



CANADIAN
BAPTISTS
of Ontario
and Quebec

THIS WE BELIEVE:

RESOURCES FOR FAITH WITH BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

This We Believe: Resources for Faith
With Addendum, Baptist Distinctives
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Preface to the 2008 edition

This *We Believe* was mandated by the 1985 CBOQ¹ Assembly in Windsor and was prepared by the Faith and Order Committee. It has been widely used and continues to find life and use in our congregations. We reprint it now with the prayerful expectation that you will find it helpful in thinking about our Christian heritage as Baptists.

The core of the document is unchanged from its original printing, but we have added a brief addendum summarizing our Baptist Distinctives, the combination of beliefs commonly held among Baptist believers.

May God bless you as you use this guide in your own Christian pilgrimage, or as you help others to develop their faith understanding.

INTRODUCTION

This We Believe: Resources For Faith — A Baptist Study Guide has been prepared by the Faith and Order Committee under mandate of the Council and Assembly of the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec. It arose out of a perceived need to define more clearly the faith that binds our family of churches together, and to provide a document of common witness and testimony in the context of our contemporary Canadian culture.

The process began with approval of the Report of Council at the 1984 Hamilton Assembly, which stated Council directed the Faith and Order Committee to press toward the formulation of a CBOQ “Statement of Faith” in addition to the proposed compilation of historic Baptist statements of faith.

In compliance the Committee undertook a survey of historic Baptist confessions, collected numerous covenants and statements of faith of Baptist Associations and churches in Canada, and held hearings across CBOQ. These resulted in a renewed appreciation of the diversity of belief, expression and practice among our Baptist churches and agencies. The study exposed possible difficulties in the event that CBOQ should adopt a definitive statement at variance with those of local churches and Associations.

Apprised of these concerns, Council recommended to the 1985 Windsor Assembly that “the Faith and Order Committee proceed with its study and produce a resource document characterizing various Convention emphases and principles for purposes of worship, witness, education and mission.”

Your Faith and Order Committee has been guided by considerations set out in the preamble, reported by Council to the 1985 Assembly, Windsor. We offer This We Believe: Resources For Faith as a study document “which reflects, in substance, the doctrines, practices and stance of member churches of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec.” Concurrently, a conscious attempt has been made to express that wider unity which we share with other Christians and denominations in the Baptist, Anabaptist, and Reformed traditions.

Two contemporary Confessions of Faith proved of immeasurable assistance. We acknowledge with gratitude reference to the Confession of Faith of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches - 1976, and to Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief, prepared under direction of the Committee on Church Doctrine of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Living Faith so commended itself to your committee that a decision was made to study it in great detail. It was found to be comprehensive, scholarly, with clarity of expression on such major doctrines as the authority of Scripture, the Persons and work of the Trinity, and the evangelical understanding of the doctrine of grace. At the same time it addressed Canadian culture with an apologetic that was couched in contemporary language.

Your Committee concluded that to rework historic Baptist confessions which stand on their own within their historical context was unwise. Nor was writing of a new confession necessary. Rather, Living Faith might be adapted by modification where necessary to reflect a Baptist understanding of the believers’ church, its ordinances and polity.

This approach has historical precedent. In the 1670s evangelicals were faced with persecution in England and Baptists determined to make common witness by preparing a statement of faith based on the Westminster Confession (1648)

and the Savoy Confession (1658). Signatories to the Second London Confession (1677/78) stated that they had written to show “our hearty agreement with them in that wholesome protestant doctrine, which with so clear evidence of Scriptures they have asserted.” In 1742 a modified version, The Philadelphia Confession, was adopted in North America. It placed the indelible mark of Reformation orthodoxy on the main stream of Baptist life and witness on this continent.

With warm affection and gratitude we acknowledge permission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to utilize and modify Living Faith. We now offer This We Believe: Resources For Faith to Baptists and to our society in a spirit of deep humility. It is “a joyful affirmation of witness and not a binding rule of faith and practice.” It is a prayerful human response to God in Christ, to be tested and corrected before the Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are ever mindful that “God has yet more truth to break forth from His word.”

Our Baptist ancestors prefaced their confession with these words, “we have thought meet . . . to recommend to (your) perusal this confession of faith, which confession we own, as containing the doctrine of our faith and practice.” The Canadian Baptist Federation crest confesses, “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor. 12:3). With that confession and in the belief that “in Him all things consist” (Col. 1:17) we commend to your edification, instruction, and study THIS WE BELIEVE: RESOURCES FOR FAITH.

Members of the Committee: Das J. Sydney, Chairman

Donald Crisp Graham Barnes, President Mark Parent Walter E.W. Ellis Albert E. Coe, General Secretary
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1 GOD

- 1.1 There is one true God
Whom to know is life eternal,
Whom to serve is joy and peace.
God has created all that is.
The whole universe testifies
to the majesty and power of its maker.
- 1.2 God has come to the world,
The Lord spoke to the people of Israel
and entered into covenant with them.
From Israel came Jesus Christ,
the Son of God,
bringing salvation through a new covenant
entered by grace through faith.
The Lord continues to come to us by the Holy Spirit,
God present in the world,
and the Guide of the Church.
- 1.3 The Church upholds and witnesses to the truth
given to the apostles
and recorded in the Scriptures.
The Old and New Testaments
witness to God's mighty acts,
reveal the Creator's holy love
and lead us to Jesus Christ.
- 1.4 The confessions of the early Church
witness to the faith of the apostles
who first preached the Gospel of Christ.
As such we receive them as a resource
to be interpreted within the context of the Scriptures.
- 1.5 Therefore, with the Church Universal,
we confess that we believe in one God,
eternal Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
three in one,
one in three,
equal in power and glory.
God is the Father to whom we come,
the Son through whom we come,
the Spirit by whom we come.
- 1.6 We worship almighty God, the source of all life.
With thanks we acknowledge
God's wisdom, power, faithfulness and love.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit!

2

GOD: CREATOR AND RULER

2.1 God Creates and Rules

- 2.1.1 The living God is Lord,
Creator of all, Sustainer and Ruler of the universe.
In the seasons and the harvest,
in the rise and fall of nations,
in all events of this world
God's judgments are present.
- 2.1.2 We hold in reverence the whole creation
as the theatre of God's glory and action.
God rules the lives of individuals and nations
yet does not negate our human freedom and responsibility.
Ever at work in the world
and in the lives of men and women,
God directs all things towards fulfillment in Christ.
- 2.1.3 We affirm God's righteous and loving purpose
even in a world where evil abounds.
This purpose is uniquely disclosed in Jesus Christ.
In Christ we see the apparent paradox
of God's action
in that the mighty God chose
to come into this world in weakness.
In Christ, God entered most deeply into our suffering.

- 2.1.4 We cannot fully comprehend
God's rule of the world.
We experience evil in the midst of life.
Yet evil cannot ultimately prevail,
for it is against God's will.
The resurrection of Christ
and the new life he gives us
are assurances of God's ultimate triumph.

2.2 Our Creation

- 2.2.1 The mystery of human existence
is that we belong to God
and have been made in the Divine image.
In God we live and move and have our being.
As such we are created as God's stewards
but we are also dependent upon God
for our very existence.
Therefore, we truly know ourselves
only when we know God.
Our lives are made to reflect
the Creator's love and purpose for all creation.
We acknowledge God as Creator and Lord.
- 2.2.2 We have been made as sexual beings, male and female,
for our mutual help, comfort and joy.
We are dependent on each other
and need one another in all of life.

2.3 Our Calling

2.3.1 We are called to work out the meaning of our own lives and to find our true vocation in the love and service of God.

2.3.2 We serve and love God by faithful stewardship, through nurture and care of our neighbour, and especially the care of the needy. Every kind of work that is honest and serves others is a vocation from the Lord.

2.3.3 Heeding Christ's call means denying selfish ambition and desire in order to minister to others. In God's service true freedom is to be found.

2.4 Our Care for the World

2.4.1 Though life is a gift from God, human life depends on the created world. Our care for the world must reflect God's care. We are not owners, but stewards of God's good earth, and thus must enhance and not misuse its resources. Concerned with the well-being of all of life we welcome the truths and insights of all human skill and science about the world and the universe.

2.4.2 Our stewardship calls us to explore ways of love and justice in respecting God's creation and in seeking its responsible use for the common good.

2.5 Sin Separates Us from God

2.5.1 God has given us the Law to show us how to live. Yet we are unable to keep his Commandments, and we do not love God without reserve nor our neighbour as ourselves. Above all, our sin is exposed by the perfect life of Christ.

2.5.2 Evidence of our sin is all about us. We do not care for the world as we should. We do not fulfill our calling to serve God. Our lives do not reflect the Creator's love. Our failure is sin, a rebellion against God, an insistence that we be God in our own lives.

2.5.3 Sin alienates us from God. It offends the holiness of God, separates us from our Lord, and leads to spiritual death. It destroys our relationship with God

and infects our relationship with others and with ourselves.

2.5.4 From birth we are exposed to the pervasive power of sin. All have sinned. Sin issues in such acts as pride asserting itself against God, indifference towards God and neighbour, untruthfulness, greed, lust, laziness, gluttony, envy and selfish anger.

2.5.5 We cannot escape our sin, nor the sin of the world.

2.5.6 Because we are sinful the societies we live in are sinful. There are no exceptions; every system is flawed. We are part of the evil of the world, of its violence, neglect, injustice.

2.5.7 All people fall short of God's standards and need salvation. God's way to salvation has been revealed in Jesus Christ. Through the death and resurrection of Christ sin is forgiven. Salvation means forgiveness, healing, wholeness and life. It comes from God's grace and is received through faith in Christ alone.

2.5.8 Thanks be to God!

3

GOD IN CHRIST

- 3.1 Jesus Christ and Israel
 - 3.1.1 To the world in its rebellion and alienation
God promised blessing and restoration.
The Lord chose Abraham and his descendants
and through a covenant with them
destined them to be bearers of that promise to all people.
 - 3.1.2 The Old Testament records God's message
and his mighty acts.
It speaks of God's judgment and mercy.
It declares God's promise
and points to the One to come.
 - 3.1.3 From Israel came the Messiah;
in Jesus of Nazareth God kept the promise of salvation.
We understand his coming in the light
of the Old Testament.
Born of the line of David, He lived a Jew among Jews.
Child of a Jewish woman, He fulfilled God's promise
that Israel would be a light to the nations.
- 3.2 Jesus Christ: Truly God
 - 3.2.1 In Christ, God came to dispel the world's darkness.
The Word became flesh
and dwelt among us.
In silence we ponder,
in awe we confess
this amazing truth.
Conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
the eternal Son of God
emptied Himself
to be one with us.
To Israel and to the world
came God in Christ.
 - 3.2.2 To call Jesus Christ the Son of God
is to say that He is God of God,
Light of Light, begotten, not created.
To see Jesus is to see God incarnate.
To know the Son is to know the Father.
 - 3.2.3 God's nature is expressed in Jesus,
the very Word of God.
Through Him were all things made.
His life is the light of the world.
 - 3.2.4 Jesus Christ is Lord.
He is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- 3.3 Jesus Christ: Truly Human
 - 3.3.1 Jesus was truly human,
Tried and tested as we are,
yet without sin,

- He experienced the depths of life.
 Jesus understands us.
 He felt the joy of friendship
 and the pain of rejection.
 He died a human death.
 He trusted and obeyed the Father completely
 and lived in the Holy Spirit.
 Neither temptation nor threat
 prevented Him from loving God
 and His neighbour as Himself.
 He showed us what it means
 to be a child of God.
- 3.4 Jesus is Saviour
- 3.4.1 Jesus is the Mediator
 through Whom God has come to us
 and through Whom we come to God.
- 3.4.2 Christ died for our sins.
 The innocent One bore our condemnation on the
 cross.
 He suffered and was put to death
 for the sin of the world.
- 3.4.2 God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery
 which the Scriptures describe
 as the sacrifice of a lamb,
 a shepherd's life given for his sheep, atonement
 through a priest.
 It is also the innocent dying for the guilty,
 the ransom of a slave,
 love drawing all people to Himself, payment of a debt,
 and victory over the powers of evil.
 These expressions interpret the love of God,
 revealing the gravity, cost, and sure achievement
 of our Lord's work.
 Such love we cannot fully explain.
 God's grace, received by faith alone,
 pardons and justifies,
 redeems and reconciles us.
- 3.5 Jesus is Lord
- 3.5.1 Jesus suffered, died, and was buried,
 but God raised Him from the dead.
 Clothed in His resurrection body
 He is alive now and, ascended,
 reigns our living Lord.
- 3.5.2 His resurrection gives substance to our faith:
 the assurance of final victory over all evil powers
 which destroy and deform life;
 the confidence that death, the last enemy,
 is conquered.
- 3.5.3 The forces of Satan, the evil one, still wage war against us.
- The destructive powers are still present,
 but their end is not in doubt.
 We await the full consummation of our Lord's triumph.
- 3.5.4 We worship our ascended Lord, reigning in glory
 and power.
 He is our High Priest and Advocate
 interceding before the Father.
 Through Him we offer sacrifices of praise and
 prayers of intercession to the Father.
- 3.6 Salvation in Christ
- 3.6.1 Salvation comes from God's grace alone received
 through faith in Christ.
 From all eternity, and through no merit on our
 part, God calls us to live in Christ.
 Here is the good news of the Gospel! Jesus Christ
 is our Saviour.
 In Him we are reconciled to God.
 Responding through faith to God's call to us in Christ
 and elected by God's grace according to His
 foreknowledge we become part of the family of God.
- 3.6.2 We are called for a purpose: to be like Christ;
 to worship and serve God.
 As with Israel in the Old Testament,
 so with the redeemed humanity in the New Testament,
 God chooses us.
 We find assurance and challenge in the knowledge
 that the living God has eternal purposes to achieve
 through us.
 God will bring to completion his work of grace.
- 3.6.3 Thanks be to God who has given us the victory
 through Jesus Christ our Lord!

4

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 4.1 The Holy Spirit is God with Us
 - 4.1.1 The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the Lord and Giver of Life, the Renewer and Helper of God's people. The Holy Spirit is God present in the world, the source of all goodness and justice. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and testifies to the truth of Christ. By the Spirit, Christ is with His Church.
 - 4.2 The Holy Spirit Enables People to Believe and to Grow
 - 4.2.1 The Spirit leads people to saving faith and to growth by enabling them to receive the Good News of Christ and repent of their sins. By the Holy Spirit people are born again into new life in Christ.
 - 4.2.2 The Holy Spirit leads us on our journey of faith, and enables us to grow in holiness. God's Spirit is in us, sometimes gently, sometimes powerfully, guiding us in the midst of life, our comfort and our help. Christian life is a pilgrimage: it begins, continues and ends in God.
- 4.3 The Holy Spirit Forms and Equips the Church
 - 4.3.1 God's Spirit dwells in each believer. By the Spirit, Christ calls the Church into being and unites us to Himself and to each other.
 - 4.3.2 The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. We pray as members of Christ's Church to be guided into truth, knowing that such truth may disturb and judge us.
 - 4.3.3 The harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace, patience, kindness, and goodness, loyalty, gentleness, and self-control.
 - 4.3.4 The Spirit blesses the Church with various gifts. Together we seek to discover those gifts and to use them for our Lord. Faithful loving service is a sign that the Spirit is present. The presence of the Spirit is evident where people are made whole, encouraged, and enabled to grow in Christ.
 - 4.3.5 Come, Holy Spirit!

5 THE BIBLE

- 5.1 The Bible has been given to us by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life. It is the standard of all doctrine by which we must test any word that comes to us from Church, world, or inner experience. We subject to its authoritative judgement all we believe and do. Through the Scriptures the Church is bound only to Jesus Christ, its King and Head. He is the living Word of God to Whom the written word bears witness.
- 5.2 The Holy Spirit gives us inner testimony to the unique authority of the Bible and is the source of its power. The Bible, written by human hands, is the word of God as no other word ever written. To it no other writings are to be added. The Scriptures are necessary, sufficient, and reliable, revealing Jesus Christ, the living Word.
- 5.3 Both Old and New Testaments were written within communities of faith and recognized as Scripture by them. Understanding of Scripture is not subject to private interpretation alone. Those who seek to understand the Bible need the guidance of the Holy Spirit within the context of the Church.
- 5.4 The Bible is to be understood in the light of God's revelation in Christ. The writings of the Bible were conditioned by the language, thought and setting of their times. For this reason the Bible must be read in its historical context; yet the truth of the Scriptures transcends these considerations. We interpret Scripture as we compare passages, seeing the two Testaments in light of each other, listening to commentators past and present, and seeking the application of God's word for our time.

6 FAITH

- 6.1 Faith
 - 6.1.1 Faith is a gift of God constantly renewed in word and worship and in the shared life of God's people. It is trust in God; it involves personal repentance of sin, acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour, and commitment to Him as Lord. It includes assent to the truth of the Gospel. By faith we receive the very life of God into our lives and joyfully discover that God knows, loves, and pardons us.
 - 6.1.2 God brings us to faith in many ways. We may have trusted in God from childhood; or our faith may have come later in life. Faith may come suddenly or only after a struggle to believe. Whatever the spiritual journey we have traveled, God honours our faith, great or small.
 - 6.1.3 Faith is a continuing response to God's presence in the midst of life, an attitude of acceptance and obedience to His will.
- 6.2 Doubt: The Trial of Faith
 - 6.2.1 We may not always feel that God is with us. At times we live in this world unaware of the Divine presence, often discerning God's nearness only as we look back. Through such struggle we mature in faith. God may also chasten and strengthen us through the hard circumstances of life.
 - 6.2.2 Questioning may be a sign of growth. It may also be disobedience: we must be honest with ourselves. Since we are to love God with our minds, as well as our hearts, the working through of doubt is part of our growth in faith. The Church includes those who wrestle with doubt. Jesus accepted the man who prayed, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief."
 - 6.2.3 Though the strength of our faith may vary we may find assurance in Christ through confidence in His word, the fellowship of His Church, and the work of His Spirit.

7 GOD'S CHURCH

- 7.1 The Church
 - 7.1.1 The Church is universal.
It is the Body of Christ.
It includes people of all time
who are redeemed believers in Christ.
 - 7.1.2 This Church is localized and made visible
within churches, gathered groups of believers,
called together by God's Spirit
under the Lordship of Christ.
 - 7.1.3 The Church expresses in worship
and in the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper
its faith, hope, and love.
 - 7.1.4 The Church gathers together in fellowship
as one family under God.
It is His purpose to unite
all persons in Jesus Christ.
 - 7.1.5 The Church proclaims the Gospel.
It is founded on Christ
and is in continuity
with the teaching of Christ and His Apostles.
 - 7.1.6 The Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit,
serves God, God's people and the world
through deeds of love and mercy.
 - 7.1.7 The Church on earth,
because of failure and sin,
is in constant need of renewal.
If controversy breaks out within the Church
and bitterness disturbs the fellowship of the redeemed,
we must repent and seek to be compassionate people.
At all times we must support one another in sorrow
and uphold one another in prayer.
 - 7.1.8 The Church is present
where the Word is preached
and the Ordinances practised,
where fellowship abounds
and loving service is carried out.
 - 7.1.9 Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church.
The believing community must be free
to seek and to follow His will.
The local church manages its own affairs
in accordance with Divine guidance.

7.1.10	The local church freely co-operates with other congregations through Associations and Conventions in the furtherance of Christ's will. The local church is not subject to any church hierarchy which could interfere with its understanding of God's will.	we seek to serve God.
		7.3
		Worship
		7.3.1
		The Church lives to praise God. We have no higher calling than to offer the worship that belongs to God day by day, Sunday by Sunday.
		7.3.2
		Through the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the Ordinances in praise, prayer, teaching and fellowship, God sustains the life of the Church. We worship God offering ourselves in the service of Christ, rejoicing that we have been brought from darkness to light.
		7.3.3
		Worship draws us into the work of Christ. Even now He intercedes for the world to which He came and for which He died. In union with Him, the Church prays for the healing and salvation of the world.
		7.3.4
		Blessing and honour and glory and power be to our God for ever and ever!
		7.4
		Preaching
		7.4.1
		To the Church and to the world Christ sends ambassadors to preach the Good News. The reconciling work of Jesus is the supreme turning point in the life of the world. The proclamation of His cross and resurrection calls for personal response and offers present hope. The Holy Spirit enables God's Word to be heard in the word of preaching. Faith comes and is renewed by hearing the proclamation of the word of Christ.
		7.4.2
		Preachers are servants of the Word. The spoken word is food for all believers. They are hungry to hear what the Lord has to say. Let those who listen pray for those who speak.
		7.5
		Ordinances
		7.5.1
		In obedience to our Lord's command and example we practise Believer's Baptism and participate in the Lord's Supper. Authorized by Christ, these are the two Ordinances of the Church.
		7.5.2
		Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper are visible expressions of the Gospel. Baptism is the symbol
7.1.11	The local church is free, in accordance with its mission, to commend or criticize government agencies and policies, but it is not bound by any state control which could interfere with its life. We hold with the separation of Church and State from each other's control.	
7.2	Pastoral Ministry	
7.2.1	The Lord continues His ministry in and through the Church. All Christians are called to participate in the ministry of Christ. As His body on earth we all have gifts to use in the Church and in the world to the glory of Christ, our King and Head.	
7.2.2	Among our churches God furthers this ministry by calling some to special tasks in the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.	
7.2.3	Pastors, both men and women, are set apart to preach the Gospel, teach the word, lead in worship, and exercise pastoral care in Christ's name. Their ministry is a calling initiated by God and recognized by the local church through ordination and induction.	
7.2.4	Local congregations choose others to share with the pastors the leadership, pastoral care, and oversight of the congregation.	
7.2.5	Others, such as missionaries, church educators, professors and administrators, evangelists, chaplains and musicians, exercise special ministries.	
7.2.6	Through all these ministries the Word is proclaimed, God's people are nourished and nurtured, supported and guided. One in Christ	

- of the entrance of an individual into the Christian life and community. The Lord's Supper is the repeated symbol given for the nourishment of the gathered community.
- 7.5.3 God's grace in the Ordinances comes not from any power inherent in them but from the work of the Holy Spirit. As we participate in faith and repentance we open our hearts more fully to God.
- 7.6 Baptism
- 7.6.1 Baptism is the immersion of a believer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- 7.6.2 In obedience to the Lord's command Christians are baptized upon repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. By the work of the Holy Spirit God effects regeneration in the believing heart. Baptism proclaims what God has done and does for us in Christ.
- 7.6.3 Baptism is a sign of our union with Christ through which we put on Christ and are identified with His death and resurrection. Baptism signifies the washing away of sin, the start of new life in Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- 7.6.4 Baptism is a public act of discipleship. It requires commitment and looks towards growth in Christ, nurtured by the believing community.
- 7.6.5 Baptism witnesses that we are children of God
- born from above. Baptism testifies that in life and in death we belong to our faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ.
- 7.7 The Lord's Supper
- 7.7.1 In breaking bread and drinking wine Jesus told us to remember him. In this action, called the Lord's Supper, or Communion, Christ offers himself to us and we present ourselves to him in worship and adoration.
- 7.7.2 The Lord's Supper is a joyful mystery whereby Jesus takes the bread and the cup to represent His atoning sacrifice, deepening our union with himself and with each other.
- 7.7.3 In Communion Christ places His table among us to feed and bless His people. The Holy Spirit so unites us in Christ that in receiving in faith the bread and wine we share in His body and blood.
- 7.7.4 In this Ordinance we give thanksgiving to God. We pray for the world and with gratitude offer our lives to God. We celebrate Christ's victory over death and anticipate His coming kingdom.
- 7.7.5 Those who belong to Christ come gladly to His table to remember His life and death and resurrection, a symbol of hope for a troubled age. We celebrate His presence, and together as His Church offer Him thanks, proclaiming salvation until He returns.

8 OUR LIFE IN CHRIST

8.1 Discipleship

8.1.1 Disciples of Christ are called to obedience. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." Obedience involves our total being. As we give ourselves to Christ we discover that in Christ's service there is true freedom and full meaning.

8.1.2 Jesus Christ is Lord of the believer. Religious freedom is not freedom to be selfish. With the Apostles we affirm that we must obey God rather than man.

8.1.3 Jesus promised that His Spirit will guide us into all truth. In response to prayer, the believer is enabled to find the will of God.

8.1.4 The Christian must be free to follow where Christ shall lead. Nothing can be permitted to come between the believer and the Lord or to interfere with the believer's discipleship.

8.1.5 Life in Christ is nurtured within a believing community and expressed in daily living. We seek to bring Christ's healing presence to the world for which He died, and to bring Christ's peace to its brokenness and pain.

8.1.6 Life in Christ brings joy, peace, and liberation. It also involves us in a struggle—a struggle with timidity, unbelief and temptation. Throughout our lives we experience both victory and defeat.

Yet in life's bittersweet experiences the Holy Spirit helps us and gives us power to grow in Christ. We are far from perfect; yet our lives can be pleasing to God and helpful to others,

8.1.7 Life in Christ involves prayer, the seeking of God's will and blessing upon oneself and others. Prayer is receptivity to the presence of God. In speech or in silence our lives are brought into focus before God. As we commune with God through Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit enables us to express our deepest desires, and we feel the touch and healing power of God's gracious presence.

8.1.8 We live in Christ as we study the Scriptures, learning to think and act in Christian ways. The Scriptures are given that Christians may be complete, equipped for every good work.

8.1.9 We observe the Lord's Day as the weekly festival of Christ's resurrection, for the worship of our Lord, and the enjoyment of God's world.

8.2 The Christian Family

8.2.1 Christian marriage is union in Christ whereby a man and a woman become one in the sight of God. It is a commitment of two people to love and to support each other faithfully for life. God's law forbids adultery. Marriage thrives in the soil of loyalty and blossoms under the light of kindness. Sexual union in marriage is intended to provide mutual joy and comfort as well as the means of creating new life.

8.2.2 Parents in caring for their children are to be mediators of God's love and concern. They are called to raise their children within the gathered community, to nurture them in the Christian faith by teaching and example.

8.2.3 When we fail each other as parents, or when we hurt each other as partners, we are called to forgive as God forgives us. We accept the possibilities for renewal that God offers to us in grace. As a community of faith we are called upon to love and support those whose marriages have been shattered beyond repair.

- 8.2.4 God's purpose for us can be realized in both single and married life. Marriage may not be God's will for everyone. Fullness of life can be experienced by all, both single and married.
- 8.2.5 The Church is the family of God. Here all are valued for themselves. We are one body in Christ, together rejoicing when things go well, celebrating the goodness of God and the wonder of our redemption.
- 8.3 Love
- 8.3.1 We bow before the mystery of God's love. From it came our creation. By it we are sustained. We respond to the God who loves by loving in return.
- 8.3.2 Love seeks the best for others. It is the mark of a Christian. We cannot claim to love God, Whom we do not see, if we hate or ignore those about us, whom we do see. Love of God and love of neighbour fulfill the law of God.
- 8.3.3 We should also love ourselves. Self-love is not selfishness. We love and accept ourselves because God has already loved and accepted us in Christ, providing the foundation for our sense of self-worth.
- 8.3.4 Love follows the example of Jesus Christ. Love seeks not her own, love is not selfish. Love bears all things, believes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.
- 8.4 Justice
- 8.4.1 God calls all people, especially Christ's Church, to seek the kind of justice in the world which reflects the Divine righteousness revealed in the Bible.
- 8.4.2 We strive towards God's justice when we deal fairly with each other and seek to change customs and practices that enslave and oppress. Justice protects the rights of others and protests against that which destroys human dignity.
- 8.4.3 Justice requires concern for the poor and seeks the best way to create well-being in every society.
- It demands fairness, equity in employment, education and health, and supports human rights and responsibilities.
- 8.4.4 Justice calls forth compassion in society. It involves the protection of human beings, concern for the victims of crime as well as offenders. It requires fair laws justly administered, courts and penal institutions that are just and humane.
- 8.4.5 Justice opposes prejudice in every form and the discrimination that arises from it. Justice calls us to stand with our neighbours in their struggle for dignity and respect. It demands the exercise of power for the common good.
- 8.5 World Peace
- 8.5.1 Christ, the Author of true peace, calls us to be peacemakers.
- 8.5.2 War is never pleasing to God. Resort to war even in causes believed to be just must involve repentance. The tragic evils that come with war, the slaughter of men, women and children, must rouse us to work for peace. We affirm the right of informed conscience when participation in armed conflict is demanded by the state.
- 8.5.3 We lament endless military build-ups and the making of profit through the selling of arms, and terrorist activity which exploits the innocent. We decry the world arms race which diminishes our ability to fight hunger, ignorance, poverty and disease. We deplore totalitarianism and fear nuclear war and the devastation it would bring.
- 8.5.4 We seek to be peacemakers. But peace without justice is no peace at all.
- 8.5.5 We affirm that the true peace promised in the Scriptures will be realized only through obedience to God and acceptance of Christ's love. Therefore we pray for peace to the One Who is the Prince of Peace.

9 THE CHURCH REACHES OUT

9.1 Our Mission

9.1.1 As God sent Christ to us,
so Christ sends us into the world.
We are here to make Him known in word and deed.

9.1.2 Mission is evangelism,
the offer of salvation to all people
in the power of the Holy Spirit,
to be received through faith in Christ.
Mission asks people to repent of their sins,
to trust Christ,
to be baptized,
and to enter a life honouring Jesus as Lord.

9.1.3 Mission is service,
a call to help people in need
and to permeate all of life with the compassion of God.

9.2 Our Mission and Other Faiths

9.2.1 Some whom we encounter belong to other religions
and already have a faith.
Their lives often give evidence of devotion
and reverence for life.
We recognize that truth and goodness in them
are the work of God's Spirit, the Author of all truth.
We should not address others in a spirit of arrogance
implying that we are better than they.
But rather, in the spirit of humility and love,
as beggars telling others where food is to be found,
we point to life in Christ.

9.2.2 We witness to God in Christ
as the Way, the Truth, the Life,
and invite others to accept from Christ
the forgiveness of God.
We are compelled to share this good news.

9.3 Our Mission and Unbelief

9.3.1 For some today "God" is an empty word
indicating no reality
they have ever consciously known.
They do not believe there is a God.

9.3.2 Many find it hard to believe in a loving God
in a world where so many suffer.
Unbelief threatens many with despair,
the feeling that nothing really matters
and that beyond this world is emptiness.

9.3.3 The Bible witnesses to God in Christ
entering deeply into human suffering.
As we behold our Saviour on the cross
we are convinced of God's love for all.
Faced with the pain and agony of the world,
only a suffering God can help.
God is with us in our anguish.

9.3.4 Faithful men and women of the Bible
also knew pain and uncertainty.
Yet they experienced God and felt compelled
to speak of God moving powerfully in life.
Christian faith is a response
to the searching presence of God.
Christian belief brings new meaning into one's life.
Life's true purpose
is to glorify and to enjoy God.

10

OUR HOPE IN GOD

10.1 God has prepared for us things beyond our imagining. Our hope is for a renewed creation and for fullness of life in the age to come. As Jesus taught us, we pray, “Thy kingdom come.”

10.2 Life in the age to come is pictured in the Bible in different ways: an eternal kingdom, a new heaven and earth, a marriage feast, an unending day, the Father’s house, and the joy of God’s presence. God’s triumph over all opposition will be revealed. God will bind together everything in eternal harmony.

10.3 We shall all stand under the final judgment of God, receiving the divine verdict on our lives. Deserving of hell, eternal separation from God, we are assured of heaven, eternal life with God, through the grace bestowed on us in Christ. To say “no” to Christ is to refuse life and to embrace death. The destiny of all people

is in the hands of God
Whose mercy and justice we trust.

10.4 Eternal life is resurrection life. As God raised Christ, so shall we be raised with a spiritual body fit for life with God. Eternal life begins in this life: whoever believes in the Son of God already has eternal life. In death we commit our future confidently to God.

10.5 Christ will come again. Only God, the Father, knows when and how our Lord will return. Life had its beginning in God. In God it will come to completion and through the Spirit its meaning will be fully revealed. All creation will find fulfillment in God. Now we see in part. Then we shall see face to face.

10.6 Come, Lord Jesus!

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

The following Scriptural passages are an Appendix to THIS WE BELIEVE: RESOURCES FOR FAITH and invite the reader to turn to the Old and New Testaments as the source of Christian truth. This is not an exhaustive list of the relevant passages. It is a means by which the inquirer may find some of the texts with which the authors of this statement have wrestled in its preparation. THIS WE BELIEVE: RESOURCES FOR FAITH is offered as a faithful and obedient interpretation of the Scriptures.

References are given so that they may be studied in relation to chapters, sections, or subsections. The text used in preparing the Scriptural references is that of the Revised Standard Version.

CHAPTER ONE - GOD

PSALM 50:1-6, ISAIAH 40:18-31,
MICAH 7:18-20, MATTHEW 6:1-34, JOHN 3:16, 2
CORINTHIANS 13:4, COLOSSIANS 1:3-8

- 1.1 Ps. 19:1-6, 100:1-2, 102:24-27, 48:1-5, Jer. 10:10, Jn. 17:3, Rom. 14:17, 2 Tim. 1:8-10, Rev. 4:11, 15:1-4
- 1.2 Gen. 3:8-9, Ex. 2:23-25, 19:1-20, Deut. 29:29, Ps. 111:9-10, Jer. 31:31-34, Mt. 1:1, Mk. 1:1, Lk. 3:16,22, Jn. 1:14, Acts 1:4-5, 16:6-10, Rom. 5:1, 10:4-9, 1 Cor. 2:12-16, 11:23-25, 2 Cor. 3:17-18, Gal. 6:14-16, 2 Tim. 2:8
- 1.3 Ps. 99:6-9, 106:1-48, Jn. 17:25-26, 20:31, Acts 2:14-36, 1 Cor. 2:12-13, Eph. 3:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:14-16, 2 Tim. 1:13-14, 2 Pet. 1:16-18
- 1.4 Acts 2:42, Rom. 16:17-18, 1 Cor. 15:1-4, Gal. 1:1-4, Eph. 2:20, 2 Th. 2:15, Heb. 13:7-9, 2 Pet. 3:14-18, 1 Jn. 4:1-6
- 1.5 Mt. 6:9, 28:19, Mk. 1:9-11, Jn. 14:6, 16:15, Rom. 1:1-4, 1 Cor. 2:7-11, 12:3, 2 Cor. 13:14, Eph. 2:18, 4:1-6, Heb. 4:14-16, 1 Jn. 4:13-14, Jude 20-21, Rev. 7:9-12
- 1.6 Ps. 85:1-13, 95:1-11, 107:1-43, Jn. 5:22-23, Acts 17:24-28, Rom. 8:26-27, 16:25-27, 1 Cor. 1:27-31, Eph. 3:14-21, Col. 3:16-17, 1 Tim. 1:17, Heb. 13:20-21, Jude 24-25, Rev. 5:11-14

CHAPTER TWO - GOD, CREATOR AND RULER

GENESIS 1:1-31, PSALM 145:1-21,
COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

- 2.1 **God Creates and Rules**
Ps. 33:4-19, Amos 1:1-3:8, Romans 11:33-36
- 2.1.1 Gen. 8:21-22, Ps. 89:5-14, 136:3-9, Is. 10:5-27, 46:8-11, Mt. 10:29-31, Rom. 11:22, Col. 1:16,17, 20
- 2.1.2 Gen. 50:20, Deut. 30:19, Ps. 2:1-11, 102:12-28, 103:19-22, 113:5-9, Acts 2:22-23, Rom. 8:28, Eph. 1:10, Rev. 11:15
- 2.1.3 Gen. 6:11-12, Mt. 12:15-21, Rom. 2:4-11, 3:21-26, 5:20, 2 Cor. 8:9, 12:8-10
- 2.1.4 Job 14:1-2, Is. 55:8-9, Rom. 9:14-28, 1 Cor. 15:25-26, Col. 3:1-3

- 2.2 **Our Creation**
Gen. 1:26-28, 2:18-24, Ps. 8:1-9
- 2.2.1 Gen. 1:26, Ps. 139:13-18, 145:10, 147:7-11, Mt. 18:1-3, Acts 17:28, 1 Cor. 3:18-23, Jas. 3:13-18
- 2.2.2 Gen. 1:27, Ps. 148:12-13, Lk. 8:1-3, 1 Cor. 11:11-12, Phil. 4:1-3
- 2.3 **Our Calling**
Job 28:28, Mt. 22:35-40, Mk. 8:34-38.
- 2.3.1 Mk. 12:28-31, Phil. 2:12-13.
- 2.3.2 Deut. 11:8-15, Ps. 41:1, Eccl. 11:6, 1 Cor. 7:17, Eph. 4:28, 2 Th. 3:10-13.
- 2.3.3 Mk. 10:35-45, Lk. 9:57-62, Jn. 8:36, Jas. 3:16.
- 2.4 **Our Care for the World**
Gen. 1:27-31, 2:15, Deut. 8:7-20
- 2.4.1 Ps. 8:4-6, 24:1, 65:9-13, Jn. 6:12, Acts 17:24-25
- 2.4.2 Is. 1:17, Mt. 5:6, 2 Cor. 8:12-15
- 2.5 **Sin Separates Us from God**
Gen. 3:22-24, Ps. 51:1-14, Mt. 15:10-20, Rom. 1:18-3:20
- 2.5.1 Ex. 20:1-17, Mic. 6:8, Mt. 12:35-37, Jn. 8:29, 15:22, Rom. 7:21-24, Rev. 2:4
- 2.5.2 Ex. 32:30-31, Judg. 21:25, Neh. 1:5-7, Ps. 143:1-2, Lk. 12:16-19, 1 Jn. 1:8-9, 3:4
- 2.5.3 Is. 6:1-5, 53:6, 57:20-21, Jer. 17:9, Jn. 13:30, Rom. 6:21, Gal. 5:19-21
- 2.5.4 Ps. 58:3, Prov. 6:6-19, Ezek. 16:48-49, Mk. 7:21-23, Lk. 18:2-4, Jn. 8:34, Jas. 1:14-15
- 2.5.5 Rom. 3:19-20,23, Gal. 3:22.
- 2.5.6 Ps. 46:6, 130:1-4, Jer. 3:25, 9:1-3, Lk. 10:13-15, 1 Cor. 1:19-20
- 2.5.7 Acts 13:26,38, Rom. 2:1-2, 4:23-5:1, 1 Cor. 1:30-31, 2:2, Tit. 2:11-14, 3:3
- 2.5.8 1 Cor. 15:56-57

CHAPTER THREE - GOD IN CHRIST

ISAIAH 11:1-5, MATTHEW 16:16, 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10-21, HEBREWS 1:1-2:18, REVELATION 11:15-19

- 3.1 **Jesus Christ and Israel**
Mt. 5:17-18, Mk. 7:5-9, Lk. 4:16-22, Jn. 12:12-16
 - 3.1.1 Gen. 6:11-12, 12:1-3, Deut. 29:10-15, Is. 49:5-6, Hab. 2:14
 - 3.1.2 Ex. 12:25-27, Deut. 4:5-8, Ps. 126:3, Jer. 3:14-18, 4:5-8, Dan. 7:13-14, Mic. 5:2, Rom. 16:25-27
 - 3.1.3 Is. 60:1-3, Mt. 1:1, Mk. 1:14-15, Lk 2:25-32, Jn. 8:12, Acts 13:22-23, Rom. 1:1-2
- 3.2 **Jesus Christ: Truly God**
Jn. 1:1-14, 20:28, 1 Cor. 8:6, Phil. 2:5-11, Col. 2:8-9
 - 3.2.1 Mt. 1:22-25, Lk. 1:30-38, Jn. 1:14, 17:5, Rom. 15:7-12, 2 Cor. 1:18-20, 5:19, 8:9, Heb. 1:1-13, 2:18
 - 3.2.2 Mt. 11:25-27, Jn. 1:18,49, 14:8-9, Col. 1:19, Heb. 1:5-13
 - 3.2.3 Jn. 1:4-5, 2 Cor. 4:4, Col. 1:15-16, Rev. 19:11-13
 - 3.2.4 Jn. 10:30, Acts 10:36, Rom. 8:9-10
- 3.3 **Jesus Christ: Truly Human**
Mk. 14:1-15:47, Lk. 2:1-7, Heb. 5:7-10
 - 3.3.1 Mt. 4:1-11, Mk. 14:33-36, Lk. 2:21-22, 41-52, 4:14-18, 13:31-33, 19:41-42, Lk. 22:28-30, Jn. 14:30-31, 15:13-15, 19:31-42, Heb. 2:17, 4:15
- 3.4 **Jesus is Saviour**
Lk. 2:11, Phil. 3:20-21, 1 Jn. 4:14
 - 3.4.1 Jn. 16:24, 1 Tim. 2:5, 1 Jn. 1:1-3
 - 3.4.2 Jn. 1:29, 1 Cor. 15:3, 2 Cor. 5:20-21, 1 Pet. 4:1
 - 3.4.3 Is. 53:1-12, Mk. 10:45, Jn. 10:11, Acts 8:32-35, Rom. 5:1-11,19, Eph. 3:1-5,19, Col. 2:15, Heb. 7:26-27, 1 Pet. 3:18, 1 Jn. 4:8
- 3.5 **Jesus is Lord**
Acts 2:22-36, 1 Cor. 15:1-11, Rev. 1:12-19
 - 3.5.1 Mk. 15:37-41, Acts 13:30, Rom. 14:9, 1 Pet. 3:22
 - 3.5.2 1 Cor. 15:12-25, 2 Tim. 1:10, 1 Pet. 5:8-9
 - 3.5.3 2 Cor. 2:10-11, Eph. 4:27, 2 Th. 1:4-10, 1 Jn. 3:8
 - 3.5.4 Rom. 8:34, 1 Tim. 2:1-4, Heb. 9:24, 13:15, Rev. 1:4-5, 7:9-12
- 3.6 **Salvation in Christ**
Mt. 12:15-21, Eph. 1:1-14, Tit. 2:11-14
 - 3.6.1 Lk. 3:22, Jn. 10:10, Rom. 11:5-6, Eph. 1:4-5, 2:8, Col. 2:9-10, 2 Tim. 1:8-9, Tit. 3:3-8, Heb. 2:11-13, 1 Pet. 2:3-7
 - 3.6.2 Ps. 138:8, Is. 43:1-7, Jn. 12:25-26, 15:16, Rom. 3:21-24, 8:29, Phil. 1:6, Col. 3:12-15, 2 Th. 2:13-14, Jas. 1:18
 - 3.6.3 1 Cor. 15:57, 2 Cor. 2:14

CHAPTER FOUR - GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

PSALM 104:30, JOEL 2:28-29, ZECHARIAH 4:6, MARK 3:20-30, JOHN 14:15-16:16

- 4.1 **The Holy Spirit is God with us**
Ps. 138:7-12, Lk. 3:15-16, 1 John 3:24
 - 4.1.1 Gen. 1:2, Mic. 3:8, Jn. 16:7-11, Acts 4:31, Rom. 8:9, 1 Cor. 2:9-16, Gal. 4:6, Eph. 1:13-14, 4:1-6, 2 Pet. 1:21
- 4.2 **The Holy Spirit Enables People to Believe and to Grow**
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 - 4.2.1 Lk. 15:17-20, Jn. 8:30, Acts 11:15-18, 16:14, Rom. 5:17, 9:16, 1 Cor. 12:3, Gal. 4:4-7, 1 Th. 1:5
 - 4.2.2 Is. 59:21, Lk. 1:35, Jn. 3:7-8, 14:26, Acts 10:19-20, Eph. 4:30, Heb. 13:14, 1 Pet. 1:2, 1 Jn. 2:20-27, Rev. 22:12-14
- 4.3 **The Holy Spirit Forms and Equips the Church**
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 - 4.3.1 Acts 2:38-39, Rom. 8:1-2,9, 15:18-19, Phil. 2:1-3
 - 4.3.2 Ps. 5:7-8, Jn. 14:15-17, Rev. 3:14-22
 - 4.3.3 Gal. 5:22-23
 - 4.3.4 Acts 8:5-8, 19:1-20, Rom. 12:6-13, 1 Cor. 12:4-7, 1 Pet. 4:10-11
 - 4.3.5 Lk. 11:13

CHAPTER FIVE - THE BIBLE

PSALM 119:97-112, 162-176, ROMANS 15:4, 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17, 2 PETER 1:20-21

- 5.1 Deut. 13:1-4, Jer. 23:26-32, Mt. 4:4,7,10, 22:43-44, Jn. 1:1, 5:39, Acts 17:10-11, Rom. 16:25-27, Gal. 4:21-31, Heb. 3:7-11, 1 Jn. 2:21, 4:1-6
- 5.2 Ps. 19:7-11, Jer. 36:4, Acts 5:30-32, 2 Cor. 4:5, 2 Tim. 3:16, Heb. 4:12, 1 Pet. 1:10-12, Rev. 22:18-19
- 5.3 Deut. 31:9, Ps. 119:18, Lk. 1:1-4, Rom. 16:21-23, 1 Cor. 11:16, 14:29,37, Col. 4:7-18, 2 Pet. 1:20-21, 3:15-16
- 5.4 Ps. 106:1-48, Ruth 4:7-12, Lk. 3:1-2, Jn. 20:31, Acts 7:1-50, 1 Cor. 10:1-13, Eph. 1:15-19, 2 Tim. 2:8-10, 14-15, Heb. 11:1-40, Jas. 1:22

CHAPTER SIX - FAITH

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- 6.1 **Faith**
Mt. 15:21-28, Rom. 4:1-25, Heb. 11:1-12:2
 - 6.1.1 Mk. 11:22, Lk. 13:1-5, Jn. 3:14-15, 4:39-42, Acts 2:37-42, 16:27-34, Eph. 2:8, Col. 2:6-7, 1 Th. 2:13
 - 6.1.2 Mt. 18:1-6, Lk. 19:1-10, Jn. 20:24-28, Acts 2:21, 9:3-6
 - 6.1.3 Gen. 28:16-21, Jn. 11:25-27

6.2 **Doubt: The Trial of Faith**
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CHAPTER SEVEN - GOD'S CHURCH

PSALM 122:1-9, HOSEA 2:19-23, MATTHEW 16:13-19, 1 PETER 2:4-10

7.1 **The Church**
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 7.1.1 Ps. 107:1-3, Mt. 16:16-19, Col. 3:9-11
 7.1.2 Mt. 18:20, Acts 14:23, 15:41
 7.1.3 Mt. 28:16-20, 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 13:13
 7.1.4 Gal. 3:15-29, Eph. 4:4-6
 7.1.5 Jn. 17:6-23, Acts 2:42, Eph. 2:20, Jude 3
 7.1.6 Rom. 12:9-13, Gal. 6:2,9-10, Col. 3:17,23-24
 7.1.7 Mk. 6:20, Lk. 11:27-28, 1 Cor. 10:16-17, 2 Cor. 1:3-4,
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 7.1.9 1 Cor. 12:27, Eph. 4:11-16, Col. 1:18
 7.1.10 Acts 11:27-30, 1 Cor. 1:2, 16:1-2, 2 Cor. 8:1-5, 16-19,24
 7.1.11 Acts 4:18-21, 5:29, 25:10-12, Rom. 13:1-7

7.2 **Pastoral Ministry**
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 7.2.1 Jn. 20:21, Rom. 12:4-9, 1 Cor. 12:12-27, Phil. 2:14-16, Heb.
 13:20-21, 1 Pet. 4:10-11
 7.2.2 Acts 13:1-3, Rom. 1:11-12, Eph. 4:12, Col. 4:17
 7.2.3 Acts 2:18, 20:28, 1 Th. 5:12-13, 1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 2:1-2,
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 7.2.4 Acts 14:23, Rom. 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:28
 7.2.5 1 Cor. 12:4-7
 7.2.6 Jn. 15:12, 21:15-17, 2 Tim. 4:1-5, 1 Pet. 2:16

7.3 **Worship**
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 7.3.1 Ps. 48:9-10, 145:2, Lk. 24:52-53, Jn. 4:23-24, Rev. 1:10
 7.3.2 Ps. 96:7-9, Is. 41:17-18, Mk. 2:2, Acts 2:46-47, 10:47-48,
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 7.3.3 Jn. 12:28-32, 2 Cor. 6:1-2, 1 Tim. 2:1-4, Heb. 7:24-25,
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 7.3.4 Rev. 7:12

7.4 **Preaching**
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 7.4.1 Jn. 12:31-32, 20:19-23, Acts 20:21, Rom. 10:17,
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 7.4.2 Ps. 85:8-9, Mt. 4:4, 5:6, Eph. 6:18-19, 2 Tim. 2:14-16

7.5 **Ordinances**
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7.5.1 Mt. 28:18-20, Mk. 14:22-24, Jn. 6:52-59, Acts 18:8
 7.5.2 Lk. 22:19-20, Acts 22:16
 7.5.3 Ps. 51:15-17, Jn. 6:63, Eph. 2:5, 1 Pet. 3:11

7.6 **Baptism**
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 7.6.1 Mt. 28:19-20, Acts 19:4-6
 7.6.2 Acts 2:38-39, 8:36-38, 10:44-48
 7.6.3 Rom. 6:1-4, 2 Cor. 7:1, Gal. 3:26-27, Col. 2:12-13
 7.6.4 Lk. 12:50, Jn. 15:6, Rom. 10:9-10, Heb. 6:4-6, Jas. 4:6-10,
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 7.6.5 Jn. 14:27, Rom. 14:8, Col. 3:1-4, 1 Jn. 3:1-2

7.7 **The Lord's Supper**
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 7.7.1 Mk. 14:22-23, 1 Cor. 5:6-8, 11:23-25, 1 Pet. 5:6-7
 7.7.2 Lk. 24:30-31, Heb. 9:27-28, Rev. 3:20
 7.7.3 Jn. 15:1-10, Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 10:16, 11:26
 7.7.4 Ps. 78:23-25, Mt. 8:11, 24:14, Lk. 14:15-24, 22:15-16,
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8.1 **Discipleship**
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 8.1.1 Jn. 8:31-32, 36, 14:15, Phil. 3:7-8
 8.1.2 Mt. 5:21-27, Acts 5:29, Gal. 5:13
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 8.1.4 Acts 4:19-20, 5:38-39, Gal. 5:1
 8.1.5 Mt. 10:16, Gal. 2:20, Jas. 3:17-18
 8.1.6 Acts 18:27, Rom. 7:21-25, 8:13, 2 Cor. 1:11, Phil. 1:27-30,
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 8.1.8 Ps. 19:7-14, Jn. 17:17, Eph. 6:17, 2 Tim. 3:16-17
 8.1.9 Is. 58:13-14, Mk. 2:27, Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:2, Col. 2:16

8.2 **The Christian Family**
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 8.2.1 Gen. 1:27-28, Ex. 20:14, Ps. 85:10-11, Song of Solomon,
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8.3 **Love**
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 8.3.1 Jn. 5:20-23, 2 Cor. 5:14, 1 Jn. 4:8-12,19, Rev. 21:4-5

- 8.3.2 Jn. 13:34-35, 15:12-13, Rom. 13:10, 1 Jn. 4:20-21
 8.3.3 Ps. 145:8-9, Mt. 22:37-40, Lk. 10:26-28, Rom. 8:38-39, 1 Cor. 4:1-4, Eph. 1:5-6
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 8.4.3 Ps. 41:1, Prov. 4:1-19, 8:1-21, Is. 1:16-17, Mt. 20:1-7, 3 Jn. 1-2
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 8.5.1 Mt. 5:9, Jn. 12:14-15
 8.5.2 2 Chr. 20:1-30, Ps. 74:1-11, Amos 1:13, Mk. 13:7, Heb. 12:14
 8.5.3 Ps. 46:9, 120:6-7, Is. 9:5-6, 55:2, Mt. 26:52, Lk. 9:1-2, 23:28-31, Jas. 3:18, 2 Pet. 3:10, 3 Jn. 15
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 9.1.2 Mk. 6:12, Jn. 14:1, Acts 8:4, 10:48, 13:38-39, 1 Cor. 4:20,

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 9.1.3 Mt. 5:7, Gal. 5:13, 1 Jn. 3:17-18

9.2 Our Mission and Other Faiths

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9.3 Our Mission and Unbelief

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CANADIAN BAPTISTS

We are Canadian Baptists. Working together in federation are Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (The Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches), Canadian Baptists of French Canada (l'Union d'Églises Baptistes Françaises au Canada), Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec) and Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (formerly the Baptist Union of Western Canada). Our mission agency that also links us together nationally is Canadian Baptist Ministries. Each regional group works to extend Christian ministry and mission in its own territory, and we cooperate in national and international enterprises through Canadian Baptist Ministries. There are also several other smaller Baptist groups in Canada. We affiliate with churches worldwide through the Baptist World Alliance, joining with over 47,500,000 Baptist Christians.

Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec partner as a family of about 350 churches. Together we are training, equipping and caring for pastors. We are helping plant new churches and connecting them with the resources they need to thrive. We are creating experiences and opportunities for young people and their leaders to expand their love of God and love of each other. We're telling our churches' stories to encourage and inspire them. We are privileged to journey together with our member churches and associations as we serve Christ together.

More about our family of churches can be found on our website, baptist.ca.

BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

Baptists share many basic biblical convictions with other Christians, including the belief in one God, the Trinity, the human and divine nature of Jesus Christ and the significance of his crucifixion and resurrection for salvation. Though they have many historic 'confessions of faith,' Baptists are not a 'credal people.' They prefer simply to affirm the authority of the Scriptures for all matters of faith and practice, and allow each Christian the right to interpret the Bible for himself or herself. However, the distinctive combination of beliefs held among Baptists can readily be identified and have come to be known as 'Baptist Distinctives.' In true Baptist fashion, these distinctives are expressed with different nuances by various Baptist groups, and the following describes how CBOQ would express these distinctives.

1. JESUS IS LORD

Baptists believe that Jesus Christ, being eternally God, only begotten Son and the visible expression of the invisible God, effectively procured salvation for all creation through his death, burial and resurrection. He is the one assigned by God the Father to rule with authority over all of creation. Every area of the believer's life and the life of the church is to be subject to the Lord.

2. THE WORD OF GOD IS THE AUTHORITATIVE RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE

Baptists believe that God communicates his will through the inspired Word of God. For Baptists, the Bible is the final authority in matters of faith and practice. It is to be interpreted responsibly under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit within the community of faith.

3. THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

The Bible affirms the value of each person as having been created in the image of God, and also declares each person morally responsible for his/her own nature and behaviour. Baptists believe that inherent in the worth of each person is also the right and competency of each individual personally to deal directly with God through Jesus Christ. This principle also suggests our responsibility to serve other believers in intercession and nurture: we are priests to each other. Baptists believe that no group or individual has any right to compel others—forcefully or politically—to believe or worship as they do. Rather, Baptists have historically been champions of religious liberty.

4. A BELIEVERS' CHURCH

Baptists believe that Jesus Christ chooses to form his church by bringing together believers for the purpose of worship, witness, fellowship and ministry (both spiritual and social). Baptists recognize the church universal as all who truly profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. They also profess their understanding of the church as being visibly expressed in local congregations. Each local church must thus be made up of believers who, upon their profession of faith and their baptism (almost always by immersion), are incorporated into the local church through the activity of the Holy Spirit. Baptists believe that Believers' Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances required by the New Testament and are to be administered by the local church.

5. MISSION AND EVANGELISM

We have a story to tell that is mandated by our Lord in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. Our calling is to share God's message of love and salvation with each person. Each Christian has a duty to share their faith with others. Baptists continue to be very active in mission efforts, both in local and global contexts. We recognize that mission is not just evangelism, but also includes promoting justice, social welfare, healing, education and peace in the world. It is a holistic approach that expresses care for both the needs of the human soul and the social needs that affect all of life.

6. CHURCH AUTONOMY AND ASSOCIATION

Government in a local church is controlled by the principles of the priesthood of all believers, the Lordship of Christ, the authority of the Scriptures and the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. Christ, present in the lives of congregational members, leads them corporately to discover and obey his mind and will. Such 'congregational government' calls for and expresses the equality and responsibility of believers under the Lordship of Christ. Baptist churches also recognize the need to temper the exercise of their autonomy in order to 'associate' by linking regionally, nationally and internationally for ministry, mission, support and fellowship.

7. FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

Emerging from our convictions about the priesthood of all believers, we affirm that in Jesus Christ all people are equal. Each one is free to be in relationship with God and to express a faith that is not coerced. Faith cannot be predetermined by someone else, but is the right of and responsibility of each individual as they seek a relationship with God based on their own personal commitments. A further extension of the principle of the Lordship of Christ and the priesthood of believers is to be found in the Baptist conviction that there must exist a separation between the church and civil governments.

OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

God's truths are foundational and unchanging. But the ways in which we express our calling is constantly shifting to be effective in the context in which we find ourselves at any particular time.

When our churches meet in Associations or at our annual Assembly, we are a group of congregations in a covenant gathering in which we make visible the Body of Christ. Our aim, whether as individual congregations or as a group of churches, is to find the Mind of Christ, not to enable the agendas of different power blocks. Though we operate through the democratic process of taking votes, the heart of the matter is not winning a decision, but in finding the Mind of Christ who is present among us. Local congregations gather with one another in fellowship and worship to discover the purpose of Christ for many matters of life and mission.

Our churches, associations and conventions gather, believing that God is at work in the lives of individuals, in history and in creation. Our opportunity is to work effectively to join with God's redemptive purpose as we cooperate together. Let us covenant together to pray that we will discover the Mind of Christ. Let us pray for wisdom and strength in fulfilling God's purposes for us.



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