

THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

I. We believe in the HOLY SCRIPTURES:

- A. We accept fully the writings of the Old and New Testaments as the very Word of God, verbally inspired in all parts and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God and therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. (Mt. 5:18; John 10:35, 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).
- B. We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations—the law, the church, and the kingdom—are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. (Genesis 1:28; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25, 27; Rev. 20:2-6)
- C. We understand that the following Articles do not by any means exhaust the content of our creed which is the whole Word of God, and they are not intended to set a limit beyond which faith cannot go within this Word; but we do believe that insofar as these Articles extend they are a true presentation of the sound doctrine taught in the Scriptures and therefore, binding upon us as Christian believers. All literature used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Articles of Faith.

II. We believe in the ONE TRIUNE GOD:

Who is personal, spirit and sovereign, perfect, infinite, and eternal in His being, holiness, love, wisdom, and power; absolutely separate and above the world as its creator, yet everywhere present in the world as the upholder of all things; self-existent and self-revealing in three distinct Persons -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -- each having a distinct ministry in God's relation to His creation and people. (1 John 5:7; Mark 12:29; John 4:24, 14:9; Col. 1:15-17; Ps. 135:6, 18:30, 147:5; Deut. 33:27; Gen. 1:1, Ps. 104; John 5:26; Mt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

III. We believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST:

The eternal Word and only begotten Son; that without any change in His divine Person He became man by the miracle of the Virgin Birth, thus to continue forever as both true God and true man, one Person with two natures; that as a man He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin; that as the perfect Lamb of God He gave Himself in death upon the cross; becoming there the sin of the world, and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our stead; that He arose bodily from the grave and was glorified, that as our Great High Priest He ascended into Heaven, there to appear before the face of God as our Advocate and Intercessor. (John 1:1, 1:14, 3:16, 8:46, 1:29, 20:25-28; Titus 2:13; Romans 9:5; Mt. 1:23, 20:28; Col 2:9; Is. 53:5-6; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:24; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 4:15).

IV. We believe in the HOLY SPIRIT:

- A. He is the divine Agent in nature, revelation, and redemption. He convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates, indwells, baptizes, seals, and anoints all who become children of God through Christ. He further empowers, guides, comforts, teaches, sanctifies, and fills believers who daily surrender to Him. (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30; 1 Cor. 2:10; 2 Cor. 3:18, 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:19-20, 12:13; Eph. 4:30, 3:16; Rom. 8:14; John 14:26; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:18).
- B. We believe that the gift of speaking in tongues was never the necessary or common sign of the baptism or the filling of the Holy Spirit; that in the assembly the gift of preaching rather than of

tongues is the divinely appointed means for “edification, exhortation, and comfort”. In view of this fact, we now have the complete revelation of doctrine in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, there is no longer any need whatsoever for the sign gifts to corroborate the truths of God’s Word. (Gal. 5:16-26; Col. 1:9-14; 1 Cor. 14:1-3; Jude 3).

- (1) Tongues were a known language (Acts 2:8).
- (2) Tongues were limited to only some (1 Cor. 12:29-30).
- (3) Tongues will cease (1 Cor. 13:8).
- (4) Original purpose of tongues has ceased (1 Cor. 14:20-23).
- (5) Tongues were last of the gifts (1 Cor. 12:28).

V. We believe that all men are, by nature and choice, sinful and lost:

Man was the direct creation of God, made in His image and likeness. By personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, man became a sinful creature and the father of a fallen race which is universally sinful in both nature and practice. Thus he is: alienated from the life and family of God, under the righteous judgment and wrath of God, and has within himself no possible means of salvation. (Gen. 1:26-28, 2:7, 18-24, 3:1-24, 5:3; Mt. 19:4; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 3:23, 3:12, 5:12; Eph. 4:17-18; John 8:42-44; Isa. 64:6, 53:6).

VI. We believe in salvation by grace through faith:

Salvation is: the free gift of God, neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or work of men; received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life; a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God, deliverance and security from all condemnation, every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness, and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish. This salvation affects the whole man for apart from Christ there is no possible salvation. (Rom. 6:23, 4:4-5, 11:16; Titus 3:5-8; John 6:28-29, 5:24; Acts 16:30-31; Rom. 3:25; John 1:12; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 5:13; Gal. 3:26; John 10:27-30; 2 Pt. 1:3; Acts 4:12).

VII. We believe in righteous living and godly works:

Not as a means of salvation in any sense, but as its proper evidence and fruit. Therefore, as Christians we should: obey the Word of our Lord, seek the things which are above, walk as He walked, accept as our solemn responsibility the duty and privileges of bearing the Gospel to a lost world, remembering that a victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who, in gratitude for the infinite and undeserved mercies of God, have presented themselves wholly to Christ. (1 John 3:9-11, 4:19, 2:6, 5:4; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:14, 3:8; Mt. 7:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:10; John 14:23; 2 Cor. 5:19-20; Rom. 12:1-2).

VIII. We believe in the existence of Satan:

He originally was created a holy and perfect being, but through pride and wicked ambition, rebelled against God, thus becoming utterly depraved in character. He is the great adversary of God and His people, leader of all other evil angels and spirits. He is the deceiver, god of this present world and his powers are vast but strictly limited to the permissive will of God who overrules all his wicked devices for good. He was defeated and judged at the cross and, therefore, his final doom is certain. We are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God, by the blood of the lamb, and through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Ezek. 28:13-17; Is. 14:12-14; 1 Tim. 3:7; John 8:44; Mt. 4:1-11, 12:24-26, 25:41; Rev. 12: 10, 20:10; 2 Cor. 4:4; Job 1:1-22; Luke 22:31-32; Eph. 6:12-18).

IX. We believe in the rapture and second coming of Christ:

His return from Heaven will be personal, visible, and glorious, a blessed hope for which we should constantly watch and pray, the time being unrevealed, but always imminent. When He comes, He will first, by resurrection of the dead and translation of the living, remove from the earth His waiting Church; then pour out the righteous judgments of God upon the unbelieving world. Afterwards He will descend with His Church and establish His glorious and literal kingdom over all the nations for a thousand years. (Acts 1:8-11; Rev. 1:7, 6:1-17, 22:20; Mark 13:33-37; Titus 2:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Luke 1:32-33; Zech. 12:10, 13:4; Is. 2:1-4; 1 Thessalonians. 5:9).

X. We believe in the future life, bodily resurrection and eternal judgment:

At death, the spirits of the saved go immediately to be with Christ in Heaven. Their works shall be brought before the Judgment Seat of Christ for the determination of rewards which will take place at the time when Christ comes for His own. The spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment and torment until the final day of the Great White Throne judgment. At which time, their bodies shall be raised from the grave, shall be judged and cast into Hell, the place of final and everlasting punishment. (Phil. 1:21-23, 3:20-21; 2 Cor. 5:8; 1 Cor. 15:58, 3:8-15; 1 John 3:2; Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 20:11-15; Mark 9:43-48; Jude 3).

XI. We believe in the priesthood of all believers:

Christ is our Great High Priest and through Him every born again person has direct access into God's presence without the need of a human priest. The believer has the right and responsibility to personally study and interpret the Scripture guided by the Holy Spirit. (Heb. 1:3,4:14; 1 John 2:1; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Tim. 2:15).

XII. We believe in the importance of the local church:

A New Testament church is a local assembly of born again, baptized believers united in organization to practice New Testament ordinances. They meet together for worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching, and a united testimony, and to actively engage in carrying out the Great Commission. (Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:41-47; Mt. 28:19-20; Eph. 4:11-12).

XIII. We believe in the lordship of Jesus Christ:

He alone is the Head of the Body of Christ, into which all true believers are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit. All members of this one spiritual body should assemble and identify themselves in local churches. (Rom. 10:9a; Eph. 5:25; I Cor. 12:12-13; Heb. 10:25).

XIV. We believe in the independence and autonomy of the local church:

Each New Testament church is free to govern itself without ecclesiastical interference and should cooperate with other churches as the Holy Spirit leads. It is responsible to follow the pattern of the New Testament church and is directly accountable to God. We also believe in the separation of church and state, with each having definite and distinct spheres of responsibility. (Mt. 22:17-22; Acts 14:27, 20:17; 1 Ti. 3:1-13).

XV. We believe the ordinances given to the local church are two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper:

Baptism is by immersion of believers, thus portraying the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and cup by the believer as a continuing memorial of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ. (Mt. 28:19-20; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 11:23-32; Acts 2:41-47).

XVI. We believe that God is the Creator:

God created the universe in six literal, twenty-four hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)

XVII. We believe that God has ordained and created civil government:

God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14)

XVIII. We believe God has designed human sexuality:

- A. God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)
- B. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

XIX. We believe that God has designed family relationships:

- A. Men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (Pastor Elders and Deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
- B. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:1-7)

XX. We believe God designed marriage between a man and a woman to last until the death of one spouse:

God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of Pastor Elder or Deacon. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)

XXI. We believe that abortion is murder:

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

XXII. We believe God commands believers to love:

We should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers and those who oppose us. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18)

XXIII. We believe that believers are forbidden from suing other believers:

That Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)

XXIV. We believe that God has given the church a Great Commission:

To proclaim the Gospel and to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20)