Theological Positions and Applications      Section 1.2

Revised: June 12, 2019

Biola’s Theological Positions are contained in three documents. The Articles of Faith, presented here as originally conceived by the founders of the organization, have been and continue to be central to Biola’s identity and its mission, represent the unwavering theological tenets of Biola University and are an essential part of the Articles of Incorporation of the University. The Statement of Biblical Principles reflects Biola’s deeply held convictions relating to God’s Intentional Design for Life, God’s Sacred Value for Life, and God’s Final Plans for Life. Biola’s Eschatology Teaching Position reflects its teaching position regarding end times. These three theological positions are fully stated below.

Articles of Faith

The Bible, consisting of all the books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God, a supernaturally given revelation from God Himself, concerning Himself, His being, nature, character, will and purposes; and concerning man, his nature, need, duty and destiny. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are without error or misstatement in their moral and spiritual teaching and record of historical facts. They are without error or defect of any kind.

There is one God, eternally existing and manifesting Himself to us in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Jesus was supernaturally conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin—Mary, a lineal descendant of David. He lived and taught and wrought mighty works and wonders and signs exactly as is recorded in the four Gospels. He was put to death by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate. God raised from the dead the body that had been nailed to the cross. The Lord Jesus after His crucifixion showed Himself to be alive to His disciples, appearing unto them by the space of forty days. After this the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, and the Father caused Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church.

The Lord Jesus, before His incarnation, existed in the form of God, and of His own choice laid aside His divine glory and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. In His pre-existent state He was with God and was God. He is a divine person possessed of all the attributes of Deity, and should be worshipped as God by angels and man. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." All the words that He spoke during His earthly life were the words of God. There is absolutely no error of any kind in them, and by the words of Jesus Christ the words of all other teachers must be tested.

The Lord Jesus became in every respect a real man, possessed of all the essential characteristics of human nature.

By His death on the cross, the Lord Jesus made a perfect atonement for sin, by which the wrath of God against sinners is appeased and a ground furnished upon which God can deal in mercy with sinners. He redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse in our place. He who Himself was absolutely without sin was made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. The Lord Jesus is coming again to this earth, personally, bodily and
visibly. The return of our Lord is the blessed hope of the believer, and in it God's purposes of grace toward mankind will find their consummation.

The Holy Spirit is a person and is possessed of all the distinctively divine attributes. He is God.

Man was created in the image of God, after His likeness, but the whole human race fell in the fall of the first Adam. All men, until they accept the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior, are lost, darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, hardened in heart, morally and spiritually dead through their trespasses and sins. They cannot see, nor enter the kingdom of God until they are born again of the Holy Spirit.

Men are justified on the simple and single ground of the shed blood of Christ and upon the simple and single condition of faith in Him who shed His blood, and are born again by the quickening, renewing, cleansing work of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the Word of God. All those who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and their Lord, and who confess Him as such before their fellow men, become children of God and receive eternal life. They become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. At death their spirits depart to be with Christ in conscious blessedness, and at the second coming of Christ their bodies shall be raised and transformed into the likeness of the body of His glory.

All those who persistently reject Jesus Christ in the present life shall be raised from the dead and throughout eternity exist in a state of conscious, unutterable, endless torment and anguish.

The Church consists of all those who, in this present dispensation, truly believe on Jesus Christ. It is the body and bride of Christ, which Christ loves and for which He has given Himself.

There is a personal devil, a being of great cunning and power. "The prince of the power of the air." "The prince of this world." "The god of this age." He can exert vast power only so far as God suffers him to do so. He shall ultimately be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and shall be tormented day and night forever.

**Statement of Biblical Principles**

In continuity with centuries of Christians before us, we believe God’s vision for humanity, as embodied in the person of Jesus Christ and illuminated by the Holy Spirit through Scripture, is a source of great joy and provides the best understanding of life’s meaning and human flourishing.

From this overarching belief flow the affirmations of our unchanging Articles of Faith — which fix us inextricably to our doctrinal core — as well as the following biblical principles, which express Biola University’s convictions about how a biblically faithful university in the 21st century should manifest the gospel of Jesus Christ in how we live, learn and serve in God’s world.

In articulating our community’s biblical principles, categorized below in three sections, we acknowledge that some propose different ways to understand the Bible. We respect and protect the freedom of communities in a pluralistic society to differ on these matters. We do not seek to impose our convictions on other communities, and we also expect others will respect and protect the freedom of our community to believe and live as we do.
Biola University is a Christian community. Everything we do is framed by the reality that the Triune God, who reigns supreme over the immense universe, desires a personal relationship with us. He makes this possible by offering salvation that is initiated by the Father, secured by the Son and applied by the Spirit.

Two words sum up the Good News that has guided Biola University since our founding in 1908: Jesus saves. The implications of these words are both intimate and vast. Jesus saves us individually, but Jesus also saves the world. Nothing in creation is too broken, too depraved, too ruined to be redeemed by Jesus. In Christ, and in him alone, there is new hope, new life, new creation.

Jesus saves. They are the words that hold us, Biola University, together as a community of faith united in Christ, clear on who we are to be and how we ought to live.

I. God's Intentional Design for Life
We believe God created all things and set in place the laws of nature, not according to random chance but according to his perfect, miraculous and purposeful plan. Our understanding of the origin of life is enhanced by scientific observation, but not limited to material processes. The existence of the world cannot be explained adequately apart from the intelligent exercise of God’s supernatural power.

God created the natural world and called it “good,” and after he created male and female he declared his creation “very good.” The man, Adam, was formed by the LORD God from the dust of the ground and not from living ancestors, and God breathed into him the breath of life so that Adam became a living being. The woman, Eve, was created from Adam’s side with both made in the image of God.

We recognize that part of God’s good design is the way he created male and female in his image to flourish in community. In the beginning, God designed marriage as a covenantal bond between one man and one woman, which is affirmed by Jesus in the New Testament. It is in this marriage union that God blessed a special spiritual, emotional and sexual intimacy for joy, satisfaction and procreation. Further, we believe God’s intent for sexual intimacy is to occur only in the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman.

II. God's Sacred Value for Life
We believe that our biblical calling to be good stewards of creation involves cultivating a sense of awe and reverence at the sacred mystery of human life made in the image of God. God is glorified by the rich mosaic of human cultures and ethnicities since men and women reflect his image and are equally precious in his sight. All human beings are created with intrinsic dignity and importance. There are no exceptions.

This understanding of human worth begins with the recognition that conception marks the start of human life and full personhood. Each person possesses a right to life and protection from harm. We uphold the value God has given to humanity by protecting the worth of persons from their beginnings until their final breaths. We are opposed to the taking of innocent life, from abortion to euthanasia.
Seeing human life as a seamless tapestry, we affirm the personhood and dignity of those who are medically and socially marginalized. Our vision of social justice is rooted in a biblical calling to care for vulnerable members of our society.

III. God’s Final Plans for Life

God is the sovereign author of history. He is working all things toward the promise of Christ’s return to earth in power and glory as he judges the world in righteousness to bring an end to evil and to rule and reign in the new heaven and new earth as the eternal dwelling place for the redeemed. As the redeemed, we faithfully live out God’s calling to grow in him, to obey his commands, to delight in him, to steward his creation and to make disciples of all nations.

Because of our new life in Christ, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit and compelled by the hope of Christ’s return to live with purpose and urgency to fulfill his mission. God’s great love for the world calls us to proclaim in word and deed the good news of salvation through faith in Christ. We also live out the fullness of life in Christ by working for justice, peace and reconciliation in his name. As the Body of Christ — the Church — we seek to bear witness to the coming Kingdom of God in every dimension of our lives as part of the gospel announcement that Jesus saves.

Eschatology Teaching Position

Biola University holds to the following teaching position on eschatology:

In fulfillment of God’s historical purpose for humanity to rule and establish God’s kingdom on earth (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 8:4-8; Matt. 6:10; Heb. 2:6-9), the Scriptures teach a millennial reign of Christ with His saints on earth following His literal return. The nation of Israel, having been redeemed, will play a central role in bringing the blessings of salvation to all nations during the millennium in fulfillment of biblical prophecies (e.g., Is. 2:1-4; 11:1-12; Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 37; Amos 9:9-15; Zech. 14; Matt. 19:28; Acts 1:6; 3:19-21; Rev. 20:4-6). Following the millennium, this kingdom will be merged into the eternal kingdom (I Cor. 15:22-28).

Before these millennial events, the believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-17). The time of this “rapture” is unknown, and thus believers are to live constantly watchful and ready.

Expectation of All Employees

Articles of Faith

Every employee of the University must annually certify the following with regard to the above-stated Articles of Faith: (1) “I have read and understand Biola University’s Articles of Faith, (2) I understand them to be central to Biola’s identity and mission and reflect the unwavering convictions of the University, (3) I have a desire to work in an educational community where the tenets stated in the Articles of Faith are embraced and taught, and (4) I believe the tenets stated in the Articles of Faith in their entirety are true and hold them as my own understanding.

Statement of Biblical Principles
Every employee of the University must annually certify the following with regard to the above-stated Statement of Biblical Principles: (1) “I have read and understand Biola University’s Statement of Biblical Principles, (2) I understand them to reflect the deeply held convictions of the University, and (3) I have a desire to work in an educational community where the principles stated in the Statement of Biblical Principles are embraced and taught.

Some employees, including the President, Provost, Vice Presidents, members of the President’s Advisory Council, all faculty (regular and adjunct), as well as staff who have as a primary part of his or her position a formal role in the education, co-education or formation of students, or in articulating and representing the mission of the university with prospective students, donors or other constituents, must, in addition to the certification required in the paragraph above, also annually certify that “I hold these principles to be true as my own understanding.”

**Eschatology Teaching Position**

With regard to the Eschatology Teaching Position, every employee must annually certify the following: (1) “I have read and understand Biola University’s Eschatology Teaching Position, (2) I understand that Biola’s Eschatology Teaching Position reflects the University’s teaching position on end times, and (3) I have a desire to work in an educational community where Biola’s Eschatology Teaching Position is embraced and taught.

Some employees, including the President, Provost, Vice Presidents and faculty (regular and adjunct) with biblical teaching responsibilities in the Talbot School of Theology and the Torrey Honors Institute, and potentially other faculty who may teach eschatology, must, in addition to the certification required in the paragraph above, also annually certify that “I hold this position to be true as my own understanding.”