

PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHURCH ELDER'S STATEMENT OF FAITH

Our statement of faith is adapted from several historic biblical confessions such as the Abstract of Principles (1858), the New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1853), The Baptist Faith and Message of 2000, and others. It sets forth our core distinctives of being Orthodox, Reformed, Evangelical and Baptist and all PBC elders are required to fully affirm it.

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible, consisting of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error (in the original manuscripts), for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. The Triune God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

Acts 17:11; Deut 4:39, Deut 6:4, Mk 12:29; Exod 15:11, Is 6:3, Ps 147:5; Psalm 42:2; Jer 23:23, John 14:23; Ps 18:30; Rev 19:6; Heb 4:13, Ps 147:5, Job 37:16; John 4:24; Ps 90:2; Gen 1:26, 3:22, 11:6-7, Mt 3:16-17, 28:19, Heb 9:14; John 20:17; Titus 2:13, Jn 1:1-3,14; Acts 5:3-4; Lk 3:21-22, Jn 14:16-17, Heb 9:14; Jn17:21-23, Gen 1:26; Gen 1:26, Mt 3:16-17, Heb 9:14, Rev 22:1,3,17; Jn 14:16-17; Rom 8:9-11; Psalm 96:8.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all

knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of His people from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring

the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. **Providence**

God from eternity, in order to display the full extent of His glory for the eternal and ever-increasing enjoyment of all who love him, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any way to be the author or approver of sin nor to destroy the free will and responsibility of intelligent creatures.

Hebrews 1:3; Matthew 10:29-31; Ephesians 1:11-12; Proverbs 16:33; Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28

IV. **Election**

God's election is an unconditional act of free grace which was given through His Son Christ Jesus before the world began. By this act God chose, before the foundation of the world, those who would be delivered from bondage to sin and brought to repentance and saving faith in His Son Christ Jesus. This act was not because of foreseen merit or faith in them, but because of His mercy in Christ alone.

Romans 9:11-18; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; John 10:25-29 John 17:6; John 6:37-39; Romans 8:28-30; Romans 11:5-8; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Acts 11:18; John 6:44, 65; Philippians 1:29; Ephesians 2:8-9; Matthew 11:27; Matthew 16:17; Acts 16:14

V. **Creation**

God created the universe, and everything in it, out of nothing, by the Word of His power and all in the span of six literal days. Having no deficiency in Himself, nor moved by any incompleteness in His joyful self-sufficiency, God was pleased in creation to display His glory for the everlasting joy of the redeemed, from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

God directly created Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from his side. Adam and Eve were the historical parents of the entire human race; they were created male and female equally in the image of God, without sin; they were created to glorify their Maker,

Ruler, Provider, and Friend by trusting His all-sufficient goodness, admiring His infinite beauty, enjoying His personal fellowship, and obeying His all-wise counsel; and in God's love and wisdom, they were appointed differing and complementary roles in marriage as a type of Christ and the church.

Genesis 1:1; Psalm 24:1-2; Hebrews 11:3; Hebrews 1:2; John 1:1-3; Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14; Isaiah 43:7; 60:21; John 12:27-28; John 17:1; John 17:4; Philippians 2:11; Exodus 3:13-14; Psalm 50:9-15; Acts 17:25; Isaiah 43:7; Isaiah 35:10; Matthew 25:23; Revelation 5:9; 7:9-10; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 15:22; 1 Cor. 15:45; Romans 5:14; Genesis 1:27; Genesis 9:6; James 3:9; Genesis 1:31; Revelation 5:9; 7:9-10; Ephesians 5:22-33; Genesis 2:18.

VI. The Fall of Man

God originally created Man in His own image, and free from sin; but, through the temptation of Satan, he transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original holiness and righteousness; whereby his posterity inherit a nature corrupt and wholly opposed to God and His law, are under condemnation, and as soon as they are capable of moral action, become actual transgressors.

Genesis 1:27, 3:4-7; Gen. 6:5; Romans 1:18-20; 3:10-18; 5:12-21; Romans 8:6-8; Ephesians 2:1-3; Titus 3:3

VII. The Free offer of the Gospel

The blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 1:12; 3:16; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:16; Romans 10:9-17; John 3:36; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10.

VIII. Regeneration

Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's free grace whereby sinners become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this work the Holy Spirit gives life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness.

John 3:1-8; Romans 8:30; 2 Cor. 5:17; John 16:8-11; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3

IX. Repentance

Repentance is an evangelical grace, wherein a person being by the Holy Spirit, made sensible of the manifold evil of his sin, humbles himself for it, with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrence, with a purpose and endeavor to walk before God so as to please Him in all things.

Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21; 2 Corinthians 7:9

X. Faith

Saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatsoever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ; accepting and resting upon Him alone for justification and eternal life. It is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and is accompanied by all other saving graces, and leads to a life of holiness.

John 1:12, 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-9

XI. Justification

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners, who believe in Christ, from all sin, through the satisfaction that Christ has made; not for anything wrought in them or done by them; but on account of the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith.

Rom. 3:23-24; Rom. 5:1-2; 18, 19; 2 Cor. 5:21

XII. Adoption

For the sake of His only Son, Jesus Christ, God has been pleased to make all justified persons sharers in the grace of adoption, by means of which they are numbered with, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of children of God.

John 1:12; Eph. 1:5; Romans 8:15, 16; 1 John 3:1

XIII. Sanctification

Sanctification is the process by which according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; it is a progressive work; it is begun in regeneration; and it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means especially the Word of God, the fellowship of the saints, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

I Thess. 4:3; I Thess. 5:23; II Cor. 7:1; II Cor. 13:10; Phil. 3:12-16; I John 2:29; Rom. 8:5; Eph. 1:4; Pro. 4:18; II Cor. 3:18; Heb. 6:1; II Peter 1:5-8; John 3:6; Phil. 1:9-11; Eph.

1:13-14; Phil. 2:12-13; Eph. 4:11-12; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25; II Cor. 13:5; Luke 11:35; Luke 9:23; Matt. 26:41; Eph.6:18; Eph.4:3

XIV. **Perseverance of the Saints**

Those whom God has accepted in the Beloved, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may fall through neglect and temptation, into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the Church, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Jn. 10:28-29; 1 Jn. 2:19; Rom. 8:30.

XV. **The Old and New Covenants**

The Old Covenant, with the Law of Moses as its core, was revealed to the nation of Israel, promising earthly blessings for obedience, and threatening curses for disobedience. The purpose of the Old Covenant was never to offer eternal life, but rather to govern the life and worship of the Old Testament nation of Israel, to reveal the extent of man's depravity, and to foreshadow Christ and the New Covenant. Nevertheless, salvation during this and all times has always and only been by grace through faith, and not of works.

Exodus 20:1-23:33 (cf. Exodus 24:3-4, 7, 12; 34:27-28; Deut. 4:13-14); John 1:17; Acts 15:5 (cf. v. 10); Hebrews 10:28. Deuteronomy 4:7-8; Romans 3:1-2; Galatians 2:14b; Deuteronomy 7:12-24; 11:13-15, 26-29; 28:1-14; Deuteronomy 11:16-17, 26-29; 28:15-68; John 5:39-40; Romans 3:19-22; 8:3; 10:1-4; Galatians 2:16, 21; 3:19-23; Hebrews 7:18-19; Deuteronomy 4:5-6, 14; 6:1-3; 10:12-13; Romans 3:20; 5:20; 7:7-13; Galatians 3:19; Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (cf. Acts 3:14-24; 7:37, 51-53); Luke 24:44; John 5:39; Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 9:6-14, 23-24; 10:1; 13:11-12; Genesis 15:6; Romans 4; Galatians 3.

The New Covenant, established through the person and redemptive work of Christ, provides eternal blessings which are acquired by grace through faith. The Old Covenant was fulfilled in Christ, thus becoming obsolete. God's final words of revelation, given through Christ and His New Testament apostles and prophets, have become the authority concerning Christian conduct, and the interpretive lens through which the Old Testament must be understood and applied.

Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 7:22; 8:6; 9:11-26; 13:20. Romans 4:1-25; 6:14; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7. Matthew 5:17-20; Romans 7:4, 6; 10:4; 2 Corinthians 3:2-11; Galatians 3:24-25; 4:21-31; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:13-14; Hebrews 7:11-12, 18-19, 22; 8:1-13; 10:9b. John 1:17-18; 13:34-35; Ephesians 2:19-20; 3:4-5 (cf. John 16:12-14). Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (cf. John 12:49); Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; 28:20a; John 13:34-35; 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10, 14; Romans 14:5-6; 1 Corinthians 9:21; Colossians 2:16-17

(cf. 2 Chronicles 2:4; 8:12-13; 31:3); Colossians 3:15-17; Hebrews 7:12; 10:28-29 (cf. Deuteronomy 18:19; John 12:47-50)

XVI. The Church

Universal

The Lord Jesus is the head of the universal Church, which includes of all of the redeemed of all the ages; believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people and nation. All power for the ordering and governing of the church is invested supremely in Christ.

Col. 1:18; Mt. 16:18; 18:15-18; Rev. 5:9; 7:9;

Local

A visible or local church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word; its only scriptural officers are Elders (Pastors or Overseers) and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are primarily defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 3:1-15; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4.

Cooperation

Though autonomous from external authorities, local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another. Partnerships should be encouraged in a spirit of unity. Partnerships (whether official or unofficial) should be by the mutual will of the churches on a voluntary independent basis.

Eph. 4:3-4; Col. 4:16, Phil. 4:21-22, Acts 15; Romans 16:25-26, Phil. 4:15.

XVII. Church Ordinances

Baptism

Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, by which he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ, of remission of sins, and of giving himself up to God, to live and walk in newness of life. Being a church ordinance, it is a prerequisite to church membership and its privileges.

Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 3:23; Acts 2:41; 8:38-39; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 1:13; Col. 2:12; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, and to be observed by His churches till the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion with Him, and of their church fellowship.

Mt. 26:26-27; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-26

XVIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16-17; 3:16; Hebrews 10:24-25; Revelation 1:10

XIX. Last Things

The bodies of men after death return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God—the righteous to rest with Him; the wicked, to be reserved under darkness to the judgment. God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XX. Evangelism & Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly

commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XXI. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. 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.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. 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. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

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 spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32;

1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

XXII. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XXIII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XXIV. The Spirit of this Statement of Faith and Unity in the Church

We do not believe that all things in this statement of faith are of equal weight, some being more essential, some less. We do not believe that every part of this statement of faith must be believed in order for one to be saved.

Our aim is not to discover how little can be believed, but rather to embrace and teach —the whole counsel of God. Our aim is to encourage a hearty adherence to the Bible, the fullness of its truth, and the glory of its Author. We believe Biblical doctrine stabilizes saints in the winds of confusion and strengthens the church in her mission to meet the great systems of false religion and secularism. We believe that the supreme virtue of love is nourished by the strong meat of God-centered doctrine. And we believe that a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ is sustained in an atmosphere of deep and joyful knowledge of God and His wonderful works.

We believe that the cause of unity in the church is best served, not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, around which all can gather, but by elevating the value of truth, stating the doctrinal parameters of church or school or mission or ministry, seeking the unity that comes from the truth, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other across boundaries rather than by removing boundaries. In this way, the importance of truth is served by the existence of doctrinal borders, and unity is served by the way we love others across those borders.

We do not claim infallibility for this statement of faith and are open to refinement and correction from Scripture. Yet we do hold firmly to these truths as we see them and call on others to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so. As conversation and debate take place, it may be that we will learn from each other, and the boundaries will be adjusted, even possibly folding formerly disagreeing groups into closer fellowship.

Acts 20:27; Titus 1:1; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 4:1; Ephesians 4:13-14; 1 Timothy 1:5; Psalm 9:10; Ephesians 4:4-5; 1 Timothy 1:5; John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 2 Peter 3:18; Acts 17:11