

*- Confession of Faith -*



# COVENANT

## REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

# - Confession of Faith -

This **CONFESSION OF FAITH** is established

for the glory of God and the benefit of

**COVENANT REFORMED BAPTISTH CHURCH (CRBC)**

in the fear of God and with love for His Word by

**DR. CASEY W. SMITH, FOUNDING ELDER & PASTOR**

by the grace and mercy of God on

**MARCH 2, 2014, in SHELBY, NORTH CAROLINA**

*“For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”*

*Ephesians 4: 12-13*

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<sup>1</sup> Chapters have been re-ordered from the 1689 2nd Baptist London Confession of Faith, and in some places re-named

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## PREFACE: OF THE CONFESSION OF TRUTH

*“This little volume is not issued as an authoritative rule, or code of faith, whereby you are to be fettered, but as assistance to you in controversy, a confirmation in faith, and a means of edification in righteousness. Here the younger members of our church will have a body of divinity in small compass, and by means of the scriptural proofs, will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them. Be not ashamed of your faith; remember it is the ancient gospel of the martyrs, confessors, reformers, and saints. Above all, it is the truth of God, against which all the gates of Hell cannot prevail. Let your lives adorn your faith; let your example adorn your creed. Above all live in Christ Jesus, and walk in Him, giving credence to no teaching but that which is manifestly approved of Him, and owned by the Holy Spirit. Cleave fast to the Word of God which is here mapped out for you.”*

(Charles Haddon Spurgeon)

The church’s identity as the Bride of Christ, the “pillar and support of the truth”, undergirds her confession of truth and stands in stark contrast to the marginalization of doctrine within the professing church today, especially the Christian denominational system, from which we have long been apart, namely Baptist.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10, we have a description of unbelievers as those who “...do not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.” Conversely, those who are saved are those who have a love for truth. Christians are concerned about theology because they love the truth and hate that which is misleading or in error. While love is used to describe a right relationship to truth, so truth is used to describe a right relationship to love. 1 Peter 1:22 explains, “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.” Loveless truth and truthless love are perversions of both biblical truth and biblical love. The clear, precise, and accurate proclamation of truth is the basis for proper equipping and edifying within the church. The hope and goal of which is that, by God’s grace, the lost would be granted a love of the truth and the church would be granted an ever-increasing love of truth such that they would “speak the truth in love, growing up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).

JB Gambrell summarized the importance of making a clear proclamation of the truth stating that:

*“No one can be a Christian without a creed... In Christianity the Holy Scriptures are the measure and criterion of creeds. To say it is right to believe a doctrine, but wrong to write what you believe, is not even respectable baby talk... A creedal statement is a challenge to seekers of truth to see whether the things stated are so, taking each separate statement and comparing it with the Scriptures. It gives definiteness to inquiry and greatly helps in the study of the Bible by drawing attention to one great cardinal doctrine at a time... A worthy creedal statement has a fine unifying effect... and is helpful in dissipating misunderstandings... The cry against creeds is lacking in sound judgment. It comes mostly from those who wish to evaporate religious thought into theological mist that it may be crystallized into other forms. It is almost impossible to say too much for clear, crystallized creedal statements in which little words are used edgewise to carve the outlines of truth deep in the minds of men.”*

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## Chapter 2: Of God's Eternal Decree

1. God has decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably to ordain all things, whatsoever comes to pass (Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15, 18); yet neither is God the author of sin<sup>2</sup> nor has he fellowship with any therein (James 1:13; 1 John 1:5); nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established (Acts 4:27-28; John 19:11); in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree (Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5).
2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions (Acts 15:18), yet he has not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions (Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18).
3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life through Jesus Christ, (1 Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:34) to the praise of his glorious grace (Ephesians 1:5-6); and others foreordained to everlasting death being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice (Romans 9:22-23; Jude 4).
4. These angels and men thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished (2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18).
5. Those of mankind that are predestined to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, has chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love alone, (Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9) without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace (Romans 9:13, 16; Ephesians 2:5, 12).
6. As God has appointed the elect unto glory, so he has, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.
7. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extends or withholds mercy, as he pleases, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This terminology has long been accepted by orthodox Christians to explain God's moral uprightness. While God in His sovereignty ordains any and all evil that occurs, He, Himself, is not morally culpable for that evil.

<sup>3</sup> While not in the 2nd London Baptist Confession, this is included in the Westminster. This truth is plainly taught by Romans 9. God's election/choice extends to those He would select for redemption and those who would receive the just penalty for their sin in condemnation. This is also understood as "double predestination."

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In the Reformed Baptist view, God from all eternity decrees some to election and positively intervenes in their lives to work regeneration and faith by the Holy Spirit acting independently of the human will in the work of regeneration as a work of grace. To the non-elect, God withholds this work of grace, passing them by and leaving them to themselves. He does not conversely work sin or unbelief in their lives. Even in the case of the “hardening” of the sinners’ already spiritually dead hearts, God does not, as Luther stated, “*work evil in us* (for hardening is working evil) *by creating fresh evil in us*” Luther continued:

*When men hear us say that God works both good and evil in us, and that we are subject to God’s working by mere passive necessity, they seem to imagine a man who is in himself good, and not evil, having an evil work wrought in him by God; for they do not sufficiently bear in mind how incessantly active God is in all His creatures, allowing none of them to keep holiday. He who would understand these matters, however, should think thus: God works evil in us (that is, by means of us) not through God’s own fault, but by reason of our own defect. We being evil by nature, and God being good, when He impels us to act by His own acting upon us according to the nature of His omnipotence, good though He is in Himself, He cannot but do evil by our evil instrumentality; although, according to His wisdom, He makes good use of this evil for His own glory and for our salvation<sup>4</sup>*

Thus, the mode of operation in the lives of the elect is not parallel with that operation in the lives of the reprobate. God works regeneration monergistically but never sin. Sin falls within the category of providential concurrence.

Another significant difference between the activity of God with respect to the elect and the reprobate concerns God’s justice. The decree and fulfillment of election provide mercy for the elect while the efficacy of reprobation provides justice for the reprobate. God shows mercy sovereignly and unconditionally to some, and gives justice to those passed over in election. That is to say, God grants the mercy of election to some and justice to others.

No one is the victim of injustice. To fail to receive mercy is not to be treated unjustly. God is under no obligation to grant mercy to all—in fact He is under no obligation to grant mercy to any. He says, “I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy” (Romans 9:15). The divine prerogative to grant mercy voluntarily cannot be faulted. If God is required by some cosmic law apart from Himself to be merciful to all men, then we would have to conclude that justice demands mercy. If that is so, then mercy is no longer voluntary, but required. If mercy is required, it is no longer mercy, but justice. What God does not do is sin by visiting injustice upon the reprobate. Only by considering election and reprobation as being asymmetrical in terms of a positive-negative concept can God be exonerated from injustice.

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We glean insight from Reformed Confessions, not as defining guides but as affirmations of what is taught by the Word of God in view of the oft debated subject of double-predestination. In doing so, we can readily see that double predestination has been consistently maintained.

## **The Reformed Confession: 1536**

Our salvation is from God, but from ourselves there is nothing but sin and damnation. (Art. 9)

## **French Confession of Faith: 1559**

We believe that from this corruption and general condemnation in which all men are plunged, God, according to his eternal and immutable counsel, calleth those whom he hath chosen by his goodness and mercy alone in our Lord Jesus Christ, without consideration of their works, to display in them the riches of his mercy; leaving the rest in this same corruption and condemnation to show in them his justice. (Art. XII)

## **The Belgic Confession of Faith: 1561**

We believe that all the posterity of Adam, being thus fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of our first parents, God then did manifest himself such as he is; that is to say, MERCIFUL AND JUST: MERCIFUL, since he delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable council, of mere goodness hath elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without respect to their works: JUST, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves. (Art. XVI)

## **The Second Helvetic Confession: 1566**

Finally, as often as God in Scripture is said or seems to do something evil, it is not thereby said that man does not do evil, but that God permits it and does not prevent it, according to his just judgment, who could prevent it if he wished, or because he turns man's evil into good... . St. Augustine writes in his *Enchiridion*: "What happens contrary to his will occurs, in a wonderful and ineffable way, not apart from his will. For it would not happen if he did not allow it. And yet he does not allow it unwillingly but willingly." (Art. VIII)

## **The Westminster Confession of Faith: 1643**

As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected ... are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power, through faith, unto salvation. Neither is any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as He pleaseth, for the glory of His Sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice. (Chap. III-Art. VI and VII)

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These examples selected from confessions of the historical Reformation under which believers safeguarded, under tremendous persecution, the integrity of Bible inerrancy. They indicate the care with which the doctrine of double predestination has been treated. The asymmetrical expression of the “double” aspect has been clearly maintained. This is in keeping with the care exhibited consistently throughout the history of the Church. The same kind of careful delineation can be seen in Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Zanchius, Turretini, Edwards, Hodge, Warfield, Bavinck, Berkouwer, and many others whose testimony rests in Christ.

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<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell, 1957), p. 206.



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## **Chapter 3: Of Creation**

1. In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (John 1:2-3; Hebrews 1:2; Job 26:13), for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power (Romans 1:20), wisdom, and goodness, to create or make out of nothing (Hebrews 11:3; Romans 4:17) the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good (Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:1-31).
2. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female (Genesis 1:27), with reasonable and immortal souls (Genesis 2:7), after his own image, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness (Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:26); having the law of God written in their hearts (Romans 2:14-15), and power to fulfill it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change (Genesis 3:6).
3. Besides the law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17), which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures (Genesis 1:26-28).

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## Chapter 4: Of Divine Providence

1. God the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all creatures, actions, and things (Hebrews 1:3; Job 38:11; Isaiah 46:10-11; Psalm 135:6), from the greatest even to the least (Matthew 10:29-31), by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will; to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, mercy, and grace (Ephesians 1:11).

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly (Acts 2:23); so that nothing comes to pass by chance, or without his providence; yet by the same providence (Proverbs 16:33) he orders them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently. 3. God, in his ordinary providence makes use of means (Acts 27:31, 44; Isaiah 55:10-11), yet is free to work without (Hosea 1:7), above (Romans 4:19-21), and against them (Daniel 3:27) at his pleasure.

4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that his determinate counsel extends itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men (Romans 11:32-34; 2 Samuel 24:1, 1 Chronicles 21:1); and that not by a bare permission, which also he most wisely and powerfully bounds, and otherwise orders and governs (2 Kings 19:28; Psalm 76:10), in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends (Genesis 1:20; Isaiah 10:6, 7, 12); yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceeds only from the creatures, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin (Psalm 1:21; 1 John 2:16).

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God does oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends (2 Chronicles 32:25-26, 31; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9). So that whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory, and their good (Romans 8:28).

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as the righteous judge, for former sin does blind and harden (Romans 1:24-28; Romans 11:7-8); from them he not only withholds his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts (Deuteronomy 29:4); but sometimes also withdraws the gifts which they had (Matthew 13:12), and exposes them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin (Deuteronomy 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12-13); and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan (Psalm 81:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12), whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God uses for the softening of others (Exodus 8:15, 32; Isaiah 6:9-10; 1 Peter 2:7-8).

7. As the providence of God does in general reach to all creatures, so after a more special manner it takes care of his church, and disposes of all things to its good (1 Timothy 4:10; Amos 9:8-9; Isaiah 43:3-5).

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## Chapter 5: Of the Holy Scriptures

1. The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, inerrant<sup>10</sup>, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Luke 16:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20), although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable (Romans 1:19-21; Romans 2:14-15; Psalm 19:1-3); yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will which is necessary unto salvation (Psalm 19:7-9; Luke 24:27, 44; Hebrews 1:1). Therefore it pleased the Lord at various times and in diverse manners to reveal himself, and to declare his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing (Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19-20); which makes the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto His people being now ceased.

2. Under the name of Holy Scripture, Word of God written, or the Bible, which was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; with God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; and is the rule of faith and life (2 Timothy 3:16-17), are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:

### **Thirty-Nine Books of the Old Testament**

Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalm, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

### **Twenty-Seven Books of the New Testament**

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude, and Revelation.

3. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon or rule of the Scripture, and, therefore, are of no authority to the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings.

4. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God who is truth itself (2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:9), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church of God to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole which is to give all glory to God, the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the

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Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts (John 16:13-14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20, 27).

6. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Galatians 1:8-9).

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word (John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12), and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed (1 Corinthians 11:13-14; 1 Corinthians 14:26, 40).

7. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves (2 Peter 3:16), nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them (Psalm 19:7; Psalm 119:130).

8. The Old Testament in Hebrew which was the native language of the people of God of old (Romans 3:2), and the New Testament in Greek which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations, being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic (Isaiah 8:20); so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them (Acts 15:15). But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them (John 5:39; Acts 17:11), therefore they are to be translated into the language of every people unto which they come (1 Corinthians 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 28), that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all (Colossians 3:16), they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

9. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself (2 Peter 1:20-21; Acts 15:15-16); and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture which is not manifold, but one, it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

10. The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture (Matthew 22:29-32; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 28:23).

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## Chapter 6: Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof

1. Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof (Genesis 2:16- 17), yet he did not long abide in this honor; Satan, the Adversary, the serpent of old who is called the devil, (Ezekiel 28:12-19; Isaiah 14:11-15; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9) subtly subdued Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:12-13; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9; Revelation 20:2), which God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.
2. By this sin, our first parents, and we in them, fell from original righteousness and communion with God, and so death came upon all (Romans 3:23): all becoming dead in sin (Romans 5:12-19), and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body (Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-19; Titus 1:15; Titus 3:3).
3. They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45, 49), being now conceived in sin (Psalm 51:5; Psalm 58:3; Job 14:4), and by nature children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), the servants of sin, the subjects of death (Romans 5:12; Romans 6:20), and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free (Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10).
4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil (Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21), do proceed all actual transgressions (James 1:14-15; Matthew 15:19).
5. This corruption of nature, during this life, remains in those that are regenerated (Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8); and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and the all motions thereof, are truly and properly sin (Galatians 5:17).

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## Chapter 7: Of God's Relationship with Man<sup>5</sup>

1. The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension on God's part (Luke 17:10; Job 35:7-8).

2. Moreover, man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall (Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:20-21), it pleased the Lord by grace to freely offer to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved (Romans 8:3; Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16); and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life, his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe (Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 6:44-45).

3. This is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15), and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament (Hebrews 1:1); and it is founded in that eternal covenant that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect (John 6:39-40, 17:9, 20; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2); and it is by grace alone that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God by works, having fallen from their original state of innocence (Hebrews 11:6-13; Romans 4:1-5; Acts 4:12; John 8:56).

4. Although this redemptive plan has been differently and variously administered in respect of ordinances and institutions in the time of the law (Hebrews 8-10; Romans 4:11; Colossians 2:11-12; 1 Corinthians 5:7), and since the coming of Christ in the flesh (Colossians 2:17; 2 Corinthians 3:6-9); yet for the substance and efficacy of it, to all its spiritual and saving ends, it is one and the same (1 Corinthians 10:1-4; Hebrews 11:13; John 8:56; Hebrews 12:22-28; Jeremiah 31:33-34); upon the account of which it has been revealed through the Old and New Testament (Galatians 3:14-16; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:21-23, 30; Psalm 32:1; Romans 4:3, 6, 16-17, 23-24; Hebrews 13:8).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>The 2<sup>nd</sup> London and Westminster Confessions both use the term "covenant" to describe God's relationship with man. The terminology of this chapter has been adopted to describe God's relationship as a whole with his creation. As a Reformed Baptist Church, we emphasize the covenant relationship God has established with the Lord Jesus Christ and thus fulfills in and throughout the bride of Christ, the Church of the living God which is comprised of both Jew and Gentile believers.

<sup>6</sup>Salvation is always by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 8: Of the Law of God

1. God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 7:29); by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience (Romans 10:5); promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it (Galatians 3:10-12).
2. The same law that was first written in the heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall (Romans 2:14-15), and was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables, the first four commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man (Exodus 20:1-17).
3. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits (Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:17); and partly holding forth diverse instructions of moral duties (1 Corinthians 5:7), all such ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only lawgiver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end, abrogated and taken away. (Colossians 2:14-17; Ephesians 2:14-16).
4. To them also he gave various judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution; their general equity only being of moral use (1 Corinthians 9:8-10).
5. The moral law does forever bind all, justified persons as well as others, to the obedience thereof (Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8, 10-12), and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator who gave it (James 2:10-11); neither does Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation (Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31).
6. Although true believers be not under the law as a way to earn salvation, to be thereby justified or condemned (Romans 6:14; Romans 8:1; Romans 10:4; Galatians 2:16), yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, in that as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts, and lives, so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against, sin (Romans 3:20; Romans 7:7-12); together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ and the perfection of his obedience; it is likewise of use to the regenerate to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law (Galatians 3:10-14). The promises of it in like manner show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, though not as due to them by the law as a system of merit (Luke 17:7-10); so as man's doing good and refraining from evil, because the law encourages to the one and deters from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law and not under grace (Romans 6:12-14; 1 Peter 3:8-13).

# - *Confession of Faith* -

7. Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it (Galatians 3:21), the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, required to be done (Ezekiel 36:27).



# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 8: Of the Law of God

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7. Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it (Galatians 3:21), the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, required to be done (Ezekiel 36:27).

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 9: Of Christ the Mediator

1. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to a plan made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man (Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 1:19-20); the prophet (Acts 3:22), priest (Hebrews 5:5-6), and king (Psalm 2:6; Luke 1:33); head and savior of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23), the heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2), and judge of the world (Acts 17:31); unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified (Isaiah 53:10; John 17:6; Romans 8:30).

2. The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with the Father who made the world, who upholds and governs all things he has made, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof (John 1:14; Galatians 4:4), yet without sin (Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14-17; Hebrews 4:15); being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her: and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so was made of a woman, of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures (Matthew 1:22-23); so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man (Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 2:5).<sup>7</sup>

3. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature thus united to the divine, in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure (Psalm 45:7; Acts 10:38; John 3:34), having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3); in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell (Colossians 1:19), to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled (Hebrews 7:26), and full of grace and truth (John 1:14), he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of mediator and surety (Hebrews 7:22); which office he took not upon himself, but was thereunto called by his Father (Hebrews 5:5); who also put all power and judgment in his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same (John 5:22, 27; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36, Acts 17:31).

4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake (Psalm 40:7, 8; Hebrews 10:5-10; John 10:18), while he was made under the law (Galatians 4:4; Matthew 3:15), and did perfectly fulfill it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne (Galatians 3:13; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 3:18), being made sin and a curse for us (2 Corinthians 5:21); enduring most grievous torments from God in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body (Matthew 26:37-38; Luke 22:44; Matthew 27:46); was crucified, died; was buried, yet saw no corruption (Acts 13:37): on the third day he arose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) with the same body in which he suffered (John 20:25-27), with which he also ascended into heaven (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11), and there sits at the right hand of his Father making intercession (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24), and will return to judge men and angels at the end of the world (Acts 10:42; Romans 14:9, 10; Acts 1:11; 2 Peter 2:4).

5. By his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, has fully satisfied the justice of his Father (Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:14; Romans 3:25-26), reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father has given unto Him (John 6:39; John 17:2; Hebrews 9:15).

# - Confession of Faith -

6. Although the work of redemption was not actually produced by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated into the elect in all ages, successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices wherein he was revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15; 1 Corinthians 4:10; Hebrews 4:2; 1 Peter 1:10-11); and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world<sup>8</sup> (Revelation 13:8), being the same yesterday, and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

7. Christ, in the work of mediation, acts according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture, attributed to the person denominated by the other nature (John 3:13; Acts 20:28).

8. To all those for whom Christ has obtained eternal redemption, he does certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them (John 6:37; John 10:15, 16; John 17:9; Romans 5:10); uniting them to himself by his Spirit, and revealing unto them, in and by his Word, the mystery of salvation, effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey (John 17:6; Ephesians 1:9; 1 John 5:20), and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit (Romans 8:9, 14), and overcoming all their enemies by his Almighty power and wisdom (Psalm 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26), in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his most wonderful and unsearchable dispensation; and all of free and absolute grace, without any condition foreseen in them to procure it (John 3:8; Ephesians 1:8).

9. This office of mediator between God and man is proper only to Christ, who is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God; and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof, transferred from him to any other (1 Timothy 2:5).

10. This number and order of offices is necessary; for in respect of our ignorance, we stand in need of his prophetic office (John 1:18); and in respect of our alienation from God, and imperfection of the best of our services, we need his priestly office to reconcile us and present us acceptable unto God (Colossians 1:21; Galatians 5:17); and in respect to our averseness and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue and security from our spiritual adversaries, we need his kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom (John 16:8; Psalm 110:3; Luke 1:74-75).

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<sup>7</sup> We affirm both the Nicene Creed (Appendix C) and the Definition of Chalcedon (Appendix D) with respect to the nature of Christ.

<sup>8</sup> [avpo. katabolh/j ko,smou ] meaning “from the foundation of the world.” Modern translations render this phrase as to the timing of the writing of the names contained in the Lamb's book of life, in contrast to the King James Version which renders it as to the time of the slaying of the Lamb. While grammatically either translation is tenable, both lead to the same conclusion vis, Christ's work on the cross had its origin before the creation of the world. Amen.

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 10: Of the Gospel, and of the Extent of the Grace Thereof<sup>9</sup>

1. The command of God given to Adam being broken by sin, and made unprofitable unto life, God was pleased to give forth the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15; Revelation 13:8), as the means of calling the elect, and begetting in them faith and repentance; in this promise the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and is therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners (2 Timothy 1:10). This promised grace assumes the creation truth that mankind bears of the divine image and is thus made for the love and praise of God. God's purpose, therefore, of restoring an elect people to His favor through Christ and reinstating Himself as the sole source and object of their praise and worship does not exclude any of fallen humanity from the duty to pursue the ends of the Gospel (Ephesians 1:9-12; Philippians 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:8-17).

2. This promise of Christ, and salvation by Him, is revealed only in and by the Word of God (Romans 1:17); neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by him, so much as in a general or obscure way (Romans 10:14-17); much less that men destitute of the revelation of Him by the promise or gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance (Isaiah 25:7-8; Isaiah 60:2-3). God provides, therefore, by command and providence, that proclamation of the full counsel of God be made to all men as sinners. The law initially written on the heart, as well as the moral law revealed to Israel, fully complies with the grace of the Gospel. This reality most forcefully implies that Christ's Gospel be proclaimed to all fallen humanity. The decree of salvation for the elect of every tongue, tribe, nation, involves of necessity the proclamation of both the Gospel and the accompanying duties of repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus to all men everywhere (Revelation 5:12-14; 7; Acts 17:24-31; 1 Timothy 1:12-16).

3. The revelation of the gospel unto sinners, made in diverse times and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God (Psalm 147:20; Acts 16:7); not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did make, or can do so; and therefore in all ages, the preaching of the gospel has been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straitening of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God (Romans 1:18-32). His secret will and good pleasure in this wise providence, however, is not the rule of our action; but rather his church must be governed by his commission of the gospel to all nations as the means of their calling. The apostolic work of careful dissemination, defense, and confirmation of the Gospel among all nations bore fruit only by virtue of the sovereign, inscrutable, and insuperable work of the Spirit embedding the preached word with vital power, and at the same time manifested the apostolic understanding of his command to make disciples (Acts 13:48; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 1:3-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-7; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15; 2 Timothy 2:8-10; James 1:17-18; 1 Peter 1:22-25).

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<sup>9</sup>This chapter, having no counterpart in the Westminster Confession, represents an attempt on the part of the Particular Baptists to speak to the relation of gospel proclamation and God's purpose for the nations. Additionally, it has been modified in response to two historic events which post-date the 1689 2<sup>nd</sup> London Baptist Confession, namely, the hyper-Calvinist controversy (1707ff) and the beginning of the modern mission movement (1792). We believe such a modification holds a two-fold purpose: 1: Articulates a clear motive for world-wide evangelism, avoiding hyper-Calvinism and 2: Insisting that it be nurtured and matured and kept alive by its unyielding Bible call for us to go preaching, believing, and expecting to see God's sheep hear His voice. Amen.

# - *Confession of Faith* -

4. We, therefore, affirm and have joyful confidence in these indivisible truths: the gospel is the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses may be born again, quickened or regenerated, there is moreover necessary, beyond the mere persuasive power of bare truth, an effectual irresistible work of the Holy Spirit upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life (1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 1:19-20); without which no other means will affect their conversion unto God (John 6:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6; Romans 8:30). The substance of all missionary and evangelistic labors, therefore, must be the proclamation of the Gospel. Apart from this message we may not expect God's Spirit to honor our efforts with the reclaiming of the lost. In the context of such labors one may always hope that the Spirit will lead the lost to Christ.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The doctrine of irresistible grace in no way implies that the sinner is brought to God against his will, but instead through changed desires he chooses to repent of sin and believe in Christ. The efficacious grace of God works in such a way that, according to Luther, "when God works in us, the will is changed under the sweet influences of the Spirit of God."

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 11: Of Free Will

1. God has endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to do good or evil (Deuteronomy 30:19; Matthew 17:12; James 1:14).
2. Man, in his state of innocence, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God (Ecclesiastes 7:29), but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it (Genesis 3:6). Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation (Romans 5:6; Romans 8:7); so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1-5), is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto (Titus 3:3-5; John 6:44).
4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he frees him from his natural bondage under sin (Colossians 1:13; John 8:36), and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good (Philippians 2:13); yet so as that by reason of his remaining corruptions, he does not perfectly, nor only will, that which is good, but does also will that which is evil (Galatians 5:16-17).
5. This will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone in the state of glory only (Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 1:6; 1 John 3:2).

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 12: Of Effectual Calling

1. All those whom God has predestined unto life, and those only, he is pleased in his appointed, and accepted time, effectually to call (Romans 8:30; Romans 11:7; Ephesians 1:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14), by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:1-6); enlightening their minds spiritually to understand the things of God (Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:17-18); taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh (Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:26); renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ (Ezekiel 36:27); yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.
2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, made before the foundation of the world and according to the kind intention of His will (Ephesians 1:4-5) not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature (2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 2:8), being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:5; John 5:25); he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20).
3. Although the non-elect may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit (Matthew 22:14; Matthew 13:20-21; Hebrews 6:4-5), yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will nor can truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men that receive not the Christian faith be saved in any other way whatsoever (John 6:44-45, 65; 1 John 2:24-25); be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess (Acts 4:12; John 4:22; John 17:3); and to assert and maintain that they may is without warrant of the Word of God.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> While the 2<sup>nd</sup> London Baptist Confession of Faith asserts that “elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; who works when, and where, and how he pleases; so also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word”, not only is there no scriptural support for such an assertion, such a claim does damage to a proper understanding of the gospel as the means of “revealing Christ and saving grace.”

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 13: Of Justification

1. Those whom God effectually calls, he also freely justifies (Romans 3:24; Romans 8:30), not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous (Romans 4:5-8; Romans 5:17-19; Ephesians 1:7); not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone (1 Corinthians 1:30-31); not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole righteousness by faith (Philippians 3:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-10), which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God (John 1:12).

2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified (Romans 3:28), but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but works by love (Galatians 5:6; James 2:17, 22, 26).

3. Christ, by his obedience and death, did, once for all time, fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified; and did, by the sacrifice of himself in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf (Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Isaiah 53:5-6); yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them (Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:21), and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners (Romans 3:26; Ephesians 1:6-7; Ephesians 2:7).

4. God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect (Galatians 3:8; 1 Peter 1:2), and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins (1 Timothy 2:6), and rise again for their justification (Romans 4:25); nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit does in time due actually apply Christ unto them (Colossians 1:21-22; Titus 3:4-7).

. God does continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified (Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:7-9), and although they can never fall from the state of justification (John 10:28), yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure (Psalm 89:31-33; Hebrews 12:5-11); until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance (Psalm 32:5; Psalm 51; 2 Chronicles 7:14).

6. The justification of believers under the Old Testament was, in all these respects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament (Galatians 3:9; Romans 4:22-24).



# *- Confession of Faith -*

## **Chapter 14: Of Adoption**

All those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption (Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4-5), by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God (John 1:12; Romans 8:17), have his name put upon them (2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12), receive the spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15), have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry “Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:18), are pitied (Psalm 103:13), protected (Proverbs 14:26; 1 Peter 5:7), provided for (Matthew 6:25-32; Matthew 7:9-11), and chastened by him as by a Father (Hebrews 12:6; Isaiah 54:8-9), yet never cast off (Deuteronomy 31:6; Lamentations 3:31; Matthew 28:20), but sealed to the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30), and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation (Hebrews 1:14, 6:12).

# - *Confession of Faith* -

## **Chapter 15: Of Sanctification**

1. They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally (Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5-6), through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them (John 17:17; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23); the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed (Galatians 5:24), and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified (Romans 6:14), and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces (Colossians 1:11), to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man will see the Lord (2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14).

2. This sanctification is throughout the whole man (1 Thessalonians 5:23), yet imperfect in this life; there abides still some remnants of corruption in every part, from which arises a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit warring against the flesh (Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11).

3. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part does overcome (Romans 6:14); and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after a heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word has prescribed them (Ephesians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 7:1).

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## **Chapter 16: Of Saving Faith**

1. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts (2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 2:8), and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word (Romans 10:14-17); by which also, and by the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, prayer, and other means appointed of God, it is increased and strengthened (Luke 17:5; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32).

2. By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word for the authority of God himself (Acts 24:14), and also apprehends an excellency therein above all other writings and all things in the world (Psalm 119:72), as it bears forth the glory of God in his attributes, the excellency of Christ in his nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in his workings and operations: and so is enabled to cast his soul upon the truth thus believed (2 Timothy 1:12); and also acts differently upon that which each particular passage thereof contains; yielding obedience to the commands (John 14:14), trembling at the threatening (Isaiah 66:2), and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come (Hebrews 11:13); but the principle acts of saving faith have immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, and resting upon him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life (John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:11).

3. This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong (Hebrews 5:13-14; Matthew 6:30; Romans 4:19-20), yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it, as is all other saving grace, from the faith and common grace of temporary believers (2 Peter 1:1); and therefore, though it may be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory (Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4-5), growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ (Hebrews 6:11-12; Colossians 2:2), who is both the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

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## Chapter 17: Of Repentance Unto Life and Salvation

1. Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace (Acts 5:31; Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25), the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel (Isaiah 1:16-18; Isaiah 55:7; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21), as well as that of faith in Christ (Titus 3:2-5; Luke 24:47).

2. By it a sinner, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God (Psalm 51:4), and upon the apprehension of his mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates his sins (Ezekiel 36:31; 2 Corinthians 7:11), as to turn from them all unto God (Ezekiel 18:30-31; Joel 2:12-13), purposing and endeavoring to walk with him in all the ways of his commandments (Psalm 119:6, 59, 106, 128).

3. Although repentance is not to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof (Ezekiel 36:31-32), which is the act of God's free grace in Christ (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7); yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Luke 13:3-5; Acts 17:30-31).

4. As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation (Matthew 12:36; Romans 5:12; Romans 6:23); so there is no sin so great that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent (Isaiah 1:16-18; Isaiah 55:7; Romans 8:1).

5. Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins, particularly (Psalm 19:13; Luke 19:8; 1 Timothy 1:13-15).

6. As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof (Psalm 51; Psalm 32:5-6), upon which, and the forsaking of them, he will find mercy (Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9): so he that scandalizes his brother, or the Church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and

sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended (James 5:16; Luke 17:3-4; Joshua 7:19); who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him (2 Corinthians 2:8).

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## Chapter 18: Of Good Works

1. Good works are only such as God has commanded in his Holy Word (Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21), and not such as without the warrant thereof are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions (Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13).
2. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith (James 2:18, 22); and by them believers manifest their thankfulness (Psalm 116:12-13), strengthen their assurance (1 John 2:3-5; 2 Peter 1:5-11), edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel (Matthew 5:16), stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God (1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:15; Philippians 1:11), whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto (Ephesians 2:10), that having their fruit unto holiness they may have the end eternal life (Romans 6:22).
3. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ (John 15:4-5); and that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure (2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:13); yet they are not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them (Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11-12).
4. They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do (Job 9:2-3; Luke 17:10; Galatians 5:17). 5. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin or eternal life at the hand of God, because of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins (Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:6); but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants; and because as they are good they proceed from his Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), and as they are wrought by us they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment (1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Psalm 143:2).
6. Yet notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him (1 Peter 2:5); not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreprouable in God's sight, but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections (Matthew 25:21, 23; Hebrews 6:10).
7. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others (1 Kings 21:27-29); yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith (Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4, 6), nor are done in a right manner according to the word (1 Corinthians 13:1), nor to a right end, the glory of God (Matthew 6:2-5), they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God (Amos 5:21-22; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5), and yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God (Job 21:14-15; Matthew 11:20-24; Matthew 25:41-43).

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## Chapter 19: Of the Perseverance of the Saints<sup>12</sup>

1. They whom God has accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace (John 10:28-29), but will certainly persevere therein to the end (Philippians 1:6), and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence he still begets and nourishes in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality (Romans 11:29; Numbers 23:19); and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they will never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon (Matthew 7:24-25; 2 Timothy 2:19); notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them (Psalm 89:46-49), yet he is still the same, and they will be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they will enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity (Malachi 3:6; Revelation 3:5; Revelation 13:8).

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election (Romans 8:30; Romans 9:11, 16), flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with him (Romans 5:9-10); the oath of God (Hebrews 6:17-18); the abiding of the Spirit, and the seed of God within them (1 John 3:9); from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof (Jeremiah 32:40; Isaiah 63:17).

3. Nevertheless they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their perseverance, fall into grievous sins (Matthew 26:70, 72, 74), and for a time continue therein (Isaiah 64:5-9), whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts (Psalm 51:10-12), have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded (Psalm 32:3-4), hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves (2 Samuel 12:14), yet will they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end (Luke 22:32, 61-62; 1 Corinthians 11:32).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> We chose to maintain the title of this section in accordance with the Westminster / 2nd London Baptist confessions. It is important that we neither neglect the sovereignty of God nor the responsibility of man. The genuinely saved individual will ultimately persevere in his faith because God sovereignly preserves him. Man works out his salvation with fear and trembling knowing that apart from God's preserving grace, his perseverance is impossible.

<sup>13</sup> The Bible says that the one who "falls away" from the faith is one who lacked saving faith from the beginning. 1 John 2:19 teaches they went out "from among us" because they "were not" of us.

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 20: Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

1. Although hypocrites, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God and state of salvation, which hope of theirs will perish (Job 8:13-14; Matthew 7:22-23); yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (1 John 2:3; 1 John 3:14-24; 1 John 5:13), which hope will never make them ashamed (Romans 5:2, 5).

2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith (Hebrews 6:11, 19), founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ, revealed in the gospel (Hebrews 6:17-18), and also upon the inward evidence of those graces of the Spirit unto which promises are made (2 Peter 1:4, 5, 10, 11), and on the immediate witness of the Spirit, testifying our adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God (Romans 8:15-16); which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 John 3:1-3).

3. This infallible assurance does not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it (Isaiah 50:10; Psalm 77:1-12; Psalm 88); yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto (1 John 4:13; Hebrews 6:11-12): and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10), that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance (Romans 5:1, 2, 5; Romans 14:17; Psalm 119:32); so far is it from inclining men to looseness (Romans 6:1-2; Titus 2:11, 12, 14).

4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation diverse ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30-31); by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light (Psalm 30:7), yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God (1 John 3:9) and life of faith (Luke 22:32), that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived (Psalm 42:5, 11), and by the which, in the meantime, they are preserved from utter despair (Lamentations 3:26-31).

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## Chapter 21: Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

1. The liberty which Christ has purchased for believers under the gospel, consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the rigor and curse of the moral law (Galatians 3:13), and in their being delivered from this present evil world (Galatians 1:4), bondage to Satan (Acts 26:18), and dominion of sin (Romans 6:6), from the evil of afflictions, the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave (1 Corinthians 15:54-57), and everlasting damnation (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10): as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear (Romans 8:15), but a child-like love and a willing mind (Luke 1:73-75; 1 John 4:18). All which were common also to believers under the law for the substance of them (Galatians 3:9, 14); but under the New Testament the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of (John 7:38-39; Galatians 4:4-7; Hebrews 10:19-21).

2. God alone is Lord of the conscience (James 4:12; Romans 14:4), and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith and worship (Acts 4:19, 29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 15:9). So that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience (Colossians 2:20-23); and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also (1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24).

3. They who upon pretense of Christian liberty do practice any sin, or cherish any sinful lust, as they do thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction (Romans 6:1-2), so they wholly destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our lives (Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 2:18,21).



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## Chapter 22: Of the Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is divine, eternal, non-derived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect, emotions, will, eternality, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and truthfulness (Isaiah 40:13-14; John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13, 22; Romans 15:13; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 9:14). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 10:15-17).
2. The work of the Holy Spirit is to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in the creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7). A unique work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17, John 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ. His activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:7-9), glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, and transforming believers into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18).
3. The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration and baptizing all believers into the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells, sanctifies, instructs and empowers the saints for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13). The Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible (2 Peter 1:19-21). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27).
4. The Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. He glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

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## Chapter 23: Of the Church

1. The catholic (GR: *katholicos*) or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or will be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of him that fills all in all (Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10, 22-23; Ephesians 5:23, 27, 32).
2. All persons throughout the world, professing the faith of the gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any errors averting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, are and may be called visible saints (1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 11:26); and of such ought all particular congregations to be constituted (Romans 1:7).
3. The purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error (1 Corinthians 5; Revelation 2; Revelation 3); and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan (Revelation 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12); nevertheless Christ always has had, and ever will have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name (Matthew 16:18; Psalm 72:17; Revelation 12:17).
4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order or government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner (Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11-12); neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is in the spirit of that antichrist<sup>14</sup>, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord will destroy with the brightness of his coming (2 Thessalonians 2:2-9).
5. In the execution of this power wherewith he is so entrusted, the Lord Jesus calls out of the world unto himself, through the ministry of his word, by his Spirit, those that are given unto him by his Father (John 10:16; John 12:32), that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribes to them in his word (Matthew 28:20). Those thus called, he commands to walk together in particular societies, or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that public worship, which he requires of them in the world (Matthew 18:15-20).
6. The members of these churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto that call of Christ (Romans. 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2); and do willingly consent to walk together, according to the appointment of Christ; giving up themselves to the Lord, and one to another, by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel (Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 5:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 9:13).
7. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his word, he has given all that power and authority, which is in any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which he has instituted for them to observe; with commands

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<sup>14</sup> While we do not claim the Pope of Rome to be the Antichrist (Revelation 13:1-2), the elevation of the Pope in the Roman Catholic church is in keeping with the spirit of antichrist and we consider without reservation or apology the Roman Catholic system with its Pope as the fruit of satanically- inspired doctrines of demons (1 John 2:18; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7).

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and rules for the due and right exerting, and executing of that power (Matthew 18:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8).<sup>15</sup> A particular church, gathered and completely organized according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members; and the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church (so called and gathered), for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which he entrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are elders<sup>21</sup> and deacons (Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1).

9. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the office of pastor in a church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church itself (Acts 14:23); and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the eldership of the church, if there be any before constituted therein (1 Timothy 4:14); and of a deacon that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer, and the like imposition of hands (Acts 6:3-6).<sup>16</sup>

10. The work of pastors being constantly to attend the service of Christ, in his churches, in the ministry of the word and prayer, with watching for their souls, as they that must give an account to Him (Acts 6:4; Hebrews 13:17); it is incumbent on the churches to whom they minister, not only to give them all due respect, but also to communicate to them of all their good things according to their ability (1 Timothy 5:17, 18; Galatians 6:6-7), so as they may have a comfortable supply, without being themselves entangled in secular affairs (2 Timothy 2:4); and may also be capable of exercising hospitality towards others (1 Timothy 3:2); and this is required by the law of nature, and by the express order of our Lord Jesus, who has ordained that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:6-14).

11. Although it be incumbent on the pastors of the churches, to be instant in preaching the word, by way of office, yet the work of preaching the word is not so peculiarly confined to them but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it (Acts 11:19-21; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

12. As all believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do; so all that are admitted unto the privileges of a church, are also under the discipline<sup>17</sup> and governance thereof, according to the rule of Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15).

13. No church members, upon any offence taken by them, having performed their duty required of them towards the person they are offended at, ought to disturb any church-order, or absent themselves from the assemblies of the church, or administration of any ordinances, upon the account of such offence at any of their fellow members, but to wait upon Christ, in the further proceeding of the church (Matthew 18:15-17; Ephesians 4:2-3).

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<sup>15</sup> 1 Peter 5:1-2 uses all three Greek words in reference to the same office. Elders are “to shepherd” (pastor) and “to oversee” the church. Elder (*presbuteros*), Pastor (*poimen*), and Bishop (*episkopos*) should not be seen as separate offices in the church, but all descriptive of the office in charge of teaching/preaching/leading/caring for the church body.

<sup>16</sup> Those put into place as elders must qualify in accordance with 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

<sup>17</sup> The term “discipline” has been used in place of “censures” and has been changed in every case. See Chapter 28.

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14. As each church, and all the members of it, are bound to pray continually for the good and prosperity of all the churches of Christ (Ephesians 6:18; Psalm 122:6), in all places, and upon all occasions to further everyone within the bounds of their places and callings, in the exercise of their gifts and graces, so the churches, when planted by the providence of God, so as they may enjoy opportunity and advantage for it, ought to hold communion among themselves, for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification (Romans 16:1-2; 3 John 8-10).

15. In cases of difficulties or differences, either in point of doctrine or administration, wherein either the churches in general are concerned, or any one church, in their peace, union, and edification; or any member or members of any church are injured, in or by any proceedings in discipline not agreeable to truth and order: it is according to the mind of Christ, that many churches holding communion together, do, by their messengers, meet to consider, and give their advice in or about that matter in difference, to be reported to all the churches concerned (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23, 25); howbeit these messengers assembled, are not entrusted with any church-power properly so called; or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any discipline either over any churches or persons; or to impose their determination on the churches or officers (2 Corinthians 1:24; 1 John 4:1).<sup>18</sup>

16. Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 2:2-3). All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage (Deuteronomy 31:12-13). The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Christian education arises as an outworking of obedience to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The call to make disciples extends to all ages, and therefore the church ought to partner with parents in training up their children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 22:6). The beginning of wisdom is found in “the fear of the Lord,” (Proverbs 9:10) and therefore, all intellectual pursuits ought to be completed out of a desire to glorify God (1 Timothy 1:3-7) and should receive the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people (Hebrews 5:12-6:3). In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:8-9), by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17) and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists (Romans 16:19; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8).

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<sup>18</sup> By this statement we uphold the autonomy of the local church. We may and will seek voluntary affiliations for the purpose of furthering the gospel, but in no way give these associations the power of defining doctrine and practice of our church.

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## Chapter 24: Of the Communion of Saints

1. All saints that are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by his Spirit, and faith, although they are not made thereby one person with him, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory (1 John 1:3; John 1:16; Ephesians 3:16-19; Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:5-6); and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces (Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23), and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, in an orderly way, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man (1 Thessalonians 5:11-14; Romans 1:12; 1 John 3:17-18; Galatians 6:10).

2. All Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification (Hebrews 10:24-25; Hebrews 3:12-13); as also in relieving each other in outward things according to their several abilities, and necessities (Acts 11:29-30); which communion, according to the rule of the gospel, though especially to be exercised by them, in the relation wherein they stand, whether in families (Ephesians 6:4), or churches (1 Corinthians 12:14-27), yet, as God offers opportunity, is to be extended to all the household of faith, even all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

3. This communion which the saints have with Christ, does not make them in any wise partakers of the substance of the Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm, is impious and blasphemous (Colossians 1:18-19; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Isaiah 42:8; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Psalm 45:7; Hebrews 1:8-9). Nor does their communion one with another as saints, take away or infringe the title or property which each man has in his goods and possessions (Exodus 20:15; Acts 5:4; Ephesians 4:28).

# - *Confession of Faith* -

## **Chapter 25: Of the Ordinances**

1. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of positive and sovereign institution, appointed by the Lord Jesus, the only lawgiver, to be continued in his church to the end of the world (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:26).
2. While there is no specific mandate as to who is to administer the Lord's Supper and Baptism, in order to guard against abuses, an elder or another leader in the church should officiate if at all possible (1 Corinthians 4:1).<sup>19</sup> Any believer may certainly baptize another believer as they are led and so, it is only in the interest of order and not under an ecclesiastical priesthood that elders are to administer the Lord's Supper or Baptism. It has always been, is, and will continue to be sufficient that where "two or three are gathered," there the Lord Jesus is, whether it be in the Lord's Supper or Baptism.

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<sup>19</sup> This point originally read: "These holy appointments are to be administered by those only who are qualified and thereunto called, according to the commission of Christ." However, we see no specification in the Bible which would exclude any Christian from officiating either ordinance.

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 26: Of Baptism

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized, a sign of his fellowship with him (Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12), in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; of remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16); and of giving up into God, through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4); which ordinance is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his Church until the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20).
2. Those who do actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only proper subjects of this ordinance (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36-37; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Acts 18:8).
3. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherein the party is to be baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:38).
4. Immersion, or dipping of the person in water, is necessary to the due administration of this ordinance (Matthew 3:16; John 3:23).<sup>20</sup> Take note, that we recognize, along with the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith, that the term “necessary” refers only to the sense of “normal” application of water. We do not put confidence in the mode whether it be under or sprinkled, but recognize immersion as the most normal and expected mode as it pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and we in him in our newness of life. However, we do not place our faith or confidence as would Romanists or other works-based theologies that give credence to modes in such a way as to result in a legalistic methodology apart from the matter of each heart receiving the ordinance. For, with “the heart” man believes unto righteousness, and in that righteousness, by faith, he/she may and should partake in baptism whether it is by immersion or by sprinkling as determined by the available resources at that time. It cannot be overemphasized that the matter of the heart of faith in Christ, “being baptized into Christ” with water baptism as a declaration and expression, should never be judged rightly by lending authenticity to the mode itself.

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<sup>20</sup> It is this point combined with point number two that pinpoint historic Baptist belief. The scriptures present baptism as an act whereby a believer is immersed in water symbolizing their having been “buried with Christ in baptism, raised to walk in newness of life.” We, therefore, do not recognize “infant baptism” as being in accordance with Scripture. We do, however, practice “infant dedication” in which parents are commissioned to raise their children in the Lord. The church also commits to support the family in prayer, discipleship and practical helps.

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 27: Of the Lord's Supper

1. The supper of the Lord Jesus was instituted by him the same night wherein he was betrayed, to be observed in his churches, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and showing forth the sacrifice of himself in his death (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits thereof, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further engagement in, and to all duties which they owe to him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other (1 Corinthians 10:16, 17, 21).
2. In this ordinance Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of himself by himself upon the cross, once for all (Hebrews 9:25-28); and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same. So that the popish sacrifice of the mass, as they call it, is most abominable, injurious to Christ's own sacrifice the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect (1 Corinthians 11:24; Matthew 26:26-27).
3. The denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this ordinance, and to the institution of Christ (Exodus 20:4-5; Matthew 26:26-28).<sup>21</sup>
4. The outward elements in this ordinance, duly set apart to the use ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, although in terms used figuratively, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:27), albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before (1 Corinthians 11:26-28; Luke 22:18).
5. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood, commonly called transubstantiation, by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthrows the nature of the ordinance, and has been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).
6. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses (1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
7. All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto; (2 Corinthians 6:14-15); yea, whosoever will receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves (Matthew 7:6; 1 Corinthians 11:29).

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<sup>21</sup> The Lord's Supper has been subject to great abuse over the centuries. We hold to a "memorial view" of the Lord's Supper. In this, we participate in the Lord's Supper as a "remembrance of the Lord's death until He comes," and symbolically remember his broken body and spilt blood on our behalf.



# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 28: Of Church Discipline<sup>22</sup>

1. The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his Church, has therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate (Isaiah 9:6-7; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Acts 20:17; Acts:20:28; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Matthew 28:18-20).
2. To these officers the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and discipline; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from discipline, as occasion will require (Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:17-18; John 20:21-23; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8).
3. Church discipline is necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring of others from like offences; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if the sanctity of it be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders (1 Corinthians 5; 1 Timothy 1:20; 1 Timothy 5:20; Jude 23).
4. For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition, first privately, second with the confirming mouth of two or three witnesses, and finally before the body of the church, after which be there as yet no repentance, by excommunication from the Church, according to the nature of the offense, and demerit of the person (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 13; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 1:18-20; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; Titus 3:10; James 5:19-20).

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<sup>22</sup> This chapter, removed entirely from the 2<sup>nd</sup> London Baptist Confession, has been adopted from the Westminster Confession with minor modification.

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 29: Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day

1. The light of nature shows that there is a God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all; is just, good and does good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might (Jeremiah 10:7; Mark 12:33). But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself (Deuteronomy 12:32), and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures (Exodus 20:4-6).
2. Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to him alone (Matthew 4:9, 10; Matthew 28:19); not to angels, saints, or any other creatures (Acts 14:11-18; Romans 1:25; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10); and since the fall, not without a mediator (John 14:6), nor in the mediation of any other but Christ alone (1 Timothy 2:5).
3. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one part of worship, is by God required of all men (Psalm 65:2; Psalm 95:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). But that it may be accepted, it is to be made by believers (Isaiah 59:1-2; John 9:31), in the name of the Son (John 14:13-14), by the help of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26), according to his will (1 John 5:14); with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a interpreted tongue (1 Corinthians 14:16-17).
4. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that will live hereafter (1 Timothy 2:1-2; 2 Samuel 7:29); but not for the dead, nor for the sins of those who are in a state of spiritual death (1 John 5:16).<sup>23</sup>
5. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear (1 Timothy 4:13); the sound preaching, and conscionable hearing of the Word of God (2 Timothy 4:2), teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19); as also the administration and worthy receiving of the ordinances of baptism (Matthew 28:19-20), and the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:26), are all parts of the worship of God, to be performed in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation, with fastings (Esther 4:16; Joel 2:12), and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, ought to be used in a holy and religious manner (Exodus 15:1-19, Psalm 107; Matthew 9:15).
6. Neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the gospel, tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth (John 4:21; Malachi 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8); as in private families (Acts 10:2) daily (Matthew 6:11; Psalm 55:17), and in secret each one by himself (Matthew 6:6); so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly nor willfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God by his word or providence calls thereunto (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42).

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<sup>23</sup> 1st John provides us with prayer instruction. Instead of praying regarding certain sins in an unbelievers' life, we ought to spend our time praying for their salvation.

# - Confession of Faith -

7. As it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God, so in his Word, by a positive moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, he has particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto him (Exodus 20:8), which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's day (Revelation 1:10): and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7).

8. The Sabbath is to be kept holy unto the Lord...<sup>24</sup>

9. MID-WEEK SERVICES: In many church congregations, there has been an added emphasis on mid-week services. We believe this emphasis, in many cases, is the fruit of irresponsible and unscriptural leadership that has produced an obligatory and legalistic mindset from having taken Hebrews 10:25 out of context. While the motive historically among many of our Baptist brethren has been honorable, we have seen the mid-week "prayer meetings" morph into something far removed from prayer at all. Covenant Reformed Baptist Church will not initially set a mid-week service, but will allow for the leading of the Holy Spirit to direct us, as a church family, in the way that we should go that is most effectual in taking the Gospel to our community while strengthening our faith by the Word of God. We will encourage families to open their homes for prayer, community evangelism, and time for our church family to meet specifically for the administration of the Lord's Supper, Baptism, Elder counselling, and individual family altar time, as our Heavenly Father so directs us both individually and as a body of believers. We will, by faith, wait upon the Lord to instruct us, breaking off the chains of man's traditions, and walking in the "liberty wherewith Christ hat set us free" (Galatians 5:1).

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<sup>24</sup> The specific way in which the Sabbath is "kept holy" is a matter of discussion. The 2<sup>nd</sup> London Baptist Confession continues, "...when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations, but are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy." We would rather remain general in our application of this due to scriptures such as Colossians 2:16-17. Of supreme importance is that we, as God's people, spend time in community with one another, making time for corporate worship, seeking the Lord together.

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## Chapter 30: Of the Family<sup>25</sup>

1. God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society, composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife (Genesis 2:18), for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue (Genesis 1:28), and the preventing of uncleanness (1 Corinthians 7:2, 9). It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. Marriage is between one man and one woman in covenant commitment until parted by death.

2. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent (Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 4:3); yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:39) and therefore such as profess the true religion, should not marry with infidels, or idolaters; neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies (Nehemiah 13:25-27).

3. Marriage must not be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity, nor within the same sex, as forbidden in the Word (Leviticus 18; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10; Romans 1:26-27); nor can such marriages ever be made lawful, by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife (Mark 6:18; 1 Corinthians 5:1); neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time (Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 19:5,6).

4. The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image (Genesis 1:28; Genesis 5:1-2). The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people (1 Corinthians 11:3). A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25-30). He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-24). She, being in the image of God, as is her husband, and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation (Genesis 2:18; Titus 2:3-5).<sup>26</sup>

5. Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled (Hebrews 13:4), therefore, fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, gives just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract (Matthew 19:1-12). After marriage, although the corruption of many be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God has joined together in marriage; yet nothing but death or desertion by a non-believing spouse, is cause sufficient for release from the bond of marriage (Malachi 2:16; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:15). In the former case the widowed is able to remarry, but only in the Lord. In the latter case, the divorced are to remain single, or else be reconciled one to the other (1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 39).

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<sup>25</sup> With minor exception, sections one, four, five, and six find their origin in the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message.

<sup>26</sup> We affirm The Denver's Statement written by The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, see Appendix E.

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6. Children from the moment of conception are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children the gospel of Christ, discipling them in the fear of God, and leading them through consistent lifestyle, example, and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents (Genesis 2:21-25; Genesis 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-32; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Colossians 3:19; Proverbs 22:6).

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 31: Of the Civil Magistrate

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil magistrates to be under him, over the people, for his own glory and the public good; and to this end has armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers (Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14).
2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate when called thereunto (Proverbs 8:15-16; Romans 13:1-4); in the management whereof, as they ought especially to maintain justice and peace (2 Samuel 23:3; Psalm 82:3, 4), according to the wholesome laws of each kingdom and commonwealth (Psalm 2:10-12; 1 Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 2:13), so for that end they may lawfully now, under the New Testament wage war upon just and necessary occasions (Luke 3:14; Romans 13:4; Matthew 8:9-10; Acts 10:1-2).
3. Although the magistrate is bound to encourage, promote, and protect the professors and profession of the gospel, and to manage and order civil administrations in a due subservience to the interest of Christ in the world, and to that end to take care that men of corrupt minds and conversations do not licentiously publish and divulge blasphemy and errors, in their own nature subverting the faith and inevitably destroying the souls of them that receive them: yet in such differences about the doctrines of the gospel, or ways of the worship of God, as may befall men exercising a good conscience, manifesting it in their conversation, and holding the foundation, not disturbing others in their ways or worship that differ from them; there is no warrant for the magistrate under the gospel to abridge them of their liberty (Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:29; Daniel 6:10).
4. Civil magistrates being set up by God for the ends aforesaid; subjection, in all lawful things commanded by them, ought to be yielded by us in the Lord, not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake (Romans 13:5-7; 1 Peter 2:17); and we ought to make supplications and prayers for kings and all that are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

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## Chapter 32: Of the State of Man After Death and the Resurrection of the Dead

1. The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption (Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36); but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they are present with the Lord, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6, 8; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23); and the souls of the wicked are cast into Hades<sup>27</sup>; where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day (Jude 6-7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23-24); besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledges none.<sup>28</sup>

2. At the last day, such of the saints as are found alive, will not sleep, but be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17); and all the dead will be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other (Job 19:26-27); although with different qualities, which will be united again to their souls forever (1 Corinthians 15:42-43).

3. The bodies of the unjust will, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9); the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honor, and be made conformable to his own glorious body (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Romans 9:21-23; Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

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<sup>27</sup> Hell (gehenna) and Hades are frequently used synonymously (2 Peter 2:4); however, Revelation 20:10-15 indicates a distinction between the first death and second death. Upon death the reprobate descend into Hades where they await a final judgment before the Great White Throne. The dead in Hades will receive the just penalty for their deeds being cast into the Lake of Fire.

<sup>28</sup> Scripture nowhere acknowledges an intermediate place such as Purgatory where souls reside before entering Heaven or Hell.

# - Confession of Faith -

## Chapter 33: Of the Last Judgment

1. God has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ (John 5:22, 27; Acts 17:31); to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels will be judged (1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6), but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth will appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10-12; Matthew 25:32-46; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

2. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient (Romans 9:22-23); for then will the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be cast aside into everlasting torments (Matthew 25:21, 34; 2 Timothy 4:8), and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10) which is the second death, the Lake of Fire, that is, Hell (Revelation 20:10-15).

3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there will be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin (2 Corinthians 5:10-11), and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity (2 Thessalonians 1:5-7), so will he have the day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come (Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40), and may ever be prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus; come quickly (Revelation 22:20). Amen



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## Appendix A – The Athanasian Creed <sup>29</sup>

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic (universal) Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is all One, the Glory Equal, the Majesty Co-Eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father Uncreate, the Son Uncreate, and the Holy Ghost Uncreate. The Father Incomprehensible, the Son Incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost Incomprehensible. The Father Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghost Eternal and yet they are not Three Eternals but One Eternal. As also there are not Three Uncreated, nor Three Incomprehensibles, but One Uncreated, and One Uncomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not Three Almighties but One Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not Three Gods, but One God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not Three Lords but One Lord. For, like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic\* Religion to say, there be Three Gods or Three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is One Father, not Three Fathers; one Son, not Three Sons; One Holy Ghost, not Three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore or after Other, None is greater or less than Another, but the whole Three Persons are Co-eternal together, and Co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity is Trinity, and the Trinity is Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting Salvation, that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.

God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the substance of His mother, born into the world. Perfect God and Perfect Man, of a reasonable Soul and human Flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood. Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but One Christ. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into Flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by Unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one Man, so God and Man is one Christ. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into Hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. This is the catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

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<sup>29</sup> This creed is named after Athanasius (A.D. 293-373), the champion of orthodoxy against Arian attacks on the doctrine of the trinity. Although Athanasius did not write this creed and it is improperly named after him, the name persists because until the seventeenth century it was commonly ascribed to him.

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## Appendix B - The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy<sup>30</sup>

### Preface

The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God's written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority. The following Statement affirms this inerrancy of Scripture afresh, making clear our understanding of it and warning against its denial.

We are persuaded that to deny it is to set aside the witness of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit and to refuse that submission to the claims of God's own Word which marks true Christian faith. We see it as our timely duty to make this affirmation in the face of current lapses from the truth of inerrancy among our fellow Christians and misunderstanding of this doctrine in the world at large.

This Statement consists of three parts: a Summary Statement, Articles of Affirmation and Denial, and an accompanying Exposition\*. It has been prepared in the course of a three-day consultation in Chicago. Those who have signed the Summary Statement and the Articles wish to affirm their own conviction as to the inerrancy of Scripture and to encourage and challenge one another and all Christians to growing appreciation and understanding of this doctrine. We acknowledge the limitations of a document prepared in a brief, intensive conference and do not propose that this Statement be given creedal weight. Yet we rejoice in the deepening of our own convictions through our discussions together, and we pray that the Statement we have signed may be used to the glory of our God toward a new reformation of the Church in its faith, life, and mission.

We offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we purpose by God's grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word. We invite response to this statement from any who see reason to amend its affirmations about Scripture by the light of Scripture itself, under whose infallible authority we stand as we speak. We claim no personal infallibility for the witness we bear, and for any help which enables us to strengthen this testimony to God's Word we shall be grateful.

\* The Exposition is not printed here but can be obtained by writing us at the Oakland office: ICBI / P.O. Box 13261 / Oakland, CA 94661 / (415)-339-1064.

### A Short Statement

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all

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that it affirms, obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.

3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.

4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

## **Articles of Affirmation and Denial**

### **Article I**

We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God. We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

### **Article II**

We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture. We deny that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

### **Article III**

We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God. We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

### **Article IV**

We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation. We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration

### **Article V**

We affirm that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive. We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

### **Article VI**

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration. We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

### **Article VII**

We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us. We deny that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

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## **Article VIII**

We affirm that God in His Work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared. We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

## **Article IX**

We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write. We deny that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

## **Article X**

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original. We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

## **Article XI**

We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses. We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

## **Article XII**

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit. We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

## **Article XIII**

We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture. We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

## **Article XIV**

We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture. We deny that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

## **Article XV**

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration. We deny that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

## **Article XVI**

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history. We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by Scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

## **Article XVII**

We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word. We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

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## **Article XVIII**

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

## **Article XIX**

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ. We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences both to the individual and to the Church.

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<sup>30</sup> The "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" was produced at an international Summit Conference of evangelical leaders, held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago in the fall of 1978. This congress was sponsored by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. The Chicago Statement was signed by nearly 300 noted evangelical scholars, including James Boice, Norman L. Geisler, John Gerstner, Carl F. H. Henry, Kenneth Kantzer, Harold Lindsell, John Warwick Montgomery, Roger Nicole, J. I. Packer, Robert Preus, Earl Radmacher, Francis Schaeffer, R. C. Sproul, and John Wenham.

The ICBI disbanded in 1988 after producing three major statements: one on biblical inerrancy in 1978, one on biblical hermeneutics in 1982, and one on biblical application in 1986. The following text, containing the "Preface" by the ICBI draft committee, plus the "Short Statement," "Articles of Affirmation and Denial," and an accompanying "Exposition," was published in toto by Carl F. H. Henry in *God, Revelation And Authority*, vol. 4 (Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1979), on pp. 211-219. The nineteen Articles of Affirmation and Denial, with a brief introduction, also appear in *A General Introduction to the Bible*, by Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix (Chicago: Moody Press, rev. 1986), at pp. 181-185. An official commentary on these articles was written by R. C. Sproul in *Explaining Inerrancy: A Commentary* (Oakland, Calif.: ICBI, 1980), and Norman Geisler edited the major addresses from the 1978 conference, in *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980).

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## Appendix C – The Nicene Creed, 381<sup>31</sup>

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by who all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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<sup>31</sup> The “Nicene” Creed gets its name from the First Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.), where it was initially adopted, and from the First Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.), where a revised version was accepted. Thus it may be referred to specifically as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed to distinguish it from the original 325 A.D. version.

The original Nicene Creed adopted in 325 ended just after the words, “We believe in the Holy Spirit...” Content was added at the First Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D.; hence the name “Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed”, which refers to the modified or updated creed. The Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (431 A.D.) reaffirmed the creed in this form and explicitly forbade making additional revisions to it.

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## Appendix D – The Definition of Chalcedon, 451<sup>32</sup>

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul {meaning human soul} and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began he was begotten of the Father, in respect of his deity, and now in these “last days,” for us and behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his humanness. We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten – in two natures; and we do this without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area or function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the “properties” of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one “person” and in one reality {hypostasis}. They are not divided or cur into two persons, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Word {Logos} of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of Fathers {the Nicene Creed} has handed down to us.

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<sup>32</sup> The Confession of Chalcedon provides a clear statement on the human and divine nature of Christ. The Council of Chalcedon was a church council held from October 8 to November 1, AD 451, at Chalcedon (a city of Bithynia in Asia Minor), on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, known in modern times as Kadıköy in Istanbul, although it was then separate from Constantinople. The council marked a significant turning point in the Christological debates that led to the separation of the church of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century. Most Protestants also consider the concepts of the Trinity and Incarnation as defined at Nicaea (in 325) and Chalcedon to be orthodox doctrine to which they adhere.

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## Appendix E – The Danver’s Statement<sup>33</sup>

There is great uncertainty in our culture concerning the proper roles of men and women and the relationship between the two sexes. This ambivalence has influenced the church, and within evangelicalism there is a growing promotion of feminist egalitarianism and a neglect or distortion of the Biblical teaching on the subject. This has resulted in the reinterpretation of particular Scripture passages in order to make them conform to the spirit of the culture of our day. This leads the seminary to express its affirmation of the Biblical teaching on this subject and to express its commitment to Scripture as the final authority for all doctrine and practice. While respecting those who may disagree with the seminary's position, our hermeneutic drives us to the position that today is called the complementarian view of men and women and their relationship to each other in the home and church. One of the best statements of this position is the Danvers Statement, and for this reason we have included its affirmations so that our viewpoint on the subject is made clear. Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood.
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart.
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin.
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women. In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility. In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women. Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community.
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
  - In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership.
  - In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men.
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission--domestic, religious, or civil--ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin.



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8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries. Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.

9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world.

10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

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<sup>33</sup> The "Danvers Statement" summarizes the need for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) and serves as an overview of our core beliefs. This statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a CBMW meeting in Danvers, Massachusetts, in December of 1987. It was first published in final form by the CBMW in Wheaton, Illinois in November of 1988.