Staff, paid and volunteer, are accountable to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor is mutually accountable to the Elder Board as a member of the Elders.

Elder-governed: The Elder Board governs the Church according to policies (see below regarding "policy-based"). The Elder Board oversees the entire Church and its ministries. The Elder Board works together with the Senior Pastor and his Staff and relies upon the Deacon Board for other important functions.

Deacon-served: The Deacon Board assists/serves the Elders in achieving the mission of the Church through handling the management of Church facilities, and financial matters and practical ministries of assisting the Elders in caring for the people of the Congregation.

Policy-based: The Senior Pastor, Elder Board, and Deacon Board function in accordance with the Church's Constitution and policies. These policies govern the ministries and operations of the Church.

f. that church worship should be God-honoring, edifying and orderly (I Corinthians 14).

g. that on all matters of church discipline the will of the local church is the final human court of appeal (Matthew 18:17)

10. Ordinances.

I 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.

a. **Baptism.** I believe that immersion pictures the believer's union into 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. I believe that the new birth, which comes through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Scriptural prerequisite to baptism; therefore, only those who are capable of believing for themselves should be baptized (Matthew 3:16; Acts 2:28, 8:35-39; Romans 6:3-7).

b. **Lord's Supper.** I believe that the Lord's Supper is a MEMORIAL of the death of Christ. The unleavened bread and grape juice (unfermented wine) are pictures or symbols of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ when He died once for all men on the cross. The Lord's Supper has no saving power, and is only for believers walking in obedience to God's Word. I do not believe in closed communion (I Corinthians 11:23-32).

11. Officers. I believe that the officers of the church are two (2) in number: ELDERS/PASTORS and DEACONS (Acts 6:1-7, 20:17, 28; I Timothy 3:1-13). Elders (mature leaders), pastors (shepherds) and bishops (overseers) are different names for the one and same office (Acts 20:17, 28; I Peter 5:1-3). I believe that the Bible teaches that the following offices of the church should be held by men only: Elders (Including assistant pastors), and Deacons (Acts 15; I Timothy 2:12, 3:2, 12).

12. Giving. I believe that Scriptural giving is an important matter of Christian living. Giving should be done regularly, willingly, and cheerfully. Freewill offerings are received by and dispersed through the local church; All other giving to para-church ministries should be secondary to the priority giving to and through the local church (Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 23;23; Acts 4:34, 35, 37; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:7; Hebrews 7:2-4).

13. Missions. I believe that the command to evangelize and make disciples is given to every Christian, and that our number-one duty on earth is to glorify God - one means of which is to reach the lost with the Gospel. This Great Commission is to be carried out through the local church to the uttermost parts of the earth. We believe Biblical missions is the ministry of planting and establishing indigenous local churches and involves the training (equipping) of leadership in, for & through those local churches (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 4:11-12).

14. Civil Government. I believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the kings of the earth. I believe in the separation of church and state (Matthew 22:21, 23:10; Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1-7).

15. Spiritual Gifts. I believe that every Christian should be continually filled with the Spirit of God, which will be evidenced by the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:18-6:10). I believe that every born-again Christian is baptized by the Spirit at the moment of salvation (I Corinthians 12:13), and that every Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

I believe that the modern-day "tongues" movement or Charismatic movement is unbiblical in that it erroneously promotes the gift of tongues as being an unknown "heavenly language" (when it was literal foreign languages in the Bible - Acts 2) and as being the sign of having the Holy Spirit when its Biblical purpose was to be a sign to unbelieving Israel (I Corinthians 14:21-22). This movement's manner of practicing the supposed gift is unscriptural (I Corinthians 14) and aggravates spiritual pride and division. Therefore, "speaking in tongues" is not in harmony with the purposes of this ministry. I also believe that modern "faith healers" carry out healing with unbiblical purposes and manners, so I do not support this type of ministry.

I believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and that the gifts of evangelist, pastor, and teacher are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today, as new revelations from God have ceased. I believe the gift of tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established (Acts 2:1-8; I Corinthians 12:4-11; II Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; II Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:22-25).

16. Future. I believe in "that blessed hope" - the personal, expectant return of Christ. This event, called the Rapture, will occur before the Great Day of the Lord's Judgment and will occur in the air (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). God will remove His people from His impending judgment as He has not appointed His Church to experience His wrath in the Day of the LORD (I Thess. 5:9). The rapture will include the Resurrection of God's people, the Judgment Seat of Christ (for rewarding his servants) and will be followed by the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Jesus Christ).
Christ's descent and second coming to the earth will be pre-millennial, to reign with His saints for a literal thousand years. I believe in the bodily resurrection of the just (at the first resurrection) and of the unjust (at the second resurrection). I believe in the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting punishment of the lost (a literal Heaven and a literal Hell & Lake of Fire). I believe that the end of this age is approaching, and that God's people need to be ready for the fulfillment of end-time events and the appearing of Jesus the Messiah in the air (Matthew 24:31-46, 25:13, 41, 46; Acts 1:11, 24:15; I Peter 4:7; Revelation 19:11-16, 20:1-6, 22:11).

17. Separation. I believe that all the saved are called into a life of separation (holiness): this separation is in at least three areas:

a. **moral** - the believer is to be holy in body and mind (II Corinthians 7:1; II Timothy 2:22; I Peter 4:15);

b. **personal** - the believer is not to be "unequally yoked together" with unbelievers in marriage, Church ministry, or joint business ventures, because of divergent world-views, morals, and ethics between the saved and lost (I Corinthians 5:11; II Corinthians 6:14-18).

c. **ecclesiastical** - our ministry cannot cooperate (work together for the promotion of the Gospel) with other churches or ministries that are not of like precious faith in the true Gospel as herein stated in this doctrinal statement, nor will we associate or fellowship with ministries which violate Biblical morals and ethics, or deny any of the fundamental doctrines upon which our faith rests (II Corinthians 6:14-18; Galatians 1:6-9; Ephesians 5:11-12; II Thessalonians 3:6; I Timothy 6:3-5; II John 9-11).