

# *Teaching Position*

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*Within the dynamics of personal growth in understanding the Scriptures, the following paragraphs summarize the teaching position of Pastor David Niquette. All such doctrinal statements must be treated as growing expressions of one's on-going process of learning the heart of God from divine revelation in Scripture, and therefore must always be held secondary to the Word of God itself.*

## **1. The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture.**

The Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is the verbally inspired word and revelation of God, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed. As to its matter, the Bible contains truth without any mixture of error. As to its message, the Bible reveals the person and character of God as well as principles by which He will save or judge this fallen race. Therefore, the Bible is the final authority and supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, attitudes and opinions are to be tested. Simply put, the Bible is God's self-disclosure. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Proverbs 30:5-6; Romans 2:12; Philippians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13; 1 John 4:1)

## **2. The Godhead.**

a. There is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent, perfect Spirit and personal being, the creator, preserver, and supreme ruler of the universe, inexpressibly glorious in holiness and all other perfections, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love. (1 John 4:24; Exodus 15:11; Mark 12:30; Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

b. Within the unity of the Godhead there are three persons -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -- co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, and co-equal in power and glory; and having the same attributes and perfections so that these three are one God. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 4:25; 14:26; 15:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

## **3. The Person and Work of Christ.**

a. The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, a virgin, in order that He might reveal God, redeem sinful men, and rule over God's kingdom. (Psalm 2:7-9; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-14; Hebrews 7:26; Isaiah 9:6; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22)

b. The Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a voluntary and vicarious sacrifice. (Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 2:24)

c. The Lord Jesus Christ made our justification sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead, and He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He ministers as our Advocate and High Priest. (Matthew 28:6; Acts 2:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24)

## 4. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.

a. The Holy Spirit is God actively present in the world today. He is a personal member of the Godhead. He executes the divine will in relation to the world of men in accordance with the sovereign plan of God. His work in the world is to convict men of sin, righteousness and judgment. His work in believers includes that of regeneration, baptism in the body of Christ, indwelling, sanctifying, instructing, empowering for service and preserving to the day of redemption. (John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:8-11; Acts 1:8; 2:4; Romans 8:9)

b. The Holy Spirit sovereignly manifests Himself in and through each Christian in supernatural enablements for the benefit of fellow saints, and for the conversion of the lost. Spiritual gifts are directly connected to the indwelling presents and working of the Holy Spirit, the Giver. He administers these spiritual gifts through saints in order to glorify Christ and empower God's work of redeeming the lost and building up believers. (John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 12:7-14; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 1:13-14)

c. The Holy Spirit inspired the biblical writers to write God's truth accurately. He illumines the word of God to human hearts. He is the divine teacher who guides believers into all truth. It is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to walk in the Spirit by continually yielding to His control. (John 16:13; 2 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27)

## 5. The Totally Depraved Nature of Man.

Man was created by the special act of God. He was created in a state of holiness. (Genesis 1:27; 2:7) Through the deceptive temptation by Satan, man voluntarily transgressed and fell from this holy state (Genesis 3:6-24), in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners (Romans 5:19), not by constraint, but choice (Isaiah 53:6), being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by God, inclined to evil from time of conception (Psalm 51:5), and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin (Ephesians 2:1-3, 12), without defense or excuse (Ezekiel 18:19-20), unable to save himself (Romans 3:9-18, 23; Titus 3:5).

## 6. God's Plan of Salvation.

a. *The Only Way:* The salvation of sinners is wholly of God, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, Jesus Christ (John 3:16), Who through the virgin birth freely took upon Him man's nature, yet without sin (Philippians 2:6-7; Hebrews 2:9-10, 17-18), honored the Divine law by His perfect obedience (Hebrews 5:7-9), demonstrated His divine identity through a miraculous ministry, and by His death made a full propitiation for our sins (Isaiah 53:4-6).

Having been raised literally, bodily from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven to reign in eternal sovereignty (Hebrews 1:8). Uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with Divine perfections, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate and all-sufficient Savior and Lord (Hebrews 7:25). Therefore, Jesus Christ provides the way, the only way, by which men may be reconciled to God. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5-6)

b. *Justification:* Because of Christ's sacrifice of Himself for sinners at Calvary, it is now possible for us to be justified -- declared righteous -- by faith in Him. This gracious work of

justification includes the pardon of sin, regeneration, the imputation of perfect righteousness, and the promise of eternal life. (Romans 3:21-26; 5:9; 17) Justification is not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer (Romans 4:4-5; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 6:5). Justification brings a sinner into a state of reconciliation with God, securing for him every other blessing needful for time and eternity (Romans 5:1-2).

c. *Repentance and Faith:* God's salvation is procured by the sinner through repentance of sin (Acts 26:18-20) and faith toward Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9). Repentance and faith are not in themselves "works," but rather, they are responses to God's grace, worked in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. (John 16:8; Luke 18:13; Romans 10:9-10).

*Summary:* Salvation is the free gift of God's grace to meritless sinners, which is received by personal response and reception of His saving grace by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of sin. (John 1:12; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:17; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19)

## 7. The Security and Assurance of Believers.

a. Because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ, because of the prayer of the Son of God while here on earth, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the immutable covenants and unchangeable word of God, because of the regenerating, abiding, sealing presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved -- all true believers, once regenerated, shall be kept by God's grace and power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 1; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24-25)

b. All true believers endure unto the end. Their persevering attachment to Christ distinguishes them from superficial professors. True saints are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (John 8:31; 1 John 2:19; Romans 8:28; Philippians 1:6)

c. It is the privilege of every believer to rejoice in the assurance of his/her salvation through faith in the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian security and liberty as a license to sin (Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

## 8. The Nature of the Believer.

All saved persons possess two "natures," that is, two groups of attributes, or sets of characteristics -- a set of characteristics called the "old nature" by virtue of their natural birth in the seed line of Adam, and a set of characteristics called the "new nature" resulting from their spiritual birth in Christ. Yet each person is but one single metaphysical entity. God has made provision for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Romans 6:13; 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9)

## 9. Christian Conduct.

a. Every Christian should live in such a manner as will bring honor and glory to the name

of the Lord Jesus Christ, and never a reproach. Therefore having renounced the value structure and sinful practices of this world, the Christian should manifest the life of Christ within by being fully devoted to Jesus, obeying the Word of God, adopting Christ-like goals, attitudes and values, and by walking in the Spirit. (Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:1ff.; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11) Christian “separation” refers to spiritual purity, not meaning isolation from lost people. Healthy Christians incarnate Christ to lost people and must build relationships that influence spiritual life-change decisions in others. (1 Peter 3:15)

b. Sanctification is the process by which believers are made partakers of God’s holiness. It is a progressive work of God, begun in regeneration and carried on in the hearts of believers throughout their earthly lives, by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, Whose primary means are the Word of God, conviction, and circumstances, and Who solicits our cooperation through prayer, faith, self-examination, and watchfulness. (1 Thessalonians 4:3; Proverb 4:18; 1 John 2:29; Philippians 2:12-13)

## 10. The Gospel and Evangelism.

a. The good news is that God has provided lost people salvation by grace through faith. It is predicated upon the dual historical facts of the significant death and literal resurrection of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, facts which are fully supported by Scripture and evidence. (1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Ephesians 2:8-10)

b. It is the joy and divine commission of all the redeemed to proclaim by conduct and conversation the truth of the gospel, and to appeal urgently that sinners be reconciled to God by repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ, Whose shed blood at Calvary is to be embraced as the singular, sufficient basis of their hope of eternal life. (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20; 1 Peter 3:15)

## 11. The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts.

a. *The Gift of Individuals:* God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gracious gifts. He gave to the church apostles and prophets to lay the foundation of New Testament truth (Ephesians 2:20-22). God continues to give apostles and prophets to the church today who function at an apostolic level of gifting and anointing. God has the exclusive prerogative of calling and identifying those He anoints with apostolic authority, both in the First and Twenty-First Centuries. Likewise, Christ gives the church evangelists and pastor-teachers, who fulfill ministries essential for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry. The task of the pastor-teacher is to equip saints to do the work of the ministry, and to help each member of the body achieve his or her highest potential in Christ Jesus in authentic relationship, character, attitude and service. (Ephesians 4:7-12)

b. *The Individual Gifts:* There are a variety of spiritual gifts given to believers by the indwelling Holy Spirit which serve to edify the saints and contribute to the life and growth of the church. Spiritual gifts are manifestations of the indwelling Holy Spirit in the form of divine enablements which result in authentic ministry in the lives of others. They are not given for self-edification, but for the edification of the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:7-14; Romans 12:3-8)

c. *The Sign Gifts:* God can and does manifest His presence today through all the biblically referenced gifts of the Spirit, including the sign gifts of tongues, healing, and miracles.

In the First Century, the sign gifts and miracles of the New Testament were initially ordained by God for the specific purposes of validating the messengers of the gospel following Pentecost. (Hebrews 2:1-4; Jude 3) More specifically, the Scriptures teach that the role of sign gifts accomplished purposes particularly helpful in the First Century, namely: (1) as a sign of the impending judgment of God upon the first-century generation of unbelieving Jews (1 Corinthians 14:20-21; Isaiah 28:11ff.; Matthew 23:29-39; Acts 2:40), (2) as an aid in helping the early church make progress toward maturity (1 Corinthians 13:8-13), (3) as the means of establishing the New Testament Scriptures as the authoritative Word of God (Hebrews 2:1-4; Jude 3), and (4) as a special testimony to the apostolic teachings as foundational to Christian truth (2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 22:18-19).

While signs and wonders appear to have been more in evidence in the first Christian century, today God remains sovereign in the manifestation of His presence, power and glory. Scripture does not preclude the possibility of authentic instances of sign gifts and miracles today. Since the Joel 2 prophecies cited by Peter on the Day of Pentecost were only partially fulfilled in the early church, we must anticipate a greater manifestation of the power of God in these latter days to prepare for the Second Advent. Believers can pray for seasons of the manifest presence of God in these final days of darkness before the return of Christ with “signs and wonders” that point hearts to the truth of the gospel message to augment an end-times harvest of souls.

All spiritual gifts are subject to the instruction of the Word of God, are to maintain the centrality of Jesus Christ, and should result in edification and unity of the body of Christ, and the advancement of the Kingdom. (John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 14)

## 12. The Church.

a. *As an Organism:* The church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a “spiritual organism” made up of all true believers throughout this present age. (Ephesians 1:22-23; 3:1-10; 4:14-16; 5:25-32; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; 2 Corinthians 11:2)

b. *As an Organization:* A church is a local congregation of Christian saints associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel (Acts 2:41-42; Philippians 1:1-4); observing the ordinances of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:2); and obedient to the mandates of the Word of God (Ephesians 4:7). Each local church is an autonomous unit under the headship of Christ (Ephesians 4:15-16). Ecclesiastical governance is built on the New Testament principles of the priesthood of believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6) and mutual submission (Philippians 2:1-4). The church governs itself, through careful recognition and submission to mature, spiritual and wise leaders, whose qualifications, duties and accountability are defined in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17). The highest principle in church governance is the headship of Jesus Christ. For Christ truly to be head of His church requires that His shepherds and sheep listen to His voice.

c. *As to Operation:* Scripture defines the operation of the church (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11). The church is a mission, with a local and global responsibility. The church is a local embassy representing her King, Jesus, on Whose behalf her members act as ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:18-6:2). Other figures of Scripture also help define the role and purpose of the church in the world -- building, bride, flock, temple, body, nation, etc. Biblical functions of the local church ministry are in response to the five imperatives of Christ, and include **worship** (John 4:23-24), **prayer** (Mark 11:17), **the Word** (Matthew 4:4), **community** (John 15:12, 17), and **mission** (Matthew 28:18-20).

d. *The Ordinances*: There are two biblical ordinances, or sacraments, for the church -- baptism and the Lord's Supper (communion). Baptism is an outward, public signification of inward faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and pictures our identification with His death and resurrection (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:1-5). The communion bread and cup are symbolic reminders of the body and blood of Christ Jesus who died for the sins of the world (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

### 13. Biblical Interpretation.

a. *Hermeneutics*: The Bible is to be understood and interpreted following normal historical, grammatical hermeneutics in accordance with the basic rules of language. The Genesis account of Creation, the flood, the miracles of both Testaments, the virgin birth, the resurrection and ascension of Christ are all truthfully recorded, giving us all that we need to know for life and godliness. God has not revealed all that He knows, but He has revealed sufficient truth for us to come into an authentic relationship with God. (Deuteronomy 29:29) The Bible is God's Self-disclosure. The Scriptures contain sufficient information and revelation by which man is able to know His nature, His character, His will, and His unfolding plan of the ages. Where figurative language is obviously employed in Scripture, it conveys a literal spiritual truth.

b. *Progressive Revelation*: At different points in history God has revealed Himself to man, and He has caused that revelation to be put in writing, opening up more fully man's understanding of God's character and will (Ephesians 3:1-10; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-4). Literal interpretation, progressive revelation, a doxological world view, the obvious distinction between Israel and the church, and the immutable covenants of God lead naturally to the observation and organization of the various stewardships in the progress of revelation. However, this and all other theological systems must be viewed as secondary to the Word of God itself from which they derive. Man's organization of theology must never take precedence over Scripture itself (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### 14. The Personality of Satan.

Satan is a personal spirit being, a deceiver, the author of sin, and the open and declared enemy of God. Demons are fallen angels. The powers of darkness are waging war on the saints, who must defeat them by the authority of Christ and the whole armor of God. Satan and his forces will be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Ephesians 6:10-18; Revelation 12:7-12; 20:10).

### 15. The Second Advent of Christ.

Jesus Christ will return to earth personally for his saints, and subsequently He will return with them to establish the millennial kingdom on earth. The pre-wrath rapture of the church is defensible, although this aspect of prophetic interpretation should not be made a test of fellowship among believers. (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:9; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

### 16. The Eternal State.

All the dead will be resurrected bodily from the grave, the regenerate souls to eternal life,

and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29). The souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious blessing they await the first resurrection, when they are reunited with their glorified bodies to be forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when, with soul and body reunited, they will appear at the Great White Throne for judgment. Pursuant to the righteous judgment of God, they will be cast into the Lake of Fire to suffer everlasting separation from God as their punishment (Matthew 25:45-46; Luke 16:19-26; Mark 9:42-48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15). There are degrees of reward in heaven for the righteous, and degrees of punishment in that place of eternal death for the unrighteous. (Luke 12:47-48; Genesis 18:15; Hebrews 12:23)