

Appendix – Confession of Faith

Introduction to Confession of Faith

February 12, 2012

Faith always expresses itself in witness. We believe therefore we confess. At Blythefield Hills, our confession is in response to God’s Word. Our “**Narrative Confession of Faith**” is a simple statement that follows the storyline of the Bible from Creation to the Fall of Humanity into Sin to God’s Redemption and the Church and ultimately to Consummation. Our “**Founding Confession of Faith**” is a systematic statement of what we believe with a reference to the biblical texts that elicit our response. Together these confessions present a rich, historical and contemporary expression of what we believe. They are an aid to understanding, a guide to raising our children, and a guard against false stories that surround us.

Narrative Confession of Faith

February 12, 2012

God

We believe in one holy, sovereign and all-knowing God, who eternally exists in three coequal persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Father directs and sustains all things through his Son and by his Spirit.

The Son is the mediator through whom God creates, governs and redeems the world.

The Spirit powerfully accomplishes the works of God,

bringing honor to the Son who glorifies the Father.

These three persons are the one true God, equal in every perfection, and acting in distinct but harmonious roles in the work of creation and redemption.¹

Revelation

We believe that the human family originally dwelt in a garden in the presence of God, but they were driven from the garden because of sin. However, God has continued to pursue humanity and reveal himself to us at many times and in many ways. One ongoing way that God reveals himself is through his glorious creation. However, because of our sin and the consequent brokenness of ourselves and the rest of creation, we are unable to know God rightly through creation alone. Therefore, God has spoken through his Son and by his Spirit in the Old and New Testaments that we might rightly know God and understand his redemptive plan for all of creation. This Scripture is God-breathed and therefore is true and our final authority in faith and life.² It is in response to what God has revealed in this authoritative text that we confess and live out the following story.³

Creation

We believe that God, out of his love and for his glory, created all things out of nothing and pronounced them good.⁴ The Father, Son and Spirit created Adam and Eve in their image and blessed them that they might fill

¹ Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 83:18; I Corinthians 8:6; Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 4:4-6; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-20; John 10:30-33; John 15:26, 16:12-15, 17:2; I Corinthians 2:10-11, 12:3; Acts 5:3,4.

² By Scripture, we are referring to the sixty-six books from Genesis to Revelation. By God-breathed, we mean that they are ultimately sourced in God and not inspired by man. Although the books retain the character, language and style of the human authors, the Spirit superintended their writing by “carrying them along,” so that Scripture is without error in the original writings. II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:19-21.

³ Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:19-21; Hebrews 1:1,2; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:19-21; Psalm 119:89, 105; Proverbs 30:5, 6; Romans 3:4, 15:4.

⁴ We believe that God is both transcendent over creation (which he created by his speech, Genesis 1:3) and immanent

the earth, subdue it and cultivate shalom⁵ in all the earth for God's glory.⁶ In the joy of his presence they were to love God, love each other and steward the world on his behalf as his representatives.⁷

Fall

We believe that Adam and Eve, our first parents, rebelled against God, lost their original righteousness and were expelled from God's presence. Now every human is born with Adam's sinful nature, so that no part of us is untouched by sin. We are born alienated from God, spiritually dead and physically dying. We subsequently participate in sin by choice and therefore are under the just condemnation of God. Our sin has corrupted God's good creation, bringing discord and disaster to society and nature. We would immediately perish if not for God's common grace, which restrains sin and preserves creation so that God can redeem it.⁸

Redemption

We believe that God has not abandoned his creation to sin's consequences of destruction and decay but is actively redeeming it. Out of the chaos of our rebellion, God called Abraham and his descendants to be his people. He blessed them, that through them he might bless the world. Out of the violence of bondage he redeemed his people, covenanted with them and gave them a mission of representing him to the world. His people would again live in the presence of God in a fruitful land marked by shalom.⁹

We believe that God gave covenants and promises to his people to redeem and restore creation and that these covenant promises were later extended to the line of David, through whom God would restore his reign and bring shalom to the world.¹⁰ However, Israel, like the rest of humankind, consistently turned from God. They broke the law that God provided and did not listen to the prophets God sent. The sons of David were also sinful and unable to bring about shalom in their own country, let alone the world. Like Adam and Eve, the disobedience of Israel led to the loss of life in God's presence within the land he had placed them. Yet, God gave them hope

within creation (the Spirit hovered over the waters, Genesis 1:2) and that he continues to sustain his creation by the word of his power (Colossians 1:15-20). Therefore, we reject any view of God as distant from his creation or merely the initiator of creation. We also affirm that God is in an ongoing way sustaining all of creation; therefore, the universe may not be explained through a process of time plus chance. We believe that creation accounts in the Bible, including Genesis, are authoritative and trustworthy theological accounts of God's creative activity.

⁵ Shalom is God's vision for his creation's wholeness and flourishing. Shalom is expressed throughout Scripture as peace, safety, abundant harvests, lands flowing with milk and honey, flourishing commerce and justice. Shalom is evidenced where individuals can flourish by serving in truth and love so that communities along with creation thrive. This vision began at creation when God blessed the land and the couple with fruitfulness and called the first couple to procreate and develop creation for the glory of God and the wholeness of the community. Despite humanity's fall into sin and death, God carried the vision through the patriarchs and prophets looking forward to its restoration in and through the life and atoning work of Jesus. Jesus' second coming will finally and fully restore shalom as he rules perfectly the new heaven and new earth, and we will use our creative gifts to love God and love others unobstructed by sin and death.

⁶ We believe that male and female both image God and therefore are equal in value before God. They model God's triune essence of unity and diversity, being equal in value and essence while having different roles. We also affirm that the union of man and woman models God's design for marriage and perpetually stands as God's loving and righteous will for all sexual intimacy. We believe that despite the pain that sin has introduced to both work and procreation, both are still essentially good and are to be seen as blessings from God. They continue as important parts of God's ongoing plan for creation. Genesis 1:27-31; Matthew 19:4-6; Psalm 127:3; I Thessalonians. 4:11.

⁷ Genesis 1:1,31; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Revelation. 4:11; John 1:1-3; Job 33:4; Psalms. 104:30; Colossians 1:16,17; Hebrew 11:3; Genesis 1:27-30; Genesis 2:15; Genesis 1-3.

⁸ Genesis 3:1-6, 24; Romans 5:12, 19; Romans 3:10-19; Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 1:18-20; Galatians 3:22.

⁹ Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 1-15, 19-24, esp. 19:3-6; 25:8ff, 3:7-10.

¹⁰ For example, the Noahic covenant in Genesis 9:1-17 renews the creation patterns of blessing and image bearing; the Abrahamic covenant restores blessings that run counter to the curses of Genesis 3; and the Sinai Covenant made the people into a kingdom of God's representatives, living out justice and obedience in God's presence as in Eden (see Exodus 19-24). These promises were eventually extended to the line of David (see II Samuel 7:1-17).

through further promises of a new covenant and coming Messiah who would restore all of creation.¹¹

Jesus Christ

We believe that all of these hopes and promises are fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. He was sent by the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, Mary, in such a way that the Son of God is fully God and fully man. He announced the good news of the kingdom of God and demonstrated his power to restore shalom. By the power of the Spirit, Jesus submitted himself fully to the Father in obedience, unlike Adam, Israel and the rest of humanity. He was obedient in life, even unto death on a cross, and his blood atoned for our sins in our place and on our behalf.¹² He arose bodily and triumphantly over Satan, sin and death.¹³

Jesus then ascended to heaven where he reigns at the right hand of the Father. He is restoring the reign of God on earth¹⁴ as it is in heaven through the work of the Spirit, whom he poured out on the church at Pentecost. The Spirit convicts the world of its guilt in regard to sin and enables those God has chosen to repent from their rebellion and be transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the beloved Son. Thus, the Father, by the Son and through the Spirit, is restoring the reign of God on the earth and bringing about the shalom promised to Jesus, the Son of David.¹⁵

We believe that salvation is a gift of God, received by faith and not earned by works. The Spirit enables lost sinners to repent and trust solely in Christ's finished work.¹⁶ These believers are united with Christ by the Spirit, justified by Christ's death and resurrection and forgiven of all their sin. By faith, we participate in the blessings promised to Abraham, enter into the New Covenant inaugurated by Christ and become representatives of God to the world. We are adopted into the family of God and sealed into the body of Christ.¹⁷

The Church and Ongoing Mission

We believe that the body of Christ is the one, holy and universal church, composed of those who have been called out of the kingdom of darkness and justified by grace through faith in Christ. This universal church is manifest in local churches¹⁸ who assemble in the name of the Lord to worship God and experience his

¹¹ I and II Kings chronicle the steady downward pattern of the kings of Israel. The prophets were to call Israel back to worship and obedience but were repeatedly ignored. This led to promises of both judgment (e.g., Jeremiah 11:1-17) and future salvation (e.g. Jeremiah 33).

¹² We affirm that Jesus' obedience unto death is an example to us but reject the view that atonement comes through following his example of self-sacrifice. Atonement requires the shedding of blood for the remission of sins. His death counted for the death we deserved. We are united to his life and stand before God with Jesus' record of righteousness, not our own. Matthew 16:24; Philippians 2:6-11; Hebrews 9:22; Romans 6.

¹³ John 1:14; Luke 1:34-35; John 1:1, 10:30-33; Luke 4; Philippians 2:5-11; Romans 3:21-26; Matthew 28:1-10; 1 Corinthians 15.

¹⁴ Until the Lord returns, we believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society. Therefore, government leaders should be prayed for and obeyed, except in those things that oppose the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such things, following the wisdom the Spirit provides and the consciences God has granted us, should be opposed. Romans 13:1-7; Acts 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-14, 17; Acts 4:19-20, 5:29, Daniel 3:17-18.

¹⁵ Acts 2, esp. 2:33; John 16:5-11; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 1:3-14; Colossians 1:13-14.

¹⁶ We believe that repentance and faith are inseparable graces. The Spirit convicts us of our sin, our condemnation and our helplessness to save ourselves, and having heard the gospel, enlivens our hearts to turn to God from our rebellion in contrition, confession and request for mercy; at the same time, trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as our only all-sufficient Savior. Mark 1:15; Acts 2:27-38; Luke 18:13; Romans 10:13; Psalms 51:1-4, 7; Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 12:8; Romans 9:11.

¹⁷ Ephesians 2:4-10; Acts 2:37-38; John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5; I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 3:21-26; Galatians 3; Hebrews 8-10; I Peter 2:4-10; Romans 8; Ephesians 4:30.

¹⁸ We hold that the local church has the right of self government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations, and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, who governs through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel, and the measure and method of its cooperation should be decided upon within the local church. Further, within the local

presence through the preaching of the Word, prayer, fellowship, the exercise of gifts given by the Spirit and the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and baptism. We believe that Christian baptism is by immersion of believers in water as a public response to the Lordship of Christ in identifying with his death, burial and resurrection and living out our death to sin and resurrection to new life.¹⁹ The Lord's Supper is a memorial service where we eat bread and drink the cup in remembrance of Christ's body broken for us and the new covenant in his blood. We eat both in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for us and as the Bride of Christ in anticipation of the marriage feast upon his return.²⁰

We believe that although Christ is seated on the throne and we are reconciled to him, his mission of redemption is not yet complete. The church participates with the Spirit in dispersing into the world to proclaim the gospel of Jesus' life, death, burial and resurrection through word and deed,²¹ baptizing and discipling those who believe. The church also participates with the Spirit in the ongoing process of sanctification by dying to our old ways and living out our new life in Christ. Our role as image-bearing representatives of God, which was marred by sin, is therefore increasingly restored as we are transformed into the image of Christ.²²

We believe that God's continuing mission is opposed by an evil adversary, Satan, who, along with his demons, is the sworn enemy of God.²³ However, God has not left us alone but has given us his Spirit as our comforter and guide into all truth. We also believe that Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, where he not only reigns but also serves as our great High Priest, interceding on our behalf and enabling us boldly to approach the throne of God for grace to help in time of need. Therefore, we believe that true believers will endure to the end and that they are kept by the power of God through faith throughout this battle.²⁴

Consummation

We believe that the final blow delivered against Satan, sin and death will be brought to pass at the personal and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. When he returns,²⁵ he will bring his kingdom to completion by delivering this world from Satan's power and handing it to the Father. The dead will be raised for final judgment, and Jesus will send the unbelieving to everlasting, conscious punishment. The redeemed will live with new spiritual bodies in a renewed creation on a new earth, enjoying the life of shalom with no sin, death or sorrow in the gladness of God's presence.²⁶

church, the officers designated in Scripture are elders and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined. Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23-24; I Peter 5:1-4; Acts 15:22; Jude 3-4; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 8:23-24; Acts 6:5-6, 14:23, 15:23, 20:17-28; I Timothy 3:1-13.

¹⁹ We believe that according to the order of Scripture, baptism follows saving belief and is followed by the privileges of church membership. Acts 2:41-42; Matthew 28:19-20.

²⁰ Acts 2:38-42; I Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 4:11-14; Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 6; I Corinthians 11:23-29.

²¹ We believe good deeds that glorify the Father flow out of saving belief and point to Jesus Christ. However, the gospel must ultimately be communicated by words. Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 10:14-15.

²² Matthew 28:18-20; John 16:5-16; Romans 6; Romans 8:29.

²³ We believe that God created angels (or messengers) as spiritual beings to serve and worship him. The good angels are God's messengers who promote his rule and protect his children. Satan was once holy and enjoyed heavenly honors, but through pride and ambition to be as God, he fell and drew after him a host of angels who joined his rebellion. They gained a foothold in this world when Eve fell for Satan's temptation. Satan continues as man's tempter and accuser and the chief power behind all forces of darkness. They have been defeated by Christ and will be forever punished in the lake of fire. Ephesians 2:2; John 14:30; I Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:7-10; Jude 6; II Peter 2:4.

²⁴ John 14:26; 16:13; Romans 8:33,34; Hebrews 8-10; I Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6; John 10:28-29, 16:8; Romans 8:35-39.

²⁵ We believe this will be premillennial and can occur at any time. Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32.

²⁶ John 14:3; Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:27, 42, 25:13; James 5:8; I Corinthians 15:23-28; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 20:11-15; I Corinthians 15:44; Revelation 21-22.

Founding Confession of Faith (GRARBC - 1952)

Article I – THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men controlled by the Holy Spirit¹; that it has truth without any admixture of error for its matter²; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.³

Explanatory

By *The Holy Bible*, we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written, does not merely contain and convey the word of God, but is the very Word of God.

By *Inspiration*, we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.

¹ II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21; Acts 1:16, 28:25

² Psalms 119:105, 130, 160; Luke 24:25-27, 44-45; John 17:17

³ Psalms 119:89; Proverbs 30:5-6; Romans 3:4, 15:4; I Peter 1:23; Revelation 22:19; John 5:39, 45-47, 12:48; Isaiah 8:20; Ephesians 6:17; Luke 16:31; Psalms 19:7-11

Article II – THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth¹; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love². That in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.³

¹ Exodus 20:2-3; Genesis 17:1; I Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; John 4:24; Psalms 83:18, 90:2, 147:5; Jeremiah 10:10

² Exodus 15:11; Revelation 4:11; I Timothy 1:17; Romans 11:33; Mark 12:30

³ Matthew 28:19; John 10:30, 15:26, 17:5; I Corinthians 2:10-11, 12:2-6, I John 5:7, Acts 5:3-4; Philippians 2:5-6; Ephesians 2:18; II Corinthians 13:14

Article III – THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person; equal with God the Father¹ and God the Son² and of the same nature³; that He was active in the creation⁴; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled⁵; that He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness⁶; that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching testimony⁷; that He is the agent in the New Birth⁸; that He seals, baptizes, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer.⁹

And that the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance) is the evidence of His indwelling rather than the speaking in tongues and other spectacular demonstrations.

¹ John 14:16-17

² Matthew 28:19

³ Hebrews 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35

⁴ Genesis 1:1-3

⁵ II Thessalonians 2:7

⁶ John 16:8-11

⁷ John 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32

⁸ John 3:5-6

⁹ Ephesians 1:13-14; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16, 24:49; John 1:33, 14:26, 16:13; Acts 11:16; Romans 8:14, 16, 26-27;

II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:18-21

Article IV – THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe that Jesus Christ, who is God and was with the Father from the beginning, was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner¹; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of woman², and that He is both the Son of God, and God, the Son.³

¹John 1:1,14; Genesis 3:15

²Psalms 2:7; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35; John 12:14; Galatians 4:4

³I Corinthians 15:47; I John 5:20

Article V – THE CREATION

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively¹; that man was created directly in God's own image and after his own likeness²; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms³; that all animal and vegetable life was made directly, and God's established law was they should bring forth only *after their kind*.⁴

¹ Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11; Acts 4:24; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3; John 1:3; Revelation 10:6; Romans 1:20; Acts 17:23-26; Jeremiah 10:12; Nehemiah 9:6

² Genesis 1:26-27; I Corinthians 11:7

³ Genesis 2:7, 21-23

⁴ Genesis 1:11, 24

Article VI – THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe that Satan was once holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty¹, fell and drew after him a host of angels²; that he is now the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world³. We hold him to be man's great tempter⁴, the enemy of God and His Christ⁵, the accuser of the saints⁶, the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy⁷; the Lord of the Antichrist⁸, and the author of all powers of darkness⁹ -- destined however to final defeat at the hands of God's Son¹⁰, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.¹¹

¹ Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17

² Revelation 12:9; Jude 6; II Peter 2:4

³ Ephesians 2:2; John 14:30

⁴ I Peter 5:8; I Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 4:1,3

⁵ Zechariah 1:3; I John 3:8; Matthew 13:25, 37-39; Luke 22:3-4

⁶ Revelation 12:10

⁷ II Corinthians 11:13-15

⁸ I John 2:22, 4:3; II John 7

⁹ Revelation 13:13,14; II Thessalonians 2:8-11

¹⁰ Revelation 12:7-9, 19:11, 16, 20, 20:1-3

¹¹ Revelation 20:10; Matthew 25:41

Article VII – THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker¹, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state², in consequence of which, all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but of choice³; and therefore under just condemnation without defense of excuse.⁴

¹ Genesis 3:1-6, 24

² Romans 5:12, 19

³ Romans 1:18, 3:10-19; Ephesians 2:1, 3; Ezekiel 18:19-20

⁴ Romans 1:20, 28, 32; Galatians 3:22

Article VIII – THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN OR WAY OF SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace¹ through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins²; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree³; that, having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.⁴

¹ Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24

² John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:14

³ John 10:18; Philippians 2:8; Galatians 1:4; I Peter 2:24, 3:18; Isaiah 53:11; Hebrews 12:2

⁴ I Corinthians 15:20; Isaiah 53:12; Hebrews 7:25, 9:12-15; I John 2:2

Article IX – JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness¹; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed unto us.²

¹ Acts 13:39; Isaiah 53:11; Zechariah 13:1, Romans 5:1, 9; 8:1

² Titus 3:5-7; Romans 1:17, 4:1-8; Hebrews 2:4, 10:38; Galatians 3:11

Article X – THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe in God's electing grace¹; that the blessings of salvation are made free to all through the gospel²; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith³; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel⁴; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.⁵

¹ I Thessalonians 1:4; Colossians 3:12; I Peter 1:2; Titus 1:1; Romans 8:29-30

² Matthew 11:28; Isaiah 55:1, Revelation 22:17; Romans 10:13; John 6:37

³ Isaiah 55:6; Acts 2:38

⁴ Isaiah 55:7; John 3:15-16, 5:40; I Timothy 1:15; I Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 2:4-5

⁵ John 3:18, 36

Article XI - GRACE IN REGENERATION OR THE NEW CREATION

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again¹; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus²; that it is instantaneous and not a process³; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God.⁴ That the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel⁵; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.⁶

¹ John 3:3

² II Corinthians 5:17

³ Luke 5:27; I John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 2:41, 16:30-33

⁴ II Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; II Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 2:13

⁵ John 1:12-13, 13:8

⁶ Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9

Article XII – REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that Repentance and Faith are solemn obligations¹, and also inseparable graces², wrought in our soul by the quickening Spirit of God³; thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplication for mercy⁴; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only all-sufficient Savior.⁵

¹ Acts 20:21

² Mark 1:15

³ Acts 2:27-38

⁴ Luke 18:13; Romans 10:13; Psalms 51:1-4, 7; Isaiah 55:6-7

⁵ Luke 12:8; Romans 9:11

Article XIII – SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification has a two-fold meaning; that of setting apart of things, days or persons specifically for God, and that the believer at the time of his regeneration is so set apart by God the Father¹; the progressive work of the Holy Spirit whereby the believer, obedient to the Word of God experiences the power of the indwelling Christ for holiness of life and victory over the old nature, which work will be completed when the believer stands in Christ's presence.²

¹ I Corinthians 1:30, Hebrews 10:10, 14

² Colossians 1:26-28; John 17:17; I Thessalonians 5:23; II Corinthians 3:18

Article XIV – THE PERSEVERANCE AND PRESERVATION OF THE SAINTS

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end¹; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors²; that a special Providence watches over their welfare³; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.⁴

¹ John 8:31-32; Colossians 1:21, 23

² I John 2:19; Matthew 13:19-20

³ Romans 8:28; Matthew 6:30; Psalms 121:3; Hebrews 1:14

⁴ I Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6; John 10:28-29, 16:8; Romans 8:35-39

Article XV – THE CHURCH

We believe that a church of Christ is a congregation of immersed believers associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel¹, observing the ordinances of Christ²; governed by His laws³; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His word⁴; that its' scripturally designated officers are pastors (elders) and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures⁵; we believe the true mission of the church is found in the great commission; first, to make individual disciples; second, to baptize them; third, to teach and instruct, as He has commanded⁶. We do not believe in the reversal of this order; we hold that the local church has the absolute right of self government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations, and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, through the Holy Spirit⁷; that it is

scriptural for true churches to co-operate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its co-operation⁸; on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.⁹

¹ Acts 2:41-42

² Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 11:2

³ Ephesians 1:22-23

⁴ Ephesians 4:11; I Corinthians 12:4, 8-11

⁵ Acts 6:5-6, 14:23, 15:23, 20:17-28; I Timothy 3:1-13

⁶ Matthew 28:19-20

⁷ Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23-24; I Peter 5:1-4

⁸ Acts 15:22; Jude 3-4; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 8:23-24; Malachi 3:10; Leviticus 27:32

⁹ I Corinthians 5:11-13, 6:1-3

Article XVI – BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

We believe that Christian Baptism is the believer’s immersion in water¹; into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost²; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its’ effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life³; that in scriptural order it (baptism) precedes the privileges of church membership and is the public recognition of the Lordship of Jesus Christ⁴; the Lord’s Supper is a memorial service in which the elements of bread and wine remind us of the love of God in Christ Jesus, *who spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all*. That this ordinance is to be observed in anticipation of His coming and preceded always by solemn self-examination.⁵

¹ Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 3:6, 16; John 3:23; Romans 6:4-5

² Matthew 28:19

³ Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12

⁴ Acts 2:41-42; Matthew 28:19-20

⁵ I Corinthians 11:23-28; Romans 8:32

Article XVII – CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society¹; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed²; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ³; who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth.⁴

¹ Romans 13:1-7; II Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21-22

² Acts 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-14, 17

³ Acts 4:19-20, 5:29, Daniel 3:17-18

⁴ Matthew 10:28, 23:10; Revelation 10:6; Philippians 2:10-11; Psalms 72:11

Article XVIII – THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there are radical and essential differences between the righteous and the wicked¹; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem²; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse³; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.⁴

¹ Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17-18; Proverbs 11:31; I Peter 4:18

² Romans 1:17, 6:16; I Corinthians 15:22; Acts 10:34-35; I John 2:29, 3:7

³ Romans 6:16, I John 5:19; Galatians 3:10; Romans 6:23, 7:6

⁴ Proverbs 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matthew 7:13-14, 25:34, 41; John 8:21, 12:25; Luke 9:26

Article XIX – THE RESURRECTION, RETURN OF CHRIST AND RELATED EVENTS

We believe in: the Bodily Resurrection¹, the Ascension², the High Priesthood³, the Second Coming⁴, the Resurrection of the Righteous Dead⁵, the Change of the Living in Christ⁶, on the Throne of David⁷, His Reign on Earth.⁸

¹ Matthew 28:6-7; Luke 24:2, 4-6, 39; John 20:27; I Corinthians 15:4; Mark 16:6

² Acts 1:9, 11; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Hebrews 8:1, 12:2; Revelation 3:21

³ Hebrews 2:17, 5:9-10, 8:6; I Timothy 2:5; I John 2:1

⁴ John 14:3; Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:27, 42, 25:13; James 5:8; Hebrews 9:28

⁵ I Thessalonians 4:16; I Corinthians 15:42-44, 52

⁶ I Corinthians 15:51-53; I Thessalonians 4:17; Philippians 3:20-21

⁷ Luke 1:32, Acts 2:29-30; Isaiah 9:6-7

⁸ I Corinthians 15:25; Isaiah 11:4-5, 32:1; Psalms 72:8; Revelation 20:1-4, 6