

DECLARATION OF FAITH of Baptist Faith Missions

Summary of Beliefs and Practices

1 THE SCRIPTURES

- We believe that the Holy Bible (consisting of the 66 books, Genesis through Revelation) was written by men divinely inspired by God through the Holy Spirit, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction;
- that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter;
- that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us;
- and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human teaching, conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

2 THE TRUE GOD

- We believe that there is one, and only one living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose Name is JEHOVAH (YAHWEH), the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth;
- He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness, incomprehensible in wisdom, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love;
- that in the unity of Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;
- they are co-eternal and co-equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

3 THE FALL OF MAN

- We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker, and in perfect agreement and fellowship with Him;
- but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state;
- in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but by choice;
- being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

4 THE WAY OF SALVATION

- We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace 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;
- that He honored and obeyed the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full, satisfactory, and substitutionary atonement for our sins;
- that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven in absolute glory, sovereignty, power, and majesty;
- and uniting in His wonderful Person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

5 JUSTIFICATION

- We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe upon Him is justification;
- that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness;
- that it is bestowed, not in consideration of or reward for any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood given for us on the Cross, and by the power of eternal life secured by His resurrection from death;
- by virtue of which faith Jesus Christ's perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us by God;
- that it brings us into a relationship of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

6 THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

- We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all who believe by the Gospel;
- that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a sincerely penitent and obedient faith;
- and that 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, which he justly deserves.

7 THE GRACE OF GOD IN REGENERATION

- We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again;
- that regeneration consists of God's giving the believer a holy disposition, inclination, and ability to the mind and will;
- that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the

Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure the love of our hearts and our voluntary obedience to the Gospel;

- and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance toward God, faith toward Jesus Christ, and a new way of life rendered by obedience to God from a heart of love and gratitude.

8 REPENTANCE AND FAITH

- We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, worked in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God;
- whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness - and of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, we turn to God with genuine contrition, confession, · and supplication for mercy;
- at the same time heartily confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord, and receiving Him as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying upon Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

9 GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

- We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God by which He chose His people unto eternal life, not because of foreseen merit or worthiness in them, but because of His unconditional love, sovereign mercy, and free grace in Jesus Christ;
- according to His choice, He graciously saves sinners by calling, justifying, regenerating, sanctifying, and glorifying them;
- that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable;
- that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of His free mercy; and that it may be ascertained by its spiritual effects in all who truly believe the Gospel;
- that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence;
- that God's election is perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, and it comprehends all the means in connection with the purposed end;
- that God's election also ordains and arranges for all the practical human means by which the elect will come to faith in Jesus Christ, and that it encourages the confident and hopeful use of those means.
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10 SANCTIFICATION

- We believe that sanctification is the process of spiritual growth and maturity by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness;
- that it is a progressive growth in human character and conduct into the likeness of Jesus Christ;
- that it begins in regeneration, and is worked out in the hearts and lives of be-

lievers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, through the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-discipline, watchfulness, and prayer.

11 THE PERSEVERANCE OF BELIEVERS

- We believe that such only are real believers as continually and faithfully demonstrate their love for Christ and faith in Him through obedience;
- that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand evidence which distinguishes them from superficial pretenders;
- that a special providence watches over their welfare, and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

12 THE HARMONY OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

- We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government;
- that it is holy, just, and good as an expression of God's perfect character and holy will;
- and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin;
- and to deliver them from their disobedience, and to restore them through a Mediator to sincere and genuine obedience to the holy law of God is one great end of the Gospel, and also of the means of grace connected with the establishment and operation of the visible church.

13 A GOSPEL CHURCH

- We believe that a visible church of Jesus Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Jesus Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word;
- that it is a local and visible congregation and assembly, and not universal or invisible;
- that its only Scriptural officers are pastors (bishops and elders) and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus (along with other relevant references);
- that the stated purposes of the church are: (1) to evangelize the lost through the witness of the Gospel; (2) to cultivate and express the worship of Jesus Christ; (3) to covenant together in a mutual fellowship and commitment to Jesus Christ and to each other to obey everything Jesus Christ has commanded us and practice every thing He has taught us; (4) to develop disciples into the likeness of Jesus Christ through public instruction, personal counsel, and the mutual encouragement of exhortation, example, and support; (5) to train and equip believers to serve Jesus Christ both by the exercise of their gifts in the ministries of the church and through our witness to others.
- that churches of the kind Jesus Christ Himself established, authorized, and commissioned have existed in all ages of history, though they may have been

identified by various names;

· that these churches have not only preserved “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” by Jesus Christ, but have also perpetuated themselves through faithful, deliberate, and diligent evangelism.

14 BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

· We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of the believer, into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;

· that it shows forth by solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior with its practical effect—that is, our death to sin and resurrection to a new life;

· that the only Scriptural baptism is that which is administered by immersion through the authority of a local church founded and functioning according to the Scriptural and historical pattern of those churches now called “Baptist”;

· that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relations and participation in the Lord’s Supper;

· that the Lord’s Supper is the other pictorial ceremony of the Gospel in which the members of the church body commemorate and celebrate together the dying love of Jesus Christ and the living union and unity of His body through the sacred sharing of the bread and the fruit of the vine;

· and that participation in this mutual service should be preceded by solemn self-examination, confession of sins, and renewal of commitment to Jesus Christ.

15 THE GREAT COMMISSION

· We believe that the Great Commission is the supreme mandate of Jesus Christ to His churches and that it serves as a comprehensive, sufficient, and all-inclusive guide for all our purposes, ambitions, and activities through all ages until He comes again;

· and that Jesus Christ commands us to take our witness of His Gospel to every person in the world;

· and that this mission and mandate is the personal responsibility of every believer;

· and that our mission reaches first of all to those closest to us in our own immediate families, communities, and localities; and that it ultimately includes all the nations of the world;

· and that the lost peoples of the world cannot be saved apart from hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

16 THE LORD’S DAY

· We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day, and that it commemorates and celebrates the finished work and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the New Covenant and the new creation;

· and that the first day of the week was appointed by the Lord Jesus Himself and observed by the apostles and early church as the regular day for meeting and worship;

- and is to be prioritized and kept sacred for religious purposes by abstaining from all unnecessary secular labor and other distracting activities;
- and that our church ministries and spiritual exercises should be faithfully, regularly, and devoutly observed, both publicly and privately;
- and that our Lord's Day worship and service both signifies and prepares us for that rest that remains for the people of God.

17 CIVIL GOVERNMENT

- We believe that civil government is divinely appointed for the interests and good order of human society;
- and that those in positions of civil authority are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and the Supreme Sovereign over all the powers and authorities in the earth.

18 THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

- We believe that there is a real, radical, and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked;
- that such only who through faith in Jesus Christ are justified from their sins, and who are sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous and therefore favorably considered by God through His grace;
- while all such who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in God's sight considered wicked, and under the curse of His condemnation;
- and that this distinction holds true among humanity both while they live and after they die.

19 THE WORLD TO COME

- We believe that the end of this world's society and operation is certainly and swiftly approaching;
 - that at the Last Day, at God's appointed time, Jesus Christ will personally and visibly descend from heaven;
 - that He will raise the dead from their graves to final reward or retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place;
 - that the wicked will be condemned to eternal punishment, and the righteous will be rewarded by God's grace and according to His promise to endless joy in His Presence;
- and that this judgment will fix forever and irrevocably the final state of all people either in heaven or hell according to God's holy and righteous principles of justice, mercy, grace, and love.