



ARTICLES OF FAITH

We are Reformed Baptists. Our desire is to be biblical in our orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The Bible is our ultimate authority for all wisdom and guidance.

We acknowledge the *1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* as a means of defining how we interpret the doctrines of Scripture, with the following exceptions: the identity of the antichrist (26:4); amendments to the language concerning the Lord's Day (22:7,8). This historic document is, however, an excellent summary of "the things most surely believed among us." We accept it not as an infallible rule or code of faith, but as an assistance to us in controversy, a confirmation in faith, a standard for church officers, and a means of instruction in righteousness for the body. This historic Christian orthodox body of theology in compact form with Scriptural citations will provide our church body a foundation for giving a reason for the hope that is in them. (1 Peter 3:15).

We also adopt as a summary expression of our faith the following articles:

I. The Scriptures

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God. Therefore, all scripture is authoritative, infallible and inerrant. The Scriptures are the only sufficient rule for faith and practice (Ps. 19:7; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

II. God and the Trinity

There is one true and living God who exists in three eternally distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one in being, united in purpose, and equally worthy of glory and adoration. God is invisible, eternal, omnipresent, almighty, all-knowing"his perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of his free creatures, unchanging, dependent upon none, sovereign, righteous, holy, just, gracious, loving, merciful, patient, and good. (Deu 6:4; John 14:26; 15:26; Matt 28:19)

III. Creation

God created all that now exists in six days and from nothing, and it was all very good. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit acted together in the work of creation. Out of all living things, only man was created in God's image, and He assigned to each a biological gender, "male and female He created them. And God granted man dominion over all lesser forms of life and over the earth itself. (Gen 1:1; 1:27 John 1:2-3; Heb 1:2)

IV. Sanctity of Human Life

All human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other state or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Ps. 139; Deut 10:18)

V. Providence

God from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any way to be the author or approver of sin, nor to violate the free agency of His creatures, nor share responsibility for their sin (Isa. 46:9-11; Prov. 16:33; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; Jas. 1:13-15).

VI. Election

Before the foundation of the world, God elected a great multitude of men and women to eternal life as an act of His free grace alone. This election was in no way dependent upon His foresight of human faith, decision, works, or merit. In the unsearchable realm of God's sovereign will, all men remain responsible beings, subject to God's commands to repent and believe, and accountable to God for their rebellion, impenitence, and rejection of Christ. (John 6:37; Rom 8:29,30; 1 Cor 1:26-28; Eph 1:11; 2 Thess 2:13-14)

VII. Fall of Man

God originally created Man in His own image, and free from sin; but, through the temptation of Satan, Adam transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original holiness and righteousness; whereby his posterity inherit a nature corrupt and wholly opposed to God and His law. As a result they are under condemnation, and as soon as they are capable of moral action, become actual transgressors (Gen. 1:26-27; 3:1-7; Rom. 5:12-19; Eph. 2:1-3).

VIII. Human Inability

The Fall brought every man into a state of utter depravity, meaning every dimension of his being is distorted by sin. Apart from the grace of God, fallen man treats sin as his master, God as an

enemy, and the message of the cross as foolishness. Until he is born again, he possesses neither the desire nor the ability to love God, to keep His laws, to understand the gospel, to repent of sin, or to trust in Christ (Job 14:4; John 6:44; Rom 8:7; 10:11).

IX. The Birth and Life of Christ

God sent His Son into the world to save His people from their sins. Conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, Jesus was and is both God and man. He was tempted in all things yet without sin, living the perfect life of righteousness on behalf of His people (Matt 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-21).

X. The Death of Christ

Christ died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sin, forever finishing the substitutionary work of atonement for His people (Matt 27:50; Mark 15:37,39; Luke 23:46; John 19:33; Heb 10:10,12,14).

XI. The Resurrection of Christ

On the third day, Jesus rose bodily from the grave. The resurrection affirms the deity and authority of Christ and assures believers of their future bodily resurrection (1 Cor 15:4,20; Acts 2:24,32; 3:15).

XII. The Ascension of Christ

Jesus ascended into heaven to appear in the presence of God as our perpetual High Priest, presenting Himself as the only acceptable sacrifice for sin. He is the one and only Mediator between God and men, and Head of His church. He intercedes forever on behalf of His people and rules over all things for their sake. (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33,34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1).

XIII. The Holy Spirit

We believe that God the Holy Spirit brings glory to the Father and the Son. He applies the work of Christ to believers and distributes spiritual gifts to every believer according to His sovereign good pleasure for the purpose of building up the body of Christ. He is the Comforter, the Spirit of Adoption, the Seal of our Salvation and the Guarantor of our inheritance in Christ (John 14:16-17; 16:14; Acts 5:3; Rom. 8:14-17; Eph. 1:13-14).

XIV. Regeneration

Regeneration is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, who gives life to those dead in trespasses and sins, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the word of

God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness. It is a work of God's free and special grace alone (Eph. 2:1-6; Tit. 3:5; 1 John 5:1).

XV. Repentance and Faith

In response to the conviction of the Holy Spirit a person repents of sin and humbles himself with godly sorrow (Acts 2:37-38; 11:18; 2 Cor. 7:10-11). Saving faith is trusting God's authority regarding whatever is revealed in His word concerning Christ; accepting and resting upon Him alone for justification and eternal life. It is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and is accompanied by all other saving graces, and leads to a life of holiness (Rom. 3:27-28; 4:1-5; 4:17-25; 10:14, 17; Phil. 1:29; Eph. 2:8; Jas. 2:14-26).

XVI. Justification

The elect are declared righteous in the sight of God because of Christ's perfect life, His substitutionary death, and the imputation of His righteousness. Justification can never be the reward or result of human works or merit, nor does it grow out of an infusion of Christ's righteousness. It is granted through faith alone in the person and work of Christ alone (Rom 3:24; 4:58; 8:30; Gal 2:16; Heb 10:10).

XVII. Sanctification

Those who have been regenerated are also progressively sanctified by God's word and Spirit dwelling in them. All true believers will press on to lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of them. Positionally, all Christians are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and holy before Him now (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:27-27; Rom. 8:1-17; Gal. 5:13-24; 2 Pet. 1:3-11).

XVIII. Perseverance of the Saints

All those whom God has regenerated will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may fall through neglect and temptation, into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the church, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (John 6:37-40; 10:28-29; Rom. 8:28-39; 1 Cor. 1:8-9; Phil. 1:6).

XIX. The Church

A local church is a visible representation of the body of Christ and is under the authority of Christ alone. Nevertheless, in every local church, qualified elders are appointed to serve Christ as they care for His body. Qualified deacons are to assist the elders as needs arise. Each member of the church is uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit to edify the body. A local church must recognize

and fellowship with the universal body of Christ as represented in other true churches (Matt 16:18; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 1:22; 5:23-25, 32; Col 1:24).

XX. Baptism

Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer. True baptism is immersion in water, symbolizing both the believer's union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection to new life, and his cleansing from sin. Baptism may only be administered to those who demonstrate repentance from sin and make a credible profession of faith in Christ (Rom 6:3-5; Acts 2:37-41; 8:12-13, 36-38; 22:16; Col 2:12).

XXI. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, and to be observed by baptized believers in His churches till the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion with Him, and of their church membership (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-34).

XXII. Evangelism

It is the calling of every local church to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded. It is a priority in evangelism to unite new believers with local churches (Matt 28:19; John 17:17-18; Romans 10:13-17).

XXIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. God has created marriage to be the uniting of one [biological] man and one [biological] woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime, and it is intended to portray the relationship between Christ and His church. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord, and parents are to raise them in the fear and admonition of the Lord (Gen 1:26-28; Deut 6:4-9; Eph 5:21-6:4).

XXIV. The Resurrection

The bodies of men after death return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God—the righteous to rest with Him; the wicked, to be reserved under darkness to the judgment. The bodies of all the dead, both just and unjust, will be raised (John 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:12-28; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 1:23).

XXV. The Judgment

God has appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world by Jesus Christ, when every one shall receive according to his deeds; the wicked shall go into everlasting and conscious punishment; the righteous, into everlasting life (Matt. 25:46; John 5:22, 27-29; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:6-11; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 7:13-17; 14:9-11).

XXVI. The Glory of God

Christians must live for God's glory alone through their awareness and enjoyment of His Person, submission to His authority, and reliance upon His goodness. In truth, all things that have or will transpire, serve to glorify God as their highest purpose. For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen (Romans 11:36).