

At any time, you can ask me a Question, just raise your hand or speak up!

### **1. Why do Churches Have Doctrinal Statements aka Confessions of Faith:**

A doctrinal statement tells you what a church believes in a concise and accessible manner. It is a statement of what you can expect to hear taught, it is also how you hold pastor-teachers accountable.

A doctrinal statement also *distinguishes* a church or a group of churches from other churches. Doctrinal statements also make it easier to track what Christians have believed down through the centuries.

### **2. Objections to Doctrinal Statements:**

Some churches object to having statements because they can become equal to scripture. They can often be too strict and not leave any room for growth or changes in understanding. Scripture does not tell us to develop doctrinal statements.

### **3. Church Members and Doctrinal Statements:**

Members of particular churches need to be aware of what their church believes. Sadly, few people understand or know what their church believes.

### **4. Baptists and Confessions:**

Baptist churches are both pro and anti-confessionalism. They have opposed Confessions because of the way that people tend to exalt confessions over Scripture. That said, Baptists have produced some incredible confessions of faith.

### **5. What does it mean when someone says, "I am a Baptist?"**

The term *Baptist* identifies a certain kind of ecclesiology. So, you can be a *Baptist* and be a heretic... This may shock people but if a church only baptizes believers and only admits people to membership who were baptized *after* a profession of faith, they technically are *B-----*.

In the 1960's a pastor named Duane Brown at the suggestion of a lady in his church developed an acrostic that in my lifetime became a standard teaching aid for outlining what makes a Baptist church distinct from other groups.

- B Biblical Authority
- A Autonomy of the Local Church
- P Priesthood of the Believer
- T Two Ordinances or Sacraments
- I Individual Soul Liberty aka Liberty of Conscience.
- S Saved Church Membership
- T Two officers: Pastors/Deacons
- S Separation of Church and State

## 6. Where did Baptists come from?

In a very real sense, we could say that *Baptists come from the Bible*. If you study the New Testament and look for a *church model*, most people wind up looking more like *Baptists* than they do *Roman Catholics*. This is why many non-denominational churches are *baptistic*.

Baptists as we know them today appeared in England in the early 1600's. They did not call choose to identify themselves as *Baptists*. The name Baptist came into use like the name Christian did in the book of Acts. Baptists in a less defined form were present in Europe for hundreds of years before the rise of the British Baptists.

Many scholars (although not a majority) say the earliest *baptistic* people were the Waldensians who lived in the Piedmont area of Northern Italy, a region that touches parts of France and Switzerland.

Remember, doctrinal statements help us to track things in history. I have little doubt that the Waldensians were *baptistic* and, in many ways, very like us because of what their doctrinal statement says.

There are two major forms of their confessions, one from 1120 AD, the other 1544 AD. When compared one can see that the Reformation influence caused them to recast their views on some things.

Q/A

Addendum - **Baptists and Associationism:** All Baptist/baptistic Churches are normally *completely autonomous*. No decision, position or action of the local church cannot be overruled by any entity outside the individual church. All properties are normally owned by the local church *only*.

However, Baptists do have a long history of *associating* with other local churches to achieve objectives together that they could never do apart. The main co-operative efforts have been for sending missionaries, printing Scriptures, books and founding training schools for ministers. But, even when a church is part of an association, *the association has zero control over the local church unless that local church invites their oversight*.

## 1. Where did our confession come from?

The confession that we use was not written by our church, it was adopted by the founders of our church. Faith Baptist is a member church of the General Association of Regular Baptists and has been in affiliation with this fellowship of churches since its inception.

(The following section is from the GARBC website link, <https://www.garbc.org/news/the-history-of-the-garbc-articles-of-faith/>)

### **THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESSION, 1853**

By 1795 there were perhaps 41 Baptist churches in New Hampshire. Most of them traced their origins to the Calvinism inherited from the Great Awakening of 1740. A number of Congregational churches were troubled by the prospect of paying taxes levied to support all churches—even the spiritually dead ones. These revived Congregational churches found an elegant solution: They turned Baptist and accepted believer's baptism. [The Congregational Church was the established or state church of New Hampshire.]

After 1780, one Benjamin Randall gathered a Freewill Baptist church in New Durham, N.H., provoking a revolt of sorts *against* strict Calvinism. By the time of Randall's death in 1808, the movement had grown to 130 Freewill Baptist churches in New England.

About 1826 the Baptists in New Hampshire organized a state convention with the participation of both Calvinistic Baptists and the Freewill Baptists, and four years later the convention appointed a committee to make a doctrinal statement. In 1833 the committee settled on wording that restated their Calvinism in *moderate tones* agreeable to their constituent churches, discharged themselves, and ordered copies to be printed. Twenty years later one member of the original committee, J. Newton Brown, authorized himself to make a few revisions and print the confession with his own name as author. This statement came to be known as the New Hampshire Confession (1853).

In 1894 Hiscox published *The New Directory for Baptist Churches* and included the Brown confession, which with a few changes appears in William Lumpkin's *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (1959).

### **THE BAPTIST BIBLE UNION, 1922**

Modernism was imported from Germany between 1880 and 1920, quietly taking over most of the old-line colleges and seminaries, along with downtown churches and agencies. When modernists organized the Baptists in the North into the Northern Baptist Convention in 1907, believers hardly realized what had happened. In the Indianapolis convention of 1922 it was clear that Baptist *fundamentalists* needed a confession to help identify the false believers. As an order of business, W. B. Riley of Minneapolis read the New Hampshire Confession and moved for its adoption.

Cornelius Woelfkin responded with a bit of parliamentary trickery, a substitute motion declaring "that the Northern Baptist Convention affirm that the New Testament is an all-sufficient ground

for Baptist faith and practice, and they need no other doctrinal statement.” The substitute motion passed, 1,264 to 637, in what was understood as a referendum vote against fundamentalism.

The Baptist Bible Union was apparently born a few nights later, when R. E. Neighbour and O. W. Van Osdel convened a group of fundamentalists in a hotel meeting room. Both men would eventually become leaders in the GARBC. Three other men joined to form an executive committee: Riley, J. Frank Norris, and William Pettingill.

That winter, Riley and Norris set about to produce a statement of faith. They began with the New Hampshire Confession but revised several sections to exclude a modernist from affirming it. For instance, they specified that the Bible is a collection of 66 books, “the very Word of God,” with a specific statement about inerrancy and inspiration (but not describing it as plenary or verbal).

Like the New Hampshire before it, the Baptist Bible Union statement was irenic, made to include various views on prophecy. When the original draft drew protests from Canada and from the South, the executive committee quickly revised the last article so that an amillennialist could sign it.

### **THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES, 1932**

The Baptist Bible Union came apart after the 1929 closing of its university in Des Moines. Under Van Osdel’s persuasion the Baptist Bible Union met for a final time in 1932 at Belden Avenue Baptist Church in Chicago. After formally dissolving the Union, the participants formed what became the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. After choosing an executive committee, they began work on their own confession of faith. The minutes are not clear, but apparently it was Earle G. Griffith, vice president, who did the actual revising.

## **2. Is our Confession a good one?**

Confessions of faith are born out of the necessity of clarifying positions. The early Baptist confessions of England were prepared so that non Baptist Christians would know that Baptists were Christians too. Most confessions are written in times of controversy; therefore they tend to *emphasize* what was important at the time. No confession is perfect, but many are completely adequate.

Our current confession is not the latest version of what GARBC churches use, but our confession is still able to achieve its original purpose. Personally I really like the original 1853 version of the New Hampshire Confession and the 1689 London Baptist Confession. I recommend them to you for study and handy references to Biblical truth.

## **3. Why can’t we just say, “Yo, I just believe the Bible?”**

Yes, but what does that mean? Does it mean that you believe the Bible is true? Does it mean that you understand the Bible?

I don’t find this sort of statement helpful because that doesn’t really tell me what you believe. Roman Catholics, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Arians, Oneness Pentecostals and Campbellites all will say, *I believe the Bible*.

Q/A

Faith Baptist Church

Terry's Class

Lecture 3

## FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

There are nineteen sections that state the doctrinal positions of *Faith Baptist Church*. We use a statement like this so that we are never in doubt as to what *we* believe or where we stand on important issues. There is overlap in our doctrinal statement with many other Christian Churches, so we are not claiming that we are the only ones who are right, but we do emphasize some doctrines that *distinguish us from other Christian and pseudo-Christian churches*.

This version<sup>1</sup> of our statement is designed for teaching and informing prospective members, and current members of what the founders of our Congregation said they believe – and we as the current church body are saying that we believe or at least are not in opposition to them.

This statement of beliefs is not superior to or more important than the Bible, this statement is an organized way of saying what we believe. This way of stating doctrinal positions is a very old method that has been used by *all* forms of Christianity since the beginning of God's dealing with people.

**The little letters in parenthesis:** To show that these statements are derived from scripture some many phrases have this: (a) e.g. At the end of each section there is a list of Scriptures marked with e.g. (a) that coordinates with passages that go with the various phrases.

**Words in brackets and footnotes:** These have been added by Terry Basham, II

### Section 1 – The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was (a) written by men controlled by the Holy Spirit; (b) that it has truth without admixture of error<sup>2</sup> for its matter; and (c) 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.

(Explanatory) By “The Holy Bible” we mean that collection of sixty-six books<sup>3</sup>, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written, does not merely contain and covey the word of God, but is the very Word of God

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<sup>1</sup> The addition of footnotes and words in brackets were added by Pastor Terry Basham, II (2021)

<sup>2</sup> The Bible does not contain any errors or false information. The Bible was written originally in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, our Bibles today are the result of hundreds of years of careful translation and comparisons. The Bible is *the most* well documented book in history. It is so well documented that in the scholarly world it stands head and shoulders above all the ancient texts. No error in translation effects our understanding of essential doctrines. That said there are translations that have been produced by *false teachers* to pervert the truth, the two most notable are the *Book of Mormon* and *The New World Translation*.

<sup>3</sup> You will see in the *Catholic Editions* of the Bible there are fourteen more books than in the *Protestant Bible*. These books were included in the early editions of the English Bible, but they were inserted between the

By “Inspiration”<sup>4</sup> 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.

(a) II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25

(b) Psalm 119:160; Psalm 119:105; Psalm 119:130; Luke 24:25-27; John 17:17; Luke 24:44-45

(c) Psalm 119:89; Proverbs 30:5-6; Romans 12:48; Isaiah 8:20; Ephesians 6:17; Romans 15:4; Luke 16:31; Psalm 19:7-11; John 5:45-47; John 5:39

## Section 2 – The True God

We believe that there is (a) one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; (b) inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; (c) that in the unity of the Godhead<sup>5</sup> there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

(a) Exodus 20:2-3; Genesis 17:1; I Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; John 4:24; Psalm 83:18; Psalm 90:2; Jeremiah 10:10

(b) Exodus 15:11; Revelation 4:11; I timothy 1:17; Romans 11:33; Mark 12:30

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

## Section 3 – The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person; (a) equal with God the Father and (b) God the Son and (c) of the same nature; (d) that He was active in the creation; (e) that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil One until God’s purpose is fulfilled; (f) that He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness; (g) that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; (h) that He is the agent<sup>6</sup> in the New Birth; (i) that He seals, baptizes, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer. We believe that the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance) is the evidence of His indwelling rather than the speaking in tongues and other spectacular demonstrations.

(a) John 14:16-17 (b) Matthew 28:19 (c) Hebrews 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35

(d) Genesis 1:1-3 (e) II Thessalonians 2:7 (f) John 16:8-11 (g) John 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32

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Testaments because they *are* not inspired Scripture. Many of the errors of Roman Catholicism are derived from these additional books. These extra books are called *The Apocrypha*.

<sup>4</sup> Inspiration means that God operated in human writers in such a way that when they wrote down the words on paper, it was the *very* words of God though robed in the unique voice of the human writers.

<sup>5</sup> Godhead is synonymous with the term *Trinity*, the God of scripture is triune which means, “In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistencies, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit,... undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided...” (London Baptist Confession 1689)

<sup>6</sup> a person or thing that takes an active role or produces a specified effect.

(h) John 3:5-6

(i) Ephesians 1:13-14; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; John 16:13; John 14:26; Romans 8:16; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2; Romans 8:26-27; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:18-21

### **Section 4 – Sanctification<sup>7</sup>**

We believe that sanctification has a two-fold meaning; (a) [first is] that of the 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 Father; (b) [second it is] the progressive work of the Holy Spirit whereby the believer, [through obedience] 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 [only] be completed when the believer stands in Christ's presence

(a) I Corinthians 1:30; Hebrews 10:10, 14 (b) Colossians 1:28-29; John 17:17; I Thessalonians 5:23; II Corinthians 3:18

### **Section 5 – The Devil, or Satan**

We believe that Satan was once (a) holy and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and (b) drew after him a host of angels<sup>8</sup>; that he is now (c) the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. We (d) hold him to be man's great tempter, (e) the enemy of God and His Christ, (f) the accuser of the saints, (g) the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy; (h) the Lord of the Antichrist, and (i) the author of all powers of darkness – destined however (j) to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, and (k) to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

(a) Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17 (b) Revelation 12:9; Jude 6; II Peter 2:4 (c) Ephesians 2:2; John 14:30 (d) I Peter 5:8; I Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 4:1,3 (e) Zechariah 1:3; I John 3:6; Matthew 13:25, 37-39; Luke 22:3-4 (f) Revelation 12:10 (g) II Corinthians 11:13-15; Mark 13:21-22 (h) I John 4:3; II John 1:7; I John 2:22 (i) Revelation 13:13-14; II Thessalonians 2:8-11 (j) Revelation 19:11; II Thessalonians 2:8-11 (k) Revelations 20:10; Matthew 25:41

### **Section 6 – The Creation**

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and (a) that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; (b) that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; (c) 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 forms; (d) that all animal and vegetable life was made directly, and God's established law was they should bring forth only "after their kind."

(a) 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; Hebrews 9:6

(b) Genesis 1:26-27; I Corinthians 11:7 (c) Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:21-23 (d) Genesis 1:11; Genesis 1:24

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<sup>7</sup> Literally means *the act of setting apart for special or holy purpose.*

<sup>8</sup> In scripture these are called fallen angels, demons, evil spirits, unclean spirits.





### **Section 7 – The Fall of Man<sup>9</sup>**

We believe (a) that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but (b) by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, (c) in consequence of which, all mankind are now sinners<sup>10</sup>, not only by constraint, but of choice; and (d) therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

(a) Genesis 3:1-6, 24, [Ecc1 7:24] (b) Romans 5:12; Romans 5:19 (c) Romans 3:10-19; Ephesians 2:1,3; Romans 1:18; Ezekiel 18:19-20 (d) Romans 1:32; Romans 1:20; Romans 1:28; Galatians 3:22

### **Section 8 – The Virgin Birth<sup>11</sup>**

We believe that (a) Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner; (b) born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of woman, and (c) that He is both Son of God, and God, the Son.<sup>12</sup>

(a) Genesis 3:15 (b) Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; Mark 1:1; John 1:14; Psalm 2:7; Galatians 4:4 (c) I John 5:20; I Corinthians 15:47

### **Section 9 -- The Atonement for Sin**

We believe (a) that the salvation of sinners is [entirely] of grace (b) through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious<sup>13</sup> atonement for our sins; (c) 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 tree; (d) that, having risen from the dead His is now enthroned in heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the most tender sympathies with divine perfection, He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

(a) Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24 (b) John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:14; Isaiah 53:4-7; Romans 3:25; I John 4:10; I Corinthians 15:3; II Corinthians 5:21 (c) John 10:18; Philippians 2:8; Galatians 1:4; I Peter 2:24; I Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53:11; Hebrews 12:2 (d) I Corinthians 15:20; Isaiah 53:[11-]12; Hebrews 9:12-15 Hebrews 7:25; I John 2:2

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<sup>9</sup> This could be called *original sin*.

<sup>10</sup> The London Baptist Confession 1689 says that we are "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body." It also says that "From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, [from which] do proceed all actual transgressions."

<sup>11</sup> The virgin birth was essential so that Jesus could be born *without* the stain of original sin. Jesus was sinless from conception forward, retaining his righteous status before the world was made.

<sup>12</sup> Nicene Creed: "[The] 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 whom all things were made."

<sup>13</sup> Definition: *experienced in the imagination through the feelings or actions of another person*.

### **Section 10 – Grace in the New Creation<sup>14</sup>**

We believe (a) that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again: (b) that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; (c) that it is instantaneous and not a process<sup>15</sup>; (d) 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; (e) that the new creation is brought 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 gospel; (f) that its proper evidence<sup>16</sup> appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

(a) John 3:3 (b) II Corinthians 5:17 (c) Luke 5:27; I John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 2:41; Acts 16:30-33 (d) II Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; II Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 2:13 (e) John 3:8; John 1:12-13 (f) Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9

### **Section 11 – The Freeness of Salvation**

We believe in (a) God's electing<sup>17</sup> grace; (b) that the blessings of salvation are made free to all through the gospel; (c) that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial [sincere], penitent [prompted by sorrow] and obedient faith; and (d) that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; (e) which rejection involved him in an aggravated condemnation.

(a) I Thessalonians 1:4; Colossians 3:12; I Peter 1:2; Titus 1:1; Romans 8:29-30 (b) Matthew 11:28; Isaiah 55:1; Revelation 22:17; Romans 10:13; John 6:37 (c) Isaiah 55:7; Acts 2:38 (d) Isaiah 55:7; John 3:15-16; I Timothy 1:15; I Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 2:4-5; John 5:40 (e) John 3:18; John 3:36

### **Section 12 – Justification<sup>18</sup>**

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification: (a) that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; (b) 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.

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<sup>14</sup> Or how a person comes to faith in Jesus...

<sup>15</sup> The New Birth itself is instantaneous, however, realizing that it has taken place is a process of understanding. This language was added because liberal Christianity was teaching that people *grew into salvation over time*.

<sup>16</sup> These are the normal expected proofs of salvation; the new birth does not leave people *unaffected*.

<sup>17</sup> The act of choosing; choice; selection. (1913 Webster)

<sup>18</sup> Justification is the doctrine that God pardons, accepts, and declares a sinner to be "just" on the basis of Christ's righteousness (Rom 3:24-26; 4:25; 5:15-21) which results in God's peace (Rom 5:1), His Spirit (Rom 8:4), and salvation. Justification is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ apart from all works and merit of the sinner (cf. Rom 1:18-3:28).

(a) Acts 13:39; Isaiah 53:11; Zechariah 13:1; Romans 8:1; Romans 5:9; Romans 5:1

(b) Titus 3:5-7; Romans 1:17; Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 3:11; Romans 4:1-8; Hebrews 10:38

### **Section 13 – Repentance and Faith**

We believe that Repentance and Faith are (a) solemn obligations<sup>19</sup>, and (b) also inseparable graces, (c) wrought<sup>20</sup> in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; (d) 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 mercy; (e) at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.

(a) Acts 20:21 (b) Mark 1:15 (c) Acts 2:27-38 (d) Luke 18:13; Romans 10:13; Psalm 51:1-4; Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 55:6-7 (e) Luke 12:8; Romans 9:11

### **Section 14 – The Church**

We believe that a [visible] church of Christ is a congregation of baptized (immersed) believers (a) associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; (b) observing the ordinances of Christ; (c) governed by His laws; and (d) exercising the gifts, right and privileges invested in them, by His Word; (e) that its scripturally designated officers are pastor (elders) and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures; (f) 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 commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order. We hold that (g) the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations<sup>21</sup>; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, through the Holy Spirit; that it is (h) scriptural for true churches<sup>22</sup> 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-operation; (i) on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

(a) Acts 2:41-42 (b) Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 11:2 (c) Ephesians 1:22-23 (d) Ephesians 4:11; I Corinthians 12:4, 8-11 (e) Acts 14:23; Acts 6:5-6; Acts 15:23; Acts 20:17-28; I Timothy 3:1-7; I Timothy 3:8-13 (f) Matthew 28:19-20 (g) Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23-24; I Peter 5:1-4 (h) Acts 15:22; Jude 3-4; II Corinthians 8:23-24; I Corinthians 16:1; Malachi 3:10; Leviticus 27:32; I Corinthians 16:2 (i) I Corinthians 6:1-3; I Corinthians 5:11-13

### **Section 15 – Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

We believe that Christian Baptism is (a) the believer's immersion in water; (b) into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; (c) 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

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<sup>19</sup> obligation = requirement

<sup>20</sup> wrought = performed

<sup>21</sup> This refers to ecclesiastical, governmental, or legislative bodies outside the local church.

<sup>22</sup> True Churches = churches of like faith and practice, justification by faith and believers baptism as a prerequisite to membership.

to a new life; (d) that in scriptural order baptism precedes the privileges of church membership and is the public recognition of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We believe that the Lord's Supper (e) 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." And that this ordinance is to be observed in anticipation of His coming and preceded always by solemn self-examination.

(a) Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 3:6; John 3:23; Romans 6:4-5; Matthew 3:16 (b) Matthew 28:19 (c) Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12 (d) Acts 2:41-42; Matthew 29:19-20 (e) I Corinthians 11:23-28; Romans 8:32

### **Section 16 – The Perseverance and Preservation of the Saints<sup>23</sup>**

We believe (a) that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; (b) that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; (c) that a special Providence<sup>24</sup> watches over their welfare; and (d) that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.

(a) John 8:31-32; Colossians 1:21,23 (b) I John 2:19; Matthew 13:19-20 (c) Romans 8:28; Matthew 6:30; Psalm 121:3; Hebrews 1:14; (d) I Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6; John 10:28; John 10:29; John 16:8; Romans 8:35-39

### **Section 17 – The Righteous and the Wicked**

We believe that (a) there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; (b) 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 esteem; (c) while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight, wicked, and under the curse; (d) and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity<sup>25</sup> of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.

(a) Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17-18; Proverbs 11:31; I Peter 4:18 (b) Romans 1:17; I Corinthians 15:22; Acts 10:34-35; I John 2:29; I John 3:7 (c) Romans 6:16; I John 5:19; Galatians 3:10; Romans 7:6; Romans 6:23 (d) Proverbs 14:12; Luke 16:25; Matthew 25:13-14; John 8:21; Luke 9:26; John 12:25; Matthew 7:13-14

### **Section 18 – Civil Government**

We believe that civil government is (a) of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; (b) that magistrates are to be prayed for conscientiously honored and obeyed; (c) except only in things opposed to the will<sup>26</sup> of our Lord Jesus Christ; (d) who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth.

(a) Romans 13:1-7; II Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21;22 (b) Acts 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-14; I Peter 2:17 (c) Acts 5:29; Acts 4:19-20; Daniel 3:17-18 (d) Matthew 10:28; Matthew 23:10; Revelations 10:6; Philippians 2:10-11; Psalm 72:11

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<sup>23</sup> More commonly today this teaching is called *the security of the Believer* or *eternal security of true believers*.

<sup>24</sup> The providence of God may be defined as His guardianship and care for His creatures and creation. Also, any manifestation of such care may be described as providence. (theopedia.com)

<sup>25</sup> The state of being happy; blessedness; blissfulness; enjoyment of good. (1913 Webster)

<sup>26</sup> When the Civil Government commands disobedience to Christ, we do not obey them. Christ is the Lord of the Christian and the Church.

## **Section 19 – The Resurrection, Return of Christ, and Related Events**

- A. [The] Bodily Resurrection [of Christ]<sup>27</sup>: Matthew 28:6,7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; I Corinthians 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2,
- B. The [Bodily] Ascension: Acts 1:9: 1:1; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Revelation 3:21; Hebrews 8:1; Hebrews 12:2
- C. The High Priesthood [of Christ]: Hebrews 8:6; I Timothy 2:5; I John 2:1; Hebrews 2:17; Hebrews 5:9-10
- D. The Second Coming [of Christ]: John 14:3; Acts 1;11; I Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:27; Matthew 25:13; James 5:8; Matthew 24:42; Hebrews 9:28
- E. The Premillennial and Pretribulation coming of Christ: We believe the rapture of the church<sup>28</sup> will take place before the tribulation and the revelation of Christ will take place at the end of the tribulation and before the millennium: Matthew 24; II Thessalonians 1:6-12; Revelation 20:1-6
- F. The Resurrection of the Righteous Dead<sup>29</sup>: I Thessalonians 4:16; I Corinthians 15:42-44; I Corinthians 15:52
- G. The Change of the Living in Christ: I Corinthians 15:51-53; I Thessalonians 4:17; Philippians 3:20-21
- H. On the Throne of David: Luke 1:32; Isaiah 9:6-7; Acts 2:29-30
- I. His Reign on Earth: I Corinthians 15:25; Isaiah 32:1; Isaiah 11:4-5; Psalm 72:8; Revelation 20:1-4; Revelation 20:6

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<sup>27</sup> Jesus rose from the dead in the same body he died with.

<sup>28</sup> We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the Church which is the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 3:1-6; 4:11; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Acts 15:13-18 (GARBC Articles of Faith #14)

<sup>29</sup> Christians



## **Supplemental Positions on Social Issues:**

The following supplementals were drawn up by the General Association of Regular Baptists, which is the fellowship that our church is part of.

**Same Sex Marriage:** The Bible teaches that marriage is the joining of one man and one woman and that sexual intimacy is to be expressed only within the bounds of a Biblically defined marriage; and believing that any other form of marriage or sexual intimacy is immoral and a perversion of God’s gracious will (Genesis 2:18, 24, 25; Matthew 19:4-6; 7:2; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 7:1-5; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4, see Article V, GARBC Articles of Faith)

## **Transgenderism:**

The Transgender Revolution

In our day, traditional social and sexual norms are being challenged like never before. The transgender revolution (a.k.a. the transgender rights movement) seeks widespread societal acceptance of the views that gender should be understood in nonbinary categories and that individuals can contribute to or achieve self-actualization by autonomously choosing their own gender identities.

In contrast to this revolutionary movement, the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches understands the Scriptures to teach the following:

- Human gender has been established by our Creator in fixed, binary categories: *male* and *female* (Gen. 1:27; Matt. 19:4). This arrangement reflects the Creator’s wise and intentional design.
- Acts that violate these gender distinctions are “[abominable] to the Lord” (Deut. 22:5), unrighteous (1 Cor. 6:9), and contrary to nature (1 Cor. 11:14, 15).
- Ultimate fulfillment cannot be found in personal autonomy or self-actualization. Rather, it is found through self-denial (Matt. 16:24–26), dying to sin (Rom. 6:8–11), and submitting one’s life to Christ (John 14:21–24; 2 Cor. 10:5).

At the same time, we recognize the following:

- All humans—including those who view themselves as transgendered—are bearers of the divine image (Gen. 1:26, 27; Jas. 3:9), and therefore possess immense intrinsic value and dignity.
- All humans are sinful by nature (Rom. 3:10–18) and in need of a Savior (Rom. 5:6).
- All humans are objects of God’s love (John 3:16). His expressed desire is not to condemn them, but to save them (2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Cor. 6:9–11).

In light of these things, be it resolved that

1. We reject the philosophical basis<sup>30</sup> underlying the transgender revolution and the movement's proposed new ethical norms, as they are inconsistent with the dictates of Scripture and the design of God.
2. We oppose the sweeping public policy outcomes<sup>31</sup> sought by proponents of the transgender revolution, as they are detrimental to human flourishing and injurious to society's morality.
3. Nevertheless, we call on our churches to minister to those who suffer from gender confusion or who advocate for the transgender revolution with a spirit of compassion and love, not of judgmental harshness, recognizing that we are all sinners in need of God's grace.
4. We renew our commitment to proclaim the gospel as the only message that is able to meet people's ultimate needs and give their lives true and lasting meaning.

### **Creation**

We believe the Biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels, and humanity; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that Adam and Eve were created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all people are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race.

Genesis 1; 2; Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:3

We believe that our Creator established human gender biologically in fixed, binary categories: male and female. Seeking to confuse or change the God-given distinction of the two genders violates God's creative design and revealed will.

In light of God's creative design, we believe that the Bible teaches that marriage is the joining of one man and one woman, and that sexual intimacy is to be expressed only within the bounds of a Biblically defined marriage. Any other form of marriage or sexual intimacy is immoral and a perversion of God's gracious will.

Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 24, 25; 5:1-2; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6; Romans 1:24-29; 7:2; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, 19, 20; 7:1-5; Ephesians 5:2-5, 22-33; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4

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<sup>30</sup> Namely, secular humanistic thinking that urges individuals to seek their self-worth and self-actualization without belief in and submission to our Creator.

<sup>31</sup> E.g., abolishing gender-binary restrictions on public restrooms, retroactively revising birth certificates to reflect one's chosen gender identity, curtailing the use of gender-specific pronouns in everyday speech, passing so-called hate crime legislation that would criminalize the criticism of transgenderism, etc.