



*Looking up, Looking in, Looking out!*

## **Our Christology**

**Christology** is the branch of theology that deals with who Christ is in particular how divinity and humanity are joined in the God man Jesus Christ.

**We believe that the entire bible is about Jesus and points us to Jesus**

### **John 5:39**

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

**We believe that Jesus is fully God (commonly known as the deity of Christ)**

### **John 8:58**

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

### **John 10:30**

I and *my* Father are one.

## **Our Soteriology**

**Soteriology** is the branch of theology that deals with salvation. It is derived from the Greek *sōtērion* "salvation" (from *sōtēr* "savior, preserver") + English -logy.

**Jesus is the only way to salvation**

### **John 14:6**

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

**We believe that God causes our salvation and we play no role in it**

### **John 6:44**

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

**Salvation is a free gift receive by grace through faith and not by works**

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

**We believe in the justification and adoption of the believer**

Justification is the instant legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and thinks of Christ's righteousness as belonging to us and (2) declare us "just" or morally righteous in HIS sight

## **Justification**

### **Romans 3:26**

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

### **Romans 5:1**

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

### **Galatians 2:16**

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

## **Adoption**

### **John 1:12**

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

### **Ephesians 1:5**

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

### **Ephesians 2:2-3**

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:  
Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

## **Salvation can not be lost**

John 10:28-29

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand.

## **You receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of confessing Christ**

1 Corinthians 12:13

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Ephesians 1:13-14

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

## **A person is not saved without the Holy Spirit**

Romans 8:9

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

## **We believe we are born in sin and in need of salvation**

Psalm 51:5

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

## **We DO NOT believe baptism is necessary for salvation (Baptismal Regeneration), but should be done after salvation as a public confession of faith in Christ**

Anything in addition to faith in Jesus Christ as being required for salvation is a works-based salvation. To add ANYTHING to the Gospel is to say that Jesus' death on the cross was not sufficient to purchase our salvation. To say that we must be baptized in order to be saved is to say that we must add our own good works and obedience to Christ's death in order to make it sufficient for salvation, we adamantly disagree with this viewpoint!

Romans 5:8

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

Acts 16:31

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

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.

Titus 3:5

he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

## **Our Ecclesiology**

**Ecclesiology** is the study of the theological understanding of the Christian church. (from Greek  $\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\sigma$ , *ekklesiā*, "congregation, church"; and *-λογία, -logia*)

### **The church is the bride of Christ**

Ephesians 5:25-27, 32

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

### **Regenerated believers should be within a community of believers known as a church (the church is not a building, but people, it's not an organization but an organism)**

Hebrews 10:25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

### **The church is the body of Christ and Christ chooses its members**

1 Corinthians 12:12-20

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.

If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.

**The church should be led by a plurality of men (in terms of eldership women can hold position of leadership)**

Acts 14:23

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

**We will ordain female deacons, but not female elders**

Romans 16:1 (Phoebe was a female deacon)

I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

**We embrace all biblical forms of church discipline (Private rebuke, public rebuke and excommunication for unrepentant sin):**

**Personal Offenses**

Matthew 18:15-22

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

**Criminal Offenses**

Romans 13:1-5

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

**Ecclesiological Offenses**

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 (Church members unrepentantly sin against God and local church)

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

### **Eldership Offenses**

1 Timothy 5:19-21

Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning. I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism

### **Revelation 2:5 (Collective church sins against God)**

Therefore, remember from what high state you have fallen and repent! Do the deeds you did at the first; if not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place – that is, if you do not repent

### **We believe in all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit**

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

### **We believe all believers should get baptized**

Romans 6:3-4

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

### **We believe in taking Holy Communion**

Luke 22:19-21

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." <sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. <sup>21</sup> But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table.

1 Corinthians 11:23-29

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup> In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. <sup>27</sup> Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup> A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

### **We believe in giving financially via tithes and offerings**

Acts 2:42-46

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the

apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. <sup>2</sup> On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

## **Our Eschatology**

**Eschatology** is a part of theology and philosophy concerned with what is believed to be the final events in the history of the world, or the ultimate destiny of humanity, commonly referred to as the end of the world. (from the Greek  $\square\chi\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ , *Eschatos* meaning "last" and *-logy* meaning "the study of")

There are four interpretations of Revelation:

### **Preterist**

This view believes that the events described in the book of Revelation were fulfilled in the first century and Revelation has no prophetic value

### **Historicist**

This view believes that the events described in the book of Revelation are fulfilled from its writing to the present time. To the Historicist Revelation is primarily historical and has no prophetic value.

### **Idealist**

This view believes Revelation symbolizes the timeless battle between good and evil. Revelation is neither prophetic or historical. The event mentioned are not actual, but a collection of myths used to convey spiritual truths.

### **Futurist**

This view takes the Book of Revelation as a literal direct presentation of actual, chronological, and prophetic truth. The people and events from chapter 4 – 22 are actual future events. This view holds that the prophecies described will take place as stated.

Revelation chapters 4 through 22 are actual events that will take place!

## **We believe in the Rapture of the Church**

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. <sup>15</sup> According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage each other with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:50-54

I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup> Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—  
<sup>52</sup> in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. <sup>53</sup> For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

### **We believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**

The Second Coming occurs after the great and terrible Tribulation (Revelation chapters 6-19). The Rapture occurs before the Tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10).

The Second Coming of Christ will not occur until after certain other end-times events take place (2 Thessalonians 2:4; Matthew 24:15-30; Revelation chapters 6-18). The Rapture is imminent; it could take place at any moment (Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54).

The Rapture and Second Coming are similar but separate events. Both involve Jesus returning. Both are end-times events. However, it is crucially important to recognize the differences. In summary, the Rapture is the return of Christ to the clouds to remove all believers from the earth before the time of God’s wrath. The Second Coming is the return of Christ to the earth to bring the Tribulation to an end and to defeat the antichrist and his evil world empire.

### **We believe in Heaven**

Isaiah 66:1

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

Acts 7:48-49

Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?

Matthew 5:34-35

But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

John 14:1-4

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

### **We believe there is Hell**

Matthew 25:41

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Matthew 3:12

His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Luke 16:23-24

In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

### **Our View of Wine, Beer and Alcohol**

Vision International Church operates under a theocracy and therefore God’s word teaches us how we should govern ourselves. With that being said we recognize there are different views on secondary issues such as wine, beer, music, etc. Scripture does not forbid Christians from drinking wine, beer or any other alcoholic beverages, but it is clear on drunkenness. We DO NOT believe or teach that drinking alcohol is a sin, but we realize that not every Christian can explore this liberty and our position can be summed up in Four Statements.

**First**, we believe that all drunkenness is a sin (Deuteronomy 21:20; Ecclesiastes 10:17; Matthew 24:29; Luke 12:45; 21:34; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:11, 6:10; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3).

**Secondly**, we believe that many horrendous sins are affiliated with drunkenness. Therefore, getting drunk is a sin that can lead to other sins, such as incest (Genesis 19:32–35), violence (Proverbs 4:17), adultery (Revelation 17:2), mockery and brawling (Proverbs 20:1), poverty (Proverbs 21:17), late night and early morning drinking (Isaiah 5:11–12), hallucinations (Isaiah 28:7), foolish behavior (Isaiah 5:22; Jeremiah 51:39), murder (2 Samuel 11:13), vomiting (Jeremiah 25:27; 48:26; Isaiah 19:14), staggering (Jeremiah 25:27; Psalm 107:27; Job 12:25), madness (Jeremiah 51:7), shameful nakedness (Habakkuk 2:15; Lamentations 4:21), sloth (Joel 1:5), escapism (Hosea 4:11), and depression (Luke 21:34). In summary, sin leads to death and the sin of drunkenness produces only death and misery.

**Thirdly**, we believe that Christian leaders are to live their lives in such a way as to set a positive example of holiness for others to emulate (Hebrews 13:7). This includes elders, the male senior leaders in the church, who are not to be drunkards (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7).

**Fourthly**, we do believe that all Christians must at varying times and in varying ways give up some of their Christian liberties in order to love people of weaker conscience. Christians must make every effort to not lead them into sin by exercising freedoms in their presence (Romans 14:21; 1 Corinthians 10:31–32).

**In conclusion**, there are different views on alcohol. We recognize that this is an issue where Christians can and do disagree, so we have no position on alcohol other than that people should have their conscience captive to the word of God, submit to the leadership of their church or denomination, and do everything for God’s glory. Vision International Church permits diversity on this secondary matter and pursues unity on the primary theological issues. We respect the right of Christians, organizations, and denominations to arrive at differing conclusions on this matter. So long as they are within the boundaries of God’s Holy Word we respect those positions and welcome faithful Christians holding them into the Vision International Church family. Together we can pursue what is most important—the expansion of God’s kingdom through the work of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the planting of His church.

### **Our View on Secular Music**

Vision International Church realizes that there are many secular musicians who are immensely talented. Secular music can be very entertaining. There are many secular songs that have “hot” beats, thoughtful insights, and positive messages. In determining whether or not a Christian should listen to secular music, there are three primary factors to consider: (1) **The Purpose of the Music**, (2) **The Style of Music**, and (3) **The Content of the Lyrics**.

**(1) The purpose of music.** Is music designed solely for worship, or does God allow music to be soothing and/or entertaining? The most famous musician in the Bible, King David, primarily used music for the purpose of worshipping God (see Psalm 4:1; 6:1; 54:1; 55:1; 61:1; 67:1; 76:1). However, when King Saul was tormented by evil spirits, he would call on David to play the harp in order to soothe him (1 Samuel 16:14-23). The Israelites also used musical instruments to warn of danger (Nehemiah 4:20) and to surprise

their enemies (Judges 7:16-22). In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul instructs Christians to encourage one another with music: “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” (Ephesians 5:19). So, while the primary purpose of music does seem to be worship, the Bible definitely allows music to be used for other purposes.

**(2) The style of music.** Sadly, the issue of music styles can be very divisive among Christians; we here at Vision International Church embrace all music styles. There are Christians who adamantly demand that no musical instruments be used, we disagree with this view.

The Bible nowhere condemns any particular style of music. The Bible nowhere declares any form of musical instrument to be ungodly. The Bible mentions numerous kinds of string instruments and wind instruments. While the Bible does not specifically mention drums, it does mention other percussion instruments (Psalm 68:25; Ezra 3:10). Nearly all of the forms of modern music are variations and/or combinations of the same types of musical instruments, played at different speeds or with heightened emphasis. There is no biblical basis to declare any particular style of music to be ungodly or outside of God’s will.

**(3) The content of the lyrics.** Since neither the purpose of music nor the style of music are determinant as to whether a Christian should listen to secular music, the content of the lyrics must be considered. While not specifically speaking of music, Philippians 4:8 is an excellent guide as to what we should listen for in the lyrics of music, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.” If those are the things we should be thinking about, surely also those are the things we should invite into our minds through music and lyrics. Can the lyrics in an entirely secular song be true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy? If the answer is yes, there would be absolutely nothing wrong with a Christian listening to a secular song of that nature.

At the same time, it is abundantly clear that much of secular music does not meet the standard of Philippians 4:8. Secular music often upholds immorality and violence while demeaning or belittling purity and integrity. If a song glorifies what opposes God, a Christian should not **purposefully** listen to it. However, there are many secular songs that have no mention of God, but still uphold godly values, such as honesty, purity, and integrity. If a love song promotes the sanctity of marriage and/or the purity of true love—but does not mention God or the Bible—such a song can still be listened to and enjoyed.

Obviously, the best kind of music we can listen to is that which praises and glorifies God. There are very talented Christian musicians in nearly every musical genre, ranging from classical, to rock, to rap, to reggae. There is nothing inherently wrong with any particular style of music. It is the lyrics that determine whether a song is “acceptable” for a Christian to listen too. But if a style of secular music, whether in the music itself or in the lyrics, leads you to think about or get involved in something that does not glorify God, it should be avoided. With that being said we believe each believer should examine themselves without being rigid toward all secular music, but avoid all music that glorifies and entices people to sin!