

*SUPPLEMENTAL
CONFESSION OF
FAITH OF
CHRISTCHURCH
MACY*

(2022)

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PREAMBLE

ChristChurch Macy loves confessions. As a prerequisite for church membership, for instance, our members must affirm the New Hampshire Confession of 1833. But while the New Hampshire Confession of 1833 is an adequate statement of faith for church membership, we desired a more full, systematic, and concise (though obviously non-exhaustive) statement of the doctrines and practices of Scripture for the training and maturity of our flock.

Faithful confessions are an echo summary of what God has already said in His Word and can serve several purposes ¹:

1. As a means of worship, for doxology without theology is mere idolatry (Jn. 4:22; Acts 17:23). As A. W. Tozer put it, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. . . . Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.”
2. As an affirmation and defense of the truth (1 TIm. 3:15; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; Jude 3).
3. As an explanation to those who harbor prejudices and misapprehensions against us based on incomplete information.
4. As a baseline for church discipline (1 Tim. 5:16).
5. As a concise standard by which to evaluate ministers of the Word (2 Tim. 2:2).
6. As a means for the catechism of families by their fathers/husbands.
7. As the doctrinal DNA for planting daughter churches.
8. As a means of establishing historical continuity and unity with other Christians.
9. As a prophetic statement to the lies and deception of the world.

Therefore our church elders must also fully subscribe to the *1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*, save with the following minor exceptions:

1. Chapter 6: Section 2—*and we in Adam* shall be substituted for *and we in them*. Section 3—*Adam* shall be substituted for *them* as the very first word, as well as *his posterity* rather than *their posterity*. (See generally Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:42-49.)
2. Chapter 7.2: The word *determining* shall be substituted for the word *promising* (Rom. 8:29-30).

¹ Borrowed, in part, from Jeff Robison’s *Six Ways a Church Should Use a Confession of Faith*.

3. Chapter 8.2: The phrase *virgin named Mary* shall be substituted for *Virgin Mary*. The Virgin Mary is nothing more than a demon (Ps. 106:36-38; 1 Cor. 10:20-22)—a fictitious (1 Cor. 8:4) papal deity. Rather, the phrase *virgin named Mary* correctly denotes that the mother of Jesus was a mere mortal (Rom. 6:23) who: (a) lost her virginity after the birth of Christ (Matt. 1:25, 13:55-56; 1 Cor. 9:5); (b) was a wretched sinner (Rom. 3:23) saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-9) who is therefore no more worthy of honor or distinction than any other elect (Matt. 27:56, 61; Mk. 3:33-35; Lk. 11:27-28); and (c) is completely unable and unqualified to serve as a mediator between God and man (Rom. 8:34; Gal. 3:19-25; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25, 9:15, 12:24; 1 Jn. 2:1).

4. Chapter 10.3: This section shall be omitted in its entirety because it consists of private speculation based on scant Scriptural inferences (see Chapter 19 on page 73 of this *Supplement*).

5. Chapter 18:1-4: The word *full* shall be added before every instance of the word *assurance* (see Chapter 3 on page 12 of this *Supplement*). Even a casual acquittance with the Puritans will show that the subject of this chapter is a “settled, well-grounded” assurance rather than the incipient assurance that must of necessity accompany faith or else faith becomes nothing more than a vapor chasing the wind.

6. Chapter 18:3: The word *ordinary* shall be added before the word *means* (WCF & Savoy).

7. Chapter 22.3: The final sentence shall be finished with the phrase *or with an interpreter present* (1 Cor. 14:27-28, 39).

8. Chapter 24.2: The rest of the section after the word *commonwealth* shall be omitted in its entirety (see Chapter 10 on page 36 & Sections 15.4 & 15.5 on pages 56-57 of this *Supplement*).

9. Chapter 26.4: The word *an* shall be substituted for *the* in front of *antichrist* and *a* shall be substitute for *that* in front of man (Gal. 1:8-9; Heb. 10:26-31; 1 Jn. 2:22-23).

10. Chapter 30.3: The phrase *but to none who are not then present in the congregation* shall be added after *communicant* (Acts 2:41-42, 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-22, 33-34).

11. Chapter 30.4: The phrase *Private masses, or receiving this sacrament by a priest, or any other, alone; as likewise*, shall begin this section (Acts 2:41-42, 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-22, 33-34).

12. Chapter 30.5-6: The phrase *fruit of the vine* shall be substituted for *wine* (Matt. 26:29; Mk. 14:25; Lk. 22:18).

Additionally, because the Church has faced over three hundreds years of newer conflicts unheard of when the 1689 Confession was written, ChristChurch Macy felt it necessary to add this addendum to adequately address more modern controversies.

Finally, we close with Charles Haddon Spurgeon’s Preface to an 1855 edition of the *1689 Confession*:

This ancient document is the most excellent epitome of the things most surely believed among us. By the preserving hand of the

Triune [Yahweh] we have been kept faithful to the great points of our glorious gospel, and we feel more resolved perpetually to abide by them.

This little volume is not issued as an authoritative rule, or code of faith, whereby ye are to be fettered, but as an assistance to you in controversy, a confirmation in faith, and the means of edification and righteousness. Here the younger members of our church will have a body of divinity in small compass, and by means of the scriptural proofs, will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them.

Be not ashamed of your faith; remember it is the ancient Gospel of martyrs, confessors, reformers, and saints. Above all, it is the truth of God against which the Gates of hell cannot prevail. Let your lives adorn your faith, let your example recommend your creed. Above all, live in Christ Jesus, and walk in him, giving credence to no teaching but that which is manifestly approved of Him, and owned by the Holy Spirit. Cleave fast to the Word of God, which is here mapped out to you.

Chapter 1: The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978)

A SHORT STATEMENT:

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms, obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

ARTICLES OF AFFIRMATION AND DENIAL:

Article I

We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.

We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

Article II

We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.

We deny that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article III

We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.

We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

Article IV

We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.

We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration.

Article V

We affirm that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive.

We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

Article VI

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.

We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII

We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.

We deny that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

Article VIII

We affirm that God in His Work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX

We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.

We deny that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

Article X

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.

We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

Article XI

We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

Article XII

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII

We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

Article XIV

We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.

We deny that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

Article XV

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.

We deny that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

Article XVI

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history.

We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by Scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

Article XVII

We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word.

We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

Article XVIII

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

Article XIX

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences both to the individual and to the Church.

Chapter 2: The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics (1982)

Article I. WE AFFIRM that the normative authority of Holy Scripture is the authority of God Himself, and is attested by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church. WE DENY the legitimacy of separating the authority of Christ from the authority of Scripture, or of opposing the one to the other.

Article II. WE AFFIRM that as Christ is God and Man in one Person, so Scripture is, indivisibly, God's Word in human language. WE DENY that the humble, human form of Scripture entails errancy any more than the humanity of Christ, even in His humiliation, entails sin.

Article III. WE AFFIRM that the Person and work of Jesus Christ are the central focus of the entire Bible. WE DENY that any method of interpretation which rejects or obscures the Christ-centeredness of Scripture is correct.

Article IV. WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture acts through it today to work faith in its message. WE DENY that the Holy Spirit ever teaches to anyone anything which is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

Article V. WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives. WE DENY that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.

Article VI. WE AFFIRM that the Bible expresses God's truth in propositional statements, and we declare that biblical truth is both objective and absolute. We further affirm that a statement is true if it represents matters as they actually are, but is an error if it misrepresents the facts. WE DENY that, while Scripture is able to make us wise unto salvation, biblical truth should be defined in terms of this function. We further deny that error should be defined as that which willfully deceives.

Article VII. WE AFFIRM that the meaning expressed in each biblical text is single, definite and fixed. WE DENY that the recognition of this single meaning eliminates the variety of its application.

Article VIII. WE AFFIRM that the Bible contains teachings and mandates which apply to all cultural and situational contexts and other mandates which the Bible itself shows apply only to particular situations. WE DENY that the distinction between the universal and particular mandates of Scripture can be determined by cultural and situational factors. We further deny that universal mandates may ever be treated as culturally or situationally relative.

Article IX. WE AFFIRM that the term hermeneutics, which historically signified the rules of exegesis, may properly be extended to cover all that is involved in the process of perceiving what the biblical revelation means and how it bears on our lives. WE DENY that the message of Scripture derives from, or is dictated by, the interpreter's understanding. Thus we deny that the "horizons" of the biblical writer and the interpreter

may rightly “fuse” in such a way that what the text communicates to the interpreter is not ultimately controlled by the expressed meaning of the Scripture.

Article X. WE AFFIRM that Scripture communicates God’s truth to us verbally through a wide variety of literary forms. WE DENY that any of the limits of human language render Scripture inadequate to convey God’s message.

Article XI. WE AFFIRM that translations of the text of Scripture can communicate knowledge of God across all temporal and cultural boundaries. WE DENY that the meaning of biblical texts is so tied to the culture out of which they came that understanding of the same meaning in other cultures is impossible.

Article XII. WE AFFIRM that in the task of translating the Bible and teaching it in the context of each culture, only those functional equivalents which are faithful to the content of biblical teaching should be employed. WE DENY the legitimacy of methods which either are insensitive to the demands of cross-cultural communication or ‘distort biblical meaning in the process.

Article XIII. WE AFFIRM that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study. WE DENY that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

Article XIV. WE AFFIRM that the biblical record of events, discourses and sayings, though presented in a variety of appropriate literary forms, corresponds to historical fact. WE DENY that any event, discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated.

Article XV. WE AFFIRM the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to its literal, or normal, sense. The literal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning which the writer expressed. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text. WE DENY the legitimacy of any approach to Scripture that attributes to it meaning which the literal sense does not support.

Article XVI. WE AFFIRM that legitimate critical techniques should be used in determining the canonical text and its meaning. WE DENY the legitimacy of allowing any method of biblical criticism to question the truth or integrity of the writer’s expressed meaning, or of any other scriptural teaching.

Article XVII. WE AFFIRM the unity, harmony and consistency of Scripture and declare that it is its own best interpreter. WE DENY that Scripture may be interpreted in such a way as to suggest that one passage corrects or militates against another. WE DENY that later writers of Scripture misinterpreted earlier passages of Scripture when quoting from or referring to them.

Article XVIII. WE AFFIRM that the Bible's own interpretation of itself is always correct, never deviating from, but rather elucidating, the single meaning of the inspired text. The single meaning of a prophet's words includes, but is not restricted to, the understanding of those words by the prophet and necessarily involves the intention of God evidenced in the fulfillment of those words. WE DENY that the writers of Scripture always understood the full implications of their own words.

Article XIX. WE AFFIRM that any preunderstandings which the interpreter brings to Scripture should be in harmony with scriptural teaching and subject to correction by it. WE DENY that Scripture should be required to fit alien preunderstandings, inconsistent with itself; such as naturalism, evolutionism, scientism, secular humanism, and relativism.

Article XX. WE AFFIRM that since God is the author of all truth, all truths, biblical and extrabiblical, are consistent and cohere, and that the Bible speaks truth when it touches on matters pertaining to nature, history, or anything else. We further affirm that in some cases extrabiblical data have value for clarifying what Scripture teaches, and for prompting correction of faulty interpretations. WE DENY that extrabiblical views ever disprove the teaching of Scripture or hold priority over it.

Article XXI. WE AFFIRM the harmony of special with general revelation and therefore of biblical teaching with the facts of nature. WE DENY that any genuine scientific facts are inconsistent with the true meaning of any passage of Scripture.

Article XXII. WE AFFIRM that Genesis 1-11 is factual, as is the rest of the book. WE DENY that the teachings of Genesis 1-11 are mythical and that scientific hypotheses about earth history or the origin of humanity may be invoked to overthrow what Scripture teaches about creation.

Article XXIII. WE AFFIRM the clarity of Scripture and specifically of its message about salvation from sin. WE DENY that all passages of Scripture are equally clear or have equal bearing on the message of redemption.

Article XXIV. WE AFFIRM that a person is not dependent for understanding of Scripture on the expertise of biblical scholars. WE DENY that a person should ignore the fruits of the technical study of Scripture by biblical scholars.

Article XXV. WE AFFIRM that the only type of preaching which sufficiently conveys the divine revelation and its proper application to life is that which faithfully expounds the text of Scripture as the Word of God. WE DENY that the preacher has any message from God apart from the text of Scripture.

Chapter 3: Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

3.1 Although unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and fleshly presumptions of being in the favor of God and state of salvation, yet such hope of theirs shall perish.¹

¹ Matt. 7:21, 23; Jn. 8:13-14

3.2 In contrast, the saving faith of elect saints is always accompanied by a measure of felt, knowable assurance that, in fact, *their* sins are forgiven, that they are reconciled and at peace with God with a clean conscience, and that this will result in their ultimate salvation; this is not a mere intellectual consent that sins may be forgiven or even that their sins are forgiven, but rather it is a personal, intimate, experimental, tangible appropriation of forgiveness and life in Christ.¹ This is required by two Scriptural necessities:

¹ Acts 16:15, 23:1, 24:16; Rom. 10:8-10; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19, 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:9, 10:2, 17, 22, 13:18; 1 Pet. 3:16, 21; 1 Jn. 3:21

3.2.1 Faith is always accompanied by a measure—though it be as small as a fraction of a mustard seed—of assurance, for trust is the presentation of the title-deed to things expected, the proof of things not yet seen; faith *is* assurance, being sure, reality of, substance, guarantee, foretaste, and resolute confidence of the personal application of the thing promised, without which faith does not exist but is rather merely an intellectual assent shared by demons; faith is an experience that lives, moves, and has its being in the unseen realities of Scriptural promises.¹

¹ Rom. 4:20-22; Heb. 11:1, 6, 13

3.2.2 Regeneration is the creation of a new man,¹ the freeing from the law of sinning and death,² the passing from death to life,³ the seeing and tasting that the Lord is good,⁴ a personal and intimate knowing of the Godhead,⁵ a joy unspeakable and glorified,⁶ the shining forth of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in one's heart;⁷ it is no more conceivable to experience an earthquake, tornado, tsunami, or hurricane and not realize it than to be born again by the power of the living God and not know it. If one does not personally and experimentally know that Jesus Christ is in them, they are reprobate—still dead in their trespasses and sins and remain under God's wrath.⁸

¹ 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10

² Jn. 8:31-6; Rom. 8:2

³ Jn. 5:24; 1 Jn. 3:14

⁴ Gen. 15:1; Ps. 16:11, 34:8; Jn. 4:14, 6:35, 7:38; 1 Pet. 2:3

⁵ Jn. 17:3; Gal. 4:9; Eph. 3:17-19; Phil. 3:8

⁶ 1 Pet. 1:8

⁷ 2 Cor. 3:18, 4:4, 6

⁸ 2 Cor. 13:5

3.3. The certainty of salvation enjoyed by the saints of God is not mere conjecture and probability based upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith¹ based upon the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel.² It also results from the inward evidences of the graces of the Holy Spirit, for to those graces God speaks promises.³ Then again, it is based upon the testimony of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption, for He bears His witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.⁴ Such witness results in the keeping of our hearts both humble and holy.⁵

¹ Heb. 6:11, 19

² Heb. 6:17-18

³ 2 Per. 1:4-5, 10-11

⁴ Rom. 8:15-16

⁵ 1 John 3:1-3

3.4 Elect saints may have the assurance of their salvation shaken and diminished in diverse ways; as by negligence in preserving of it,¹ by falling into some special sin which wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit;² by some sudden or vehement temptation,³ by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light,⁴ yet are they never destitute of the unbreakable, imperishable seed of assurance⁵ that, by the gracious operation of the Spirit, will in due time be revived,⁶ and by which, in the meantime, they are preserved from utter despair.⁷

¹ Song of Solomon 5:2-3, 6

² Ps. 51:8, 12, 14; Eph. 4:30

³ Ps. 31:22, 77:7-8, 116:11

⁴ Ps. 30:7

⁵ 1 Jn. 3:9; Lk. 22:32

⁶ Ps. 42:5, 11

⁷ Lam. 3:26-31

Chapter 4: The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

4.1 While every elect saint has been regenerated and indwelt with the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion,¹ the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a distinct, separate, and often (though not always²) subsequent experience to that of new birth.³ It is the a gift of the sovereign grace of God,⁴ purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ,⁵ and the birthright of every elect saint.⁶ It is obtained through faith⁷ at the sovereign and gracious discretion of God,⁸ and is often though not necessarily proceeded by entire consecration and persistent, shamelessly importune asking, seeking, and knocking.⁹ This baptism—coming/falling upon, pouring out, or clothing with¹⁰—is wrought in an instant,¹¹ and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears unmistakable witness.¹²

¹ Ezek. 36:25-27; Matt. 16:17, 28:17; Lk. 9:20, 24:45; Jn. 1:13, 3:3, 5-6, 6:63; Rom. 8:1-11; 1 Cor. 3:16, 6:18, 12:3; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 5:17, 6:16; Eph. 1:13-14, 2:3-5; Titus 3:5-7

² Acts 10:44-45, 11:5

³ Acts 2:1-4, 8:16, 9:17, 18:25-26, 19:1-7

⁴ Lk. 24:49; Jn. 4:10; Acts 1:4, 2:33, 38b, 10:45, 11:17

⁵ Jn. 7:39; Acts 2:33

⁶ Is. 4:4, 44:3; Ezek. 11:19; Joel 2:28-32; Zech. 12:10, 13:1; Mal. 3:2-3; Matt. 3:11-12; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16-17; Jn. 1:33, 7:38; Acts 1:5, 2:39, 11:16; 2 Cor. 1:20

⁷ Acts 5:8-9; Gal. 3:2, 14

⁸ Acts 2:1-4, 8:16, 9:17, 10:44-45, 11:5, 18:25-26, 19:1-7

⁹ Ex. 17:8-16, 32:10; Judges 14:17; 1 Kings 18:41-46; Matt. 7:7-12, 11:12; Mk. 7:26; Lk. 11:5-13, 16:16, 18:1-8; Acts 1:14, 2:1, 8:15, 9:11, 12:12, 16

¹⁰ Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8, 2:17, 18, 33, 8:15, 10:45, 11:15, 19:6; see also Judges 3:10, 6:34; 1 Chron. 12:18; 2 Chron. 24:20

¹¹ Acts 2:1-4, 8:17, 9:17-18, 10:44-45, 11:5, 18:25-26, 19:1-7

¹² Jn. 14:14-24, 16:7; Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:6

4.2 The baptism with the Holy Spirit—also commonly referred to as the baptism with love or the second blessing—has three primary purposes:

4.2.1 An elect saint receives the full assurance of salvation by the Spirit crying out with his spirit, “Abba, Father!”¹ as He pours out the love of God into his heart.²

¹ Jn. 14:14-24, 16:7; Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:6

² Jn. 17:26; Rom. 5:5

4.2.2 The fire of God's love for him being perfected in the elect saint washes, cleanses, and purifies him and thereby casts out fear, sinning, shame, and guilt—producing new, though still yet imperfect, victory in holiness over the power and presence of sin.¹

¹ Is. 4:4; Mal. 3:2-3; Matt. 3:11-12; Lk. 3:26-27; Acts 5:8-9; Jn. 8:31-36; Rom. 6:1-8; Gal. 2:20, 5:24, 6:14; Col. 2:11-12; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Jn. 2:5, 4:12, 17-18

4.2.3 Both of these, in turn, endue the elect saint with power from on high, enabling him to proclaim Christ in a demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and such boldness and effectual power in witnessing are always distinguishing marks of the Spirit baptism.¹

¹ Mk. 16:20; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8, 4:13, 5:20-21, 41-42; Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Thess. 1:5; Heb. 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:12; in contrast to Matt. 28:17

4.3 Elect saints are called upon to seek to baptism with the Spirit, but are not to be looked down upon as second class Christians for not yet having received it.¹ An elect saint is never baptized with the Spirit gradually,² and he always knows beyond a shadow of a doubt when he has been baptized.³ An elect saint may also receive multiple subsequent fillings of the Holy Spirit at the sovereign and gracious discretion of God.⁴ The baptism may⁵ or may not⁶ be evidenced by speaking in tongues (i.e., an actual foreign language).

¹ Lk. 11:5-13, 24:49; Acts 1:5, 8; Acts 8:14-17, 18:26, 19:1-7; Eph. 5:18

² Acts 2:1-4, 8:17, 9:17-18, 10:44-45, 11:15, 18:25-26, 19:1-7

³ Acts 19:2-3; Rom. 6:3; see also Acts 2:1-21, 8:17-18, 9:17-18, 10:44-45, 11:15

⁴ Acts 4:8, 31, 7:55, 13:9

⁵ Acts 2:1-12, 10:46, 19:1-6

⁶ Matt. 3:16-17; Lk. 3:21-22; Acts 8:17 (but see inference of vs. 18), 9:17-18, 18:25-26

4.4 There is a marked difference between the baptism with the Holy Spirit and a mature Christ-like character—the former is obtained in an instant, the latter is the result of growth in grace; the Spirit baptism is often proceeded and always followed by lifelong growth in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that evidences itself by loving obedience to God's will.¹

¹ Gal. 3:27, 5:16-18, 22-25; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10

Chapter 5: The Gifts & Offices of the Holy Spirit

5.1 In His discretion alone, God disperses the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the edification of the Church.¹

¹ Mk. 16:17-18; Acts 5:12-16, 9:32-42, 14:8-15; Rm. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; James 5:13-16; 1 Pet. 4:10-11

5.2 In His discretion alone, God disperses the offices of the Holy Spirit—missionaries, some prophets, some evangelists, some shepherd-teachers, and some as deacons—for the edification of the Church.¹

¹ 1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9

5.3 Scripture is clear that, while not sharing the exact same gift, every believer has received at least one of these gifts and/or offices of the Spirit.¹ However, while we are to desire² and pray³ for the best gifts,⁴ we are exhorted to pursue the more excellent way of love.⁵

¹ 1 Cor. 12:8-11; 1 Pet. 4:10

² 1 Cor. 12:31, 14:1

³ 1 Cor. 14:13

⁴ 1 Cor. 12:31

⁵ 1 Cor. 12:31-14:1

5.4 The gift of speaking in tongues (i.e., an actual foreign language¹) is at the sole discretion of God.² A person may be a Christian and not have this particular gift.³ We neither encourage nor discourage speaking in tongues.⁴ In the assembly of believers, this gift, as with all the other spiritual gifts, must be done for edification⁵ and in an orderly fashion.⁶ Therefore, at most only two or three are permitted to speak in tongues at our meetings,⁷ and only one at a time⁸ and only with an interpreter present.⁹

¹ Acts 2:4, 6, 8, 11

² Acts 2:4; 1 Cor. 14:18

³ Matt. 3:16-17; Lk. 3:21-22; Acts 8:17 (but see inference of vs. 18), 9:17-18, 18:25-26, 19:1-6

⁴ 1 Cor. 14:39

⁵ 1 Cor. 14:26

⁶ 1 Cor. 14:33, 40

⁷ 1 Cor. 14:27

⁸ 1 Cor. 14:27

⁹ 1 Cor. 14:14, 27-28

5.5 The New Testament gift of prophecy is a spontaneous revelation from the Holy Spirit¹ often made in an assembly of believers² for the purpose of edification and exhortation and comfort,³ conviction,⁴ and guidance.⁵ It is not, however, entirely free from a mixture of human error (intentional or unintentional), and therefore must be tested and tried⁶ by Scripture⁷ with spiritual wisdom.⁸ God is completely sovereign in distributing the gifts of the Spirit to whom He wills,⁹ and not every believer will be a prophet,¹⁰ and those who do have this gift may have it temporarily.¹¹ In the New Testament, prophets never: made themselves a prophet, transcribed and distributed personal messages they received from God for others to use in lieu of or as a supplement to Scripture, revealed divine visions and revelations except at the express command of God,¹² or sought to add to or supplement the canon of Scripture because they considered it too dry and lacking in intimacy or personality. Consequently, all such extra-biblical revelations—including but not limited to after-death experiences or personal messages from Jesus—that go beyond the New Testament role of prophets should be scorned and shunned as lies of the evil one¹³ in favor of the all-sufficiency of Scripture.

¹⁴

¹ Lk. 7:39; Jn. 4:19; 1 Cor. 14:30

² Acts 11:27-30, 20:23, 21:4, 10-11

³ 1 Cor. 14:3

⁴ 1 Cor. 14:24-25

⁵ Acts 11:27-30, 20:23, 21:4, 10-11

⁶ 1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:19-20; 1 Jn. 4:1-3; 2 Jn. 7-11

⁷ 1 Cor. 14:36-38; 2 Thess. 2:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:13-17; Heb. 4:12

⁸ Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 2:6-16; Eph. 5:8-11, 15-18; Col. 1:9

⁹ 1 Cor. 12:11; Heb. 2:4

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 12:18-20, 29

¹¹ Lk. 1:41-45, 67-79, 2:28-35

¹² 2 Cor. 12:1-4; Rev. 1:19, 10:4

¹³ Jn. 8:44, 18:37; 2 Cor. 11:3-4; Gal. 1:8-9; 1 John 2:21

¹⁴ Numb. 23:19; Ps. 12:6; Prov. 30:5; Matt. 22:29, 43-44, 24:35; Jn. 14:26, 16:13-14, 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:13, 14:37; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:16; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18; 2 Pet. 1:21, 3:16

5.6 Though God often heals through the means of medical science, He also delights to heal supernaturally and therefore invites His shepherd-teachers to anoint the sick with oil and for they and the rest of the elect to offer the prayer of faith for His divine healing upon them.¹

¹ 2 Kings 5:1-19; Ps. 103:1-5; Mtt. 4:23-24, 9:18-35; Jn. 4:46-54; Acts 5:12-16, 9:32-42, 14:8-15; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 2 Cor. 12:7-10; Js. 5:13-16.

5.7 Cessation of signs and wonders or the termination of the gifts and offices of the Holy Spirit will only occur with Christ's return.¹

¹ 1 Cor. 13:8-10; Eph. 4:12-16

Chapter 6: Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (1987)

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18). Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21-24; 1 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:12-14).
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Gen 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Cor 11:7-9).
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen 3:1-7, 12, 16).
 - In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 - In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15).
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
 - In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7).
 - In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim 2:11-15).
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2).
8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit

1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.

9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7- 21).
10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

Chapter 7: The Nashville Statement Fortified (2017)

And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.” (Matthew 19:4, NASB)

Preamble

Nearly two decades into the twenty-first century, followers of Jesus Christ mourn the rebellion of the Western world against the God who created us in his own image and likeness. Western man refuses to give praise and glory to the Father Almighty who made us and tenderly cares for us.

Our rebellion is most intense at the point of his bifurcation of mankind into male and female. Attempting to deny that from the beginning he made each of us male or female, we reject the sexual calling God has assigned us, instead embracing individual preferences and identity politics. Men and women repudiate this station that God assigned to us, and their rebellion dishonors God, bringing on them the suffering that always accompanies wickedness.

The church has encouraged this rebellion against God’s creation order of man and woman by refusing to teach and defend God’s distinct callings for man and woman. We have failed to teach or apply them inside the home and church, and we have denied God’s design and commands are universally binding on all men and women.

We call the church to repent of our fear and timidity and to renew our commitment to God’s Word, declaring once again the true history of the world and God’s creation order of male and female. Scripture declares there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all.

We believe that God’s design for his creation and his way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God’s good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ’s church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

Article 1

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be an ordered, covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife. Through physical, emotional, and spiritual union and love, marriage points to the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.

WE DENY that God has designed marriage to be a disordered, homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract and that a marriage vowed in repudiation of God's law is lawful.

Article 2

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for man is chastity outside of marriage and chaste fidelity within marriage.

WE DENY that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual lusts, intimacy, or intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any other form of sexual immorality.

Article 3

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female. This distinction began when he created Adam first, of dust from the ground, then Eve from Adam's rib. We affirm that man is the glory of God and woman the glory of man, her head.

WE DENY that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

Article 4

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for God's glory and man's good, fruitfulness, and dominion.

WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

Article 5

WE AFFIRM that our inward self-conception and outward gender identity must conform to the sex God assigned us at conception, and thus we are to live in obedience to his call evident in our reproductive organs.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the union God has decreed between biological sex and self-conception and gender identity.

Article 6

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about "eunuchs who were born that way

from their mother's womb." With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known.

WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person's biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

Article 7

WE AFFIRM that inward self-conception and outward gender identity as male or female are defined by God's holy purposes in creation as revealed in Scripture.

WE DENY that adopting an effeminate, homosexual, or transgender inward self-conception or outward gender identity is consistent with God's holy purposes in creation.

Article 8

WE DENY that people who experience sexual attractions for the same sex can, without repenting of those attractions, live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God, and walk in purity of life. We also deny that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God's original creation.

WE AFFIRM that repentance from these sinful attractions is a grace of the Holy Spirit offered to all sinners, and that faith and repentance place a person inside the hope of the Gospel.

Article 9

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality—a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality.

WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behavior or continued lust. We also deny that, in the eyes of God, all sexually immoral desires are equally corrupt.

Article 10

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of effeminacy, homosexual immorality, and transgenderism, and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness, barring a man or woman from the kingdom of God.

WE DENY that the approval of effeminacy, homosexual immorality, or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians may agree to disagree.

Article 11

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak in a way that demonstrates the truth and love of our Lord Jesus when we speak to or about one another as male or female.

WE DENY any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonor God's design of his image-bearers as male and female.

Article 12

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive any sexual sin and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

Article 13

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake effeminate, homosexual, and transgender inward self-conceptions and outward identities, and joyfully to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception and identity as male or female.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions and identities that are at odds with God's revealed will.

Article 14

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ's death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are given to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as Savior, Lord, and supreme treasure.

WE DENY that the Lord's arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond his reach.

Chapter 8: Of Marriage

8.1 Marriage is the single, exclusive, consensual,¹ conjugal, covenantal and non-incestual² union, ordained by God from the creation of humanity, of one adult biologically born male and one adult biologically born female,³ for as long as both of them remain alive,⁴ and is the most basic societal institution and sole relationship appointed by God for sexual intimacy. As all are one race created in God's image, Scripture places no restrictions on interracial marriages.⁵

¹ 1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Tim. 4:3; Heb. 13:4

² Lev. 18:6-18; Amos 2:7; Mk. 6:18; 1 Cor. 5:1

³ Gen. 2:23-24; Deut. 17:14-17; Ps. 128:3; Prov. 5:18; 18:22; 19:14; 31:10-29; Eccl. 9:9; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:5-6; 1 Cor. 7:2; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6

⁴ Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39

⁵ Gen. 1:27, 5:1-3; Num. 12:1-16 with Jer. 13:23; Acts 17:26

8.2 Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife¹ for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue,² and the preventing of uncleanness.³ Marriage is established by God as part of His common grace, and that it has no meaning other than as He has provided.⁴ Marriage is subject to the curse of the Fall but that the elect, living in obedience to the Scriptures and under the control of the Holy Spirit, can begin to experience peaceful, productive, and fulfilled marriage as intended by God.⁵ The marriages of God's saints are to illustrate the loving relationship of Christ and His Bride, with the husband loving his wife as Christ loves the Church and the wife responding to her husband's loving leadership as the Church responds to Christ.⁶ Because the marriages of the elect are to illustrate Christ's relationship with His Bride, believers should choose to marry those who share their faith and regenerate life.⁷

¹ Gen. 2:18; Prov. 2:17; Mal. 2:14

² Gen. 1:28; Ps. 127:3-5, 128:3-4

³ 1 Cor. 7:2, 9

⁴ Gen. 2:18-24

⁵ Gen. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:7

⁶ Eph. 5:18-33

⁷ Ezra 10:2, 10; Neh. 13:27; 1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14

8.3 Marriage is intended by God to be solemnized in a public, formal, and officially recognized covenant between a man and a woman¹ and, without such a covenant, prolonged conjugal cohabitation—such as common law “marriages”—falls short of God’s design for marriage.² In cases, therefore, where no such covenant exists, or can be discerned, between a cohabiting couple prior to coming to faith in Christ, after a period of penitent separation and chastity, solemnization is required. Where a valid marriage has been established prior to coming to faith in Christ, the couple should remain married.³

¹ Gen. 2:14; Prov. 2:17; Ezek. 16:8; Mal. 2:14

² Jn. 4:18

³ 1 Cor. 7:24

8.4 In marriage, the man is called the husband and is given certain responsibilities: (a) he is head of the wife as Christ is head of the church;¹ (b) he is to love his wife, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her;² (c) he is to dwell with his wife with understanding, giving honor to her as to the weaker vessel;³ and (d) he is not to provoke his children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.⁴

¹ Eph. 5:23

² Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19

³ 1 Pet. 3:7

⁴ Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21

8.5 In marriage, the woman is called a wife and is given the following responsibilities: (a) she is to submit to her husbands in everything, as the church submits to Christ;¹ (b) be a helpmate to her husband;² and (c) love her husband and children, be self-controlled and pure, be busy at home, be kind, so that no one will malign the word of God.³

¹ Gen. 3:16; Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1-6

² Gen. 2:18

³ Titus 2:4-5

8.6 In marriage, the husband and wife have mutual responsibilities: (a) to impress the commandments of God upon the hearts of their children;¹ (b) to fulfill their conjugal duties toward each other, only depriving each other by mutual consent and for a short time (lest Satan tempt them) in order to devote themselves to prayer.²

¹ Deut. 6:6-7

² 1 Cor. 7:2-5

8.7 A man and wife are no longer two but one flesh;¹ therefore, what God has joined together, let no man separate.² Therefore, whoever divorces a spouse and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries the one who is divorced from a spouse commits adultery.³ Consequently, the divorced parties remain one flesh, and they are to remain either unmarried or be reconciled to each other.⁴ Because God hates divorce,⁵ Scripture provides absolutely no grounds for divorce, whether for adultery, desertion, emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse of spouse and/or children, for other criminal activity, or for any other reason under the sun. The only ground God has provided for not resisting a divorce (though not of subsequent remarriage) is a desertion by an unbelieving spouse due to the fact that the other spouse came to Christ.⁶ In such cases they remain one flesh, and the believing spouse is to either stay unmarried or be reconciled to the unbelieving spouse.⁷

¹ Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6; Mk. 10:7-8; Eph. 5:31; 1 Cor. 6:16, 7:2

² Matt. 19:9; Mk. 10:9

³ Matt. 5:32, 14:3-4, 19:9; Mk. 6:18, 10:11; Lk. 16:18; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:10-11

⁴ Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6; Mk. 10:7-8; Rom. 7:1-3; Cor. 6:16, 7:2, 39; Eph. 5:28-29, 31

⁵ Mal. 2:14-16

⁶ 1 Cor. 7:10-16

⁷ 1 Cor. 7:2-3, 10-11, 39

8.8 Therefore, the only remarriage allowed in Scripture is between a divorced couple that has been subsequently reconciled. With that said, however, no past unbiblical divorce or remarriage automatically, in itself, entails church discipline so long as it is accompanied by genuine and evident godly sorrow and repentance over sin that results in holiness.¹

¹ Matt. 18:22; 2 Cor. 2:7-8

8.9 An individual seeking or holding a Spirit-office in the church must, if he should marry, remain in a one-flesh union until their first spouse dies.¹ If he is/were divorced, in God's eyes he still remains in a one-flesh union (a "one-woman man"²) with his spouse and must therefore either stay unmarried or be reconciled with his spouse in order to meet the qualifications for office.^{2, 3, 4} Additionally, in order to be qualified for office, an investigation into the circumstances of his divorce must reveal that he was/is the

innocent/blameless party⁵, who contested the divorce on Scriptural grounds⁶, made and is still making every available effort at reconciliation, and who *remains*: (a) able to manage his household well⁷; (b) above reproach⁸; and (c) with a good reputation with those outside the church.⁹

¹ 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6

² 1 Tim. 3:2

³ Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6; Mk. 10:7-8; Rom. 7:1-3; Cor. 6:16, 7:2, 39; Eph. 5:28-29, 31

⁴ 1 Cor. 7:2-3, 10-11, 39

⁵ Titus 1:6-7

⁶ 1 Cor. 7:10-16

⁷ 1 Tim. 3:4

⁸ 1 Tim. 3:2

⁹ 1 Tim. 3:7

8.10 Though marriage was ordained because God determined that it was not good for man to be alone,¹ marriage is not for everyone. The Apostle Paul wished that all men were single even as he was,² and Christ described such individuals as those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.³ But Scripture recognizes that not everyone has the gift of celibacy—he who is able to accept it, let him accept it,⁴ for each man has his own gift from God, one of this kind and another of that kind.⁵ Those who cannot exercise self-control should marry rather than burn with passion,⁶ but the man who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and who had made up his mind not to marry—this man also does the right thing.⁷ If, therefore, one is able to be a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake, he should so as to serve the Lord with undistracted devotion.⁸

¹ Gen. 2:18

² 1 Cor. 7:7

³ Matt. 19:12

⁴ Matt. 19:12

⁵ 1 Cor. 7:7

⁶ 1 Cor. 7:9

⁷ 1 Cor. 7:37

⁸ 1 Cor. 7:32-35

Chapter 9: Of Generosity

9.1 God commands His elect not to harden their hearts or shut their hands from their poor brother, but rather open their hands wide and willingly lend him whatever he needs;¹ they are not withhold good from those who need it, when it is in their power to act, by saying to their neighbor, “Come back later; I’ll give it tomorrow”—when they now have it with them.² God warns His saints that they cannot know Him unless they defend the cause of the poor and needy,³ for doing so honors God, but failing to do so shows contempt for their Maker.⁴ The sin of Sodom was that she was arrogant, overfed, unconcerned, and did not help the poor and needy,⁵ and those who likewise keep their bread to themselves, fail to guide the widow, or do nothing to aid those perishing for lack of clothing, are worthy of divine judgment.⁶

¹ Deut. 10:18, 15:7-8; Psalm 82:3-4; Proverbs 31:8-9; Jeremiah 22:3; Isaiah 1:17; Isaiah 58:6-7; Zechariah 7:10

² Prov. 3:27-28

³ Jer. 22:16

⁴ Prov. 14:31

⁵ Ezek. 16:49

⁶ Job 31:17-23

9.2 This is the fast that the Lord commands—for His elect to share their bread with the hungry, and bring to their house the poor who are cast out; when they see the naked, they cover him, and not hide themselves from their own flesh.¹ Faith that God their Father accepts as pure and faultless is this—to look after orphans and widows in their distress and so keep oneself from being polluted by the world.² By this, therefore, His saints know love, because He laid down His life for them, and they also ought to lay down their lives for the brethren; but whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, the love of God does not abide in him.³

¹ Is. 58:7

² Lk. 3:11, 19:8a, 9a; James 1:27; 2:15-17

³ 1 Jn. 3:16-17

9.3 No one can serve two masters—for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other; no one can serve both God and money.¹ The pocket book is the lamp of the soul—if, therefore, one’s pocketbook is

generous, his whole soul will be full of light; but if his pocketbook is stingy, his whole soul will be full of darkness; if, therefore, the light that is in one is darkness, how great is that darkness!² Therefore, the elect of God are to sell their possessions and give to the poor, and in so doing they will provide for themselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fall, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.³ For where one's treasure is, there his heart will be also.⁴

¹ Matt. 5:24; Lk. 16:13

² Deut. 15:4, 28:54-56; Prov. 22:9, 23:6, 28:22; Matt. 6:22-23, 20:15; Mk. 7:22; Lk. 11:34-35

³ Matt. 6:20, 8:20, 19:21, 27; Mk. 10:21, 12:41-44; Lk. 9:58, 12:33, 18:22; Jn. 12:6, 13:29; Acts 3:16

⁴ Matt. 6:21; Lk. 12:24

9.4 The saints of God will be enriched in everything so that their generosity at every opportunity will produce thanksgiving to God.¹ That is the purpose for which God gives them money—so, after having all that they need, they will be rich in good works, ready to give, sharing with those who are in need.² And by their sacrificial generosity they prove themselves obedient to their confession of the gospel of Christ, leading others to glorify God.³

¹ 2 Cor. 9:11

² Rom. 12:13; 2 Cor. 9:8; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 6:18-19

³ 2 Cor. 9:13

9.5 The elect of God are commanded not to accumulate for themselves material possessions on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.¹ Rather, they are to pray, "Give me only the daily bread I need, lest I be full and deny You, saying, 'Who is the Lord?'"² Having, therefore, sufficient necessities for their clear and present needs, they are to abound in generosity in all things at all times.³ For godliness with contentment is great gain—for no one brought anything into this world, and it is certain that no one can carry anything out; having daily food and clothing, therefore, the saints of God shall be content.⁴ Everyone, however, who lays up treasure for himself on earth will be judged by God for not being rich toward God,⁵ who will say to him, "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then who will own those possessions you have accumulated?"⁶

¹ Matthew 6:19

² Prov. 30:8-9; Matt.6:11; Lk. 11:3

³ 2 Cor. 9:8

⁴ 1 Tim. 6:6-8

⁵ Lk. 12:16-20; 16:19-22

⁶ Lk. 12:20; Rev. 3:17-18

9.6 As the elect of God give as much as they are able, and even beyond their ability, even in extreme poverty,¹ in abundant joy,² they are to do so without worrying about their life, what they will eat or drink or about their body, what they will wear, for is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Therefore, considering that they cannot add a single hour to their life by worrying, the saints of God do not doubt His provision for tomorrow, for each day has enough trouble of its own.³ Whereas they do not know what will happen tomorrow, for what is their life but a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.⁴ Therefore, those who are rich will weep and howl for their miseries are coming upon them—their riches are corrupted, and their garments are moth-eaten, their gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against them and will eat their flesh like fire; they have accumulated treasures of wrath in the last days.⁵

¹ 2 Cor. 8:2-3, 7b

² Deut. 15:10; 1 Cor. 13:3; 2 Cor. 8:2, 11, 9:5, 7

³ Job 38:39-41; Ps. 26:3; 104:14, 21, 147:9; Matt. 6:25-34; Lk. 12:24-28; Rom. 8:32; Phil. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:7

⁴ Job 7:16; Ps. 39:4-6, 11. 62:9, 89:47-48; James 4:14

⁵ Lk. 6:24-26; Rom. 2:5; James 5:1-3

9.7 Capitalism is not incompatible with Gospel, but the American Dream of self-reliance and materialism is. But those who are poor for His sake¹ will be blessed because they have sought first the kingdom of God;² and by faith they have an ever present bank account that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never be exhausted, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys,³ and their Father, knowing what they need even before they ask, will out of the bank account of heaven provide His children with their daily bread so long as they seek first the His kingdom.⁴

¹ Lk. 6:20

² Matt. 6:33; Lk. 12:31

³ Matt. 6:20; Lk. 12:33; 1 Tim. 6:19

⁴ Ps. 34:9-10; Prov. 11:24-25, 28:27; Mal. 3:10b; Matt. 6:8, 32-33; Lk. 12:30-31; 2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:19

Chapter 10: On Being Peacemakers

10.1 Christ, in His first coming, repeatedly declared that His kingdom was not of this world¹ as He commanded His own to seek first the kingdom of God by dying to themselves in the pursuit of His righteousness.² Saints, therefore, as ambassadors of His kingdom,³ do not live according to the standards of the world⁴ but as radical, selfless pilgrims in this world who deny themselves to follow their Sovereign.⁵ Their primary purpose here on earth, the one by which all other pursuits are evaluated, is to live, proclaim, and demonstrate Christ within them;⁶ as lived Christ—who did not live to please Himself but humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross⁷—so should His disciples.⁸

¹ John 15:18-19, 17:16, 18:36

² Matt. 6:8, 33; Lk. 12:31

³ 2 Cor. 5:20

⁴ James 4:4b; 1 Jn. 2:15

⁵ Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:13-16, 13:14; 1 Pet. 2:11

⁶ Col. 1:27

⁷ Phil. 2:8

⁸ Romans 15:5; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Peter 2:21

10.2 For to this the elect were called—that they should endure grief and suffer wrongfully for doing good and take it patiently, because Christ also suffered for them, leaving them an example that they should follow His steps: who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth, who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return, when He suffered, He did not threaten,¹ because for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and despised its shame.²

¹ 1 Pet. 2:19-23

² Heb. 12:2

10.3 As imitators of Christ,¹ therefore, His elect are to treat others, whether friend or enemy,² as they themselves would like to be treated³ by an integrated, inseparable five-fold response: (a) showing mercy even as their Father is merciful;⁴ (b) forgiving those who have wronged them;⁵ (c) blessing and praying for those who have wronged them;⁶ (d) not repaying evil with evil but rather good;⁷ and (e) not using force to resist an evil person,⁸ for in so doing they will be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect⁹ and inherit an eternal weight of glory,¹⁰ because His steadfast love is better than life.¹¹

¹ Eph. 5:1-2

² Matt. 43-44; Matt. 5:44, 46a; Lk. 6:32a, 35a

³ Matt. 7:12, 22:39; Mk. 12:31

⁴ Matt. 5:48; Lk. 35:b-36; 1 Jn. 4:16b

⁵ Matt. 6:12, 14-15, 18:21-25; Mk. 11:25-26; Lk. 11:4, 23:34; Acts 7:60; James 2:13

⁶ Matt. 5:44; Lk. 6:28; Lk. 23:34; Acts 7:60; Rom. 12:14; 1 Thess. 5:15

⁷ Deut. 32:35; 1 Sam. 24:17; Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Pet. 3:9

⁸ Matt. 5:38-48; Lk. 6:27-36

⁹ Matt. 5:48

¹⁰ 2 Cor. 4:17

¹¹ Ps. 63:3

10.4 Loving, therefore, as Christ loved His elect,¹ saints will do nothing through selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in lowliness of mind they will esteem others better than themselves² by turning the other cheek so their enemies can strike it as well,³ giving their enemies their coat in addition to their shirt,⁴ carrying their luggage two miles instead of just one,⁵ lending to them without either expecting or asking repayment,⁶ not demanding repayment from the one who robs them,⁷ and, if need be, becoming obedient to the point of death,⁸ humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God, trusting that He will exalt them in due time.⁹

¹ John 15:12

² Phil. 2:3

³ Matt. 5:39b; Lk. 6:29a

⁴ Matt 5:40; Lk. 29b

⁵ Matt. 5:41

⁶ Matt. 5:42; Lk. 6:35a

⁷ Lk. 6:30b

⁸ Phil. 2:8

⁹ 1 Pet. 4:19, 5:6

Chapter 11: Of Persecution

11.1 Christ assures His elect that in this world they will have many tribulations¹ and that through them they must enter the kingdom of God,² for the world hates them, because it hated Him before it hated them; if they were of the world, the world would love its own, yet because they are not of the world, but He chose them out of the world, therefore the world hates them; because a servant is not greater than his master, since they persecuted Him, they will also persecute them; all these things they will do to the saints for His name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Christ.³

¹ Jn. 16:33

² Acts 14:22; 1 Pet. 4:12

³ Matthew 10:24-25, 24:9; Jn. 15:18-21, 16:3

11.2 The elect of God, therefore, is commanded to count the cost¹ and forsake all that he has, including his own family,² to follow Christ³—denying himself and taking up his cross daily and following Him, for whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for His sake will save it, for there is no profit to gain the whole world yet lose one's own soul,⁴ because whoever denies Christ before men, He will also deny him before His Father who is in heaven.⁵

¹ Lk. 14:28-32

² Matt. 10:37, 19:29; Mk. 10:29-30; Lk. 14:26, 18:29-30

³ Lk. 14:33

⁴ Matt. 10:39; Mk. 8:34-37; Lk. 9:23-25

⁵ Matt. 10:32-33; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26

11.3 Going to Him outside the camp bearing His reproach,¹ His saints do not fear those who can simply kill the body but cannot kill the soul;² but rather, to win the prize for which God has called them heavenward in Christ Jesus,³ they remember to fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell,⁴ for they who endure to the end by seeing Him who is invisible⁵ will be saved⁶ and gain their own souls.⁷

¹ Heb. 11:26, 13:13

² Matt. 10:28; 1 Pet. 3:14

³ Phil. 3:14

⁴ Matt. 10:28

⁵ Heb. 11:27

⁶ Matt. 10:22; Mk. 13:13

⁷ Lk. 21:19

11.4 The elect of God, therefore, hallow God in their hearts¹ by continually entrusting themselves to Him as to a faithful Creator² who judges righteously,³ trusting that since two sparrows, which are sold for a copper coin, do not fall to the ground apart from their Father's will, they have no reason to fear because they are of more value than many sparrows.⁴

¹ 1 Pet. 3:15

² 1 Pet. 4:19

³ Deut. 32:3-4; 1 Pet. 2:23

⁴ Matt. 10:29-31; Lk. 12:6-7

11.5 Therefore, blessed are the elect when men hate them and prosecute them and say all kinds of evil against them falsely for Christ sake; they are to rejoice in that day and leap for joy—for great is their reward in heaven¹ because they partake of Christ's sufferings.² They are to rejoice because they have been counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name,³ for worthy is the Lamb who was slain of all their sacrificial worship, even that unto their deaths.⁴

¹ Matt. 5:11-12; Lk. 6:22-23; 1 Pet. 2:14, 4:13-14

² Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 4:13

³ Acts 5:41, 7:54-60, 16:25

⁴ Rev. 5:12

11.6 And when anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed,¹ for when Christ's glory is revealed, he may also be glad with exceeding joy,² On the part of the prosecutors, Christ is blasphemed, but on the saints' part He is glorified³ by their patient trust,⁴ which serves as their defense to everyone who asks them a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear,⁵ and thereby they are the salt and light of the world.⁶

¹ 1 Pet. 4:16

² 1 Pet. 4:13

³ 1 Pet. 4:14, 16

⁴ 1 Pet. 2:23, 4:19, 5:6-7

⁵ 1 Pet. 2:15

⁶ Matt. 5:13-16; Mk. 9:49-50; Lk. 14:34-35

11.7 When the elect of God stand trial, they are commanded not to be anxious about how or what they should speak,¹ for Christ has promised that on that day it is not they who speak, but the Spirit of their Father who speaks in them.² They will be given a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries will not be able to withstand or contradict.³

¹ Matt. 10:19

² Matt. 10:20; Mk. 13:11; Jn. 15:25

³ Lk. 21:15

Chapter 12: Of Suffering & Sorrow

12.1 God is the absolute sovereign author of everything that was, is, and is to come; what He wills, He does. He is God, and there is no other; He is God, and there is none like Him, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all My purpose.”¹ He watches over His word to perform it,² and no purpose of His can be thwarted.³ All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing as He does according to His will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and there is none who can stay His hand or say to Him, “What have you done?”⁴ Whatever the Lord pleases, He does—in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps—⁵ as He works all things according to the counsel of His will.⁶

¹ Is. 46:9-10

² Jer. 1:12

³ Job 42:4; Ecc. 7:13

⁴ Dan. 4:35

⁵ Ps. 135:6

⁶ Eph. 1:11

12.2 Such absolute sovereign authorship extends—in such a way that God never sins,[†] nor ever condemns a person unjustly;² nor that is incompatible with the moral accountability of all men³—to suffering and sorrow.⁴ He, and He alone, is the great I AM, and there is no god besides Him; He kills and makes alive; He wounds and He heals; and there is none that can deliver out of His hand.⁵ God designs evil⁶ and affliction,⁷ so that, if a calamity occurs in a city, only He has ultimately done it.⁸ The Lord gives and the Lord takes away,⁹ He gives good as well as evil.¹⁰

[†] Gen. 18:25; Deut. 32:4; Rom. 3:4; Acts 4:27-28; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5

² Dan. 4:37; Rom. 1:20, 2:11-12

³ Rom. 3:19

⁴ Job 1:22, 2:10

⁵ Deut. 32:39

⁶ Gen. 50:20, Ps. 105:17

⁷ Ruth 1:20-21; Job 42:11

⁸ Amos 3:6

⁹ Job 1:21

¹⁰ Job 2:10; Jn. 3:27; 1 Cor. 4:7

12.3 God is therefore the absolute sovereign author of every detail pertaining to all things, including but not limited to wind,¹ lightning,² earthquakes,³ snow,⁴ frogs,⁵ gnats,⁶ flies,⁷ locusts,⁸ quail,⁹ worms,¹⁰ fish,¹¹ sparrows,¹² grass,¹³ plants,¹⁴ famine,¹⁵ the sun,¹⁶ prison doors,¹⁷ blindness,¹⁸ deafness,¹⁹ paralysis,²⁰ fever,²¹ the sickness of children,²² every disease,²³ travel plans,²⁴ the rolling of dice,²⁵ the loss or gain of money,²⁶ the hearts of kings,²⁷ nations,²⁸ murderers,²⁹ spiritual deadness,³⁰ the slaughter of His people,³¹ the suffering of His saints,³² the persecution of His children,³³ the repentance of souls,³⁴ the gift of faith,³⁵ the pursuit of holiness,³⁶ the maturity of the elect,³⁷ the giving of life and taking in death,³⁸ and the crucifixion of His Son.³⁹

¹ Lk. 8:25

² Job 36:32

³ Acts 16:26; Rev. 16:18

⁴ Ps. 147:16

⁵ Ex. 8:1-15

⁶ Ex. 8:16-19

⁷ Ex. 8:20-32

⁸ Ex. 10:1-12

⁹ Ex. 16:6-8

¹⁰ Jonah 4:7

¹¹ Jonah 2:10

¹² Matt. 10:29

¹³ Ps. 147:8

¹⁴ Jonah 4:6

¹⁵ Ps. 105:16

¹⁶ Josh. 10:12-13

¹⁷ Acts 5:19

¹⁸ Ex. 4:11; Lk. 18:42

¹⁹ Ex. 4:11; Mk. 7:37

²⁰ Lk. 5:24-25

²¹ Matt. 8:15

²² 2 Sam. 12:15

²³ Matt. 4:23

²⁴ James 4:13-15

²⁵ Prov. 16:33

²⁶ 1 Sam. 2:7

²⁷ Prov. 21:1; Dan. 2:21

²⁸ Ps. 33:10

²⁹ Acts 4:27-28

³⁰ Eph. 2:4-5

³¹ Ps. 44:11

³² 1 Pet. 4:19

³³ Heb. 12:4-7

³⁴ 2 Tim. 2:25

³⁵ Phil. 1:29

³⁶ Phil. 3:12-13

³⁷ Heb. 6:3

³⁸ 1 Sam. 2:6

³⁹ Acts 4:27-28

12.4 God is God,¹ but God is also love²—though He causes grief, He will have compassion according to the abundance of His steadfast love, for He does not afflict from His heart to grieve the children of men.³ God is not double-minded—there is a perfect beauty, coherence, and consistency in the majestic and harmonious cooperation of all His attributes.⁴ With God are wisdom and might; He has counsel and understanding⁵ beyond measure.⁶ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!!⁷ His infinite sovereignty, therefore, rests in the hands of His infinite holiness, righteousness, wisdom, love, and grace; He is too wise to be mistaken, and too good to be unkind.⁸ How kindly does God deal with His elect when He chooses to afflict them but for a little while, so that with everlasting kindness He may have mercy on them.⁹

¹ Is. 45:22, 26:9-10

² 1 Jn. 4:8, 16

³ Lam. 3:32-33

⁴ Ex. 34:6-7; Prov. 17:15; Rom. 3:21-26, 9:14-15

⁵ Job 12:13

⁶ Ps. 147:5

⁷ Rom. 11:33

⁸ Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 85:10, 89:14, 100:5

⁹ Is. 54:7-8

12.5 Consequently, the suffering and sorrow of God's elect do not rest upon chance nor upon the will of men, but alone upon God's sovereign authorship—for He has appointed who shall suffer,¹ when they shall suffer,² where they shall suffer,³ and what kind of sufferings they shall experience⁴—who among them shall die of hunger, with the sword, be lead into captivity, and be eaten up of beasts.⁵ The saints of God, therefore, are immortal until their work is done.⁶

¹ Rev. 6:11

² Jn. 7:30; Acts 18:9-10

³ Lk. 9:30, 13:33

⁴ Mk. 9:13; Jn. 21:19; Acts 9:16, 13:29

⁵ Jer. 15:2-3

⁶ Ps. 139:16; Heb. 9:27; James 4:13-16

12.6 There are an unsearchable number of reasons for why God does what He does;¹ each moment of every day contains a complex tapestry of innumerable deterministic chaoses (i.e., butterfly effects) that can only be weaved by His sovereign authorship,² for if they were simply a product of happenstance or of man's volition they would quickly unravel into purposelessness, and therefore meaninglessness, and therefore despairing madness.³ For the elect of God, every aspect of each new trial has been personally authored by the hand of an infinitely loving and merciful Father⁴ for the purpose of refining their worshipful trust⁵ by: (a) discipline that leads to repentance;⁶ (b) pruning that leads to abounding fruit;⁷ (c) humiliating weakness that severs our self-reliance;⁸ in order that they may (d) be partakers of His holiness;⁹ (e) and know Him intimately.¹⁰

¹ Job 5:9; Ecc. 3:11, 7:23, 8:17; Rom. 11:33

² Prov. 8:22-31; Ecc. 3:1-8, 11; Acts 17:28; Rom. 8:28, 11:36; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:3, 2:10

³ Ecc. 1:2, 14, 2:1-2, 11, 17, 4:4, 12:8; 1 Thess. 4:13

⁴ Rom. 5:3-5; 1 Pet. 1:6-9, 5:10

⁵ Deut. 8:2-5, 16; Heb. 12:5-11

⁶ Lk. 13:4-5

⁷ Jn. 15:1-8

⁸ Deut. 8:3, 16; 2 Cor. 12:7-10; Phil. 3:7-16, 4:11-13

⁹ Heb. 12:10

¹⁰ Job 42:5

12.7 God is most glorified by the indomitable though painful joy¹ of His saints in Christ Jesus who, while in the very midst of suffering and sorrow, they in humble, gusty trust² continue to worship and bless His name³ and find their contentment in Him alone.⁴ They magnify His beauty by kissing the Rose of Sharon while hallowing His thorns,⁵ declaring, "Go, then, earthly fame and treasure. Come disaster, scorn, and pain. In Your service, pain is pleasure. With Your favor, loss is gain."⁶ By seeing faith they understand that God moves in mysterious ways;⁷ therefore, they judge Him not by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace, for they are assured that behind a frowning providence He hides

a smiling face.⁸ Though He slay them, yet they will trust Him⁹ and magnify Him, because for them to live is Christ and to die is gain.¹⁰

¹ Is. 43:3; Jn. 15:11, 17:13; Rom. 9:2-3; 2 Cor. 6:10

² Prov. 28:1; Acts 21:14; Heb. 4:16

³ Job 1:20-21

⁴ Ps. 16:11, 21:6, 27:1-4, 42:1-2, 43:4, 63:1-5, 73:25-26; Hab. 3:17-18; Jn. 15:11, 16:24, 17:13; 1 Pet. 1:8; 1 Jn. 1:4

⁵ Songs 2:1

⁶ Phil. 1:20-21, 3:7-11

⁷ Job 5:9; Ecc. 3:11, 7:23, 8:17; Rom. 11:33

⁸ Rom. 8:28, 32; 2 Cor. 4:17

⁹ Job 13:15

¹⁰ Eph. 2:7; Phil. 1:20-21

Doctrine 13: Of Oaths and Vows

13.1 An oath is a conditional self-curse—a promise to perform a certain act bound with an appeal to divine sanction for failure to fulfill said obligation; it is intended to guarantee future performance based on the authority or virtue of something greater than the swearer; every oath therefore inherently implicates God, and every cunning deceit to escape its terms belittles His Name and glory; and by its very nature the oath implies that the swearer is untrustworthy and hypocritical in his behavior.¹ It is, therefore, distinct from a contractual performance,² voluntary vow to God,³ or inviting God to swear regarding past behavior and conduct.⁴

¹ Matt. 5:33-37, 23:16-22; Mk. 6:26; Acts 23:12, 14, 21; Heb. 6:16; James 5:12

² Ruth 4:6-8; 1 Kings 5:9-11, 9:11; Jer. 32:10-15; Matt. 20:1-16

³ Acts 18:18, 21:23, 26

⁴ 1 Sam. 12:1-5; Rom. 1:9, 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:18, 23, 11:31; Gal. 1:20; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:5; 1 Tim. 2:7

13.2 Jesus—as the Moses-like Lawgiver of the New Covenant¹ who came not to destroy but to perfectly complete the Law²—consummated the Third Commandment to prohibit the taking of the name of the LORD our God at all in making oaths by clearly, unambiguously, unequivocally commanding His elect not to swear at all, but to let their “yes” be “yes” and their “no” be “no,” for whatever is more than this is from the evil one and they thereby fall into judgment.³

¹ Deut. 18:15-22, Matt. 5:1-2, 17-20, 7:28-29; Lk. 4:32; 1 Cor. 3:11

² Matt. 5:17-20; Gal. 3:17; Eph. 2:14-15, 17; Heb. 7:18, 8:3

³ Matt. 5:22-27, 23:16-22; James 5:12

13.3 A contractual performance or voluntary vow to God is to be made in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation.¹ No man may vow to do anything forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for the performance whereof he has no promise of ability from God,² but in anything not sinful being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt;³ nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels.⁴

¹ Ps. 24:4; Jer. 4:2

² Num. 30:5, 8, 12-13; Mk. 6:26; Acts 23:12, 14

³ 1 Sam. 25:22, 32-34; Ps. 15:4

Chapter 14: The (Dallas) Statement On Social Justice & The Gospel (2018)

14.1 Scripture

WE AFFIRM that the Bible is God's Word, breathed out by him. It is inerrant, infallible, and the final authority for determining what is true (what we must believe) and what is right (how we must live). All truth claims and ethical standards must be tested by God's final Word, which is Scripture alone.

WE DENY that Christian belief, character, or conduct can be dictated by any other authority, and we deny that the postmodern ideologies derived from intersectionality, radical feminism, and critical race theory are consistent with biblical teaching. We further deny that competency to teach on any biblical issue comes from any qualification for spiritual people other than clear understanding and simple communication of what is revealed in Scripture.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 2:18-25; PSALM 19:7-10; 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14-15; EPHESIANS 5:22-33; 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-4:5; HEBREWS 4:12; 13:4; 1 PETER 1:25; 2 PETER 1:19-21

14.2 Imago Dei

WE AFFIRM that God created every person equally in his own image. As divine image-bearers, all people have inestimable value and dignity before God and deserve honor, respect and protection. Everyone has been created by God and for God.

WE DENY that God-given roles, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, sex or physical condition or any other property of a person either negates or contributes to that individual's worth as an image-bearer of God.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1:26-30; 2:18-22; 9:6; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17; COLOSSIANS 1:21-22

14.3 Justice

WE AFFIRM that since he is holy, righteous, and just, God requires those who bear his image to live justly in the world. This includes showing appropriate respect to every person and giving to each one what he or she is due. We affirm that societies must establish laws to correct injustices that have been imposed through cultural prejudice.

WE DENY that true justice can be culturally defined or that standards of justice that are merely socially constructed can be imposed with the same authority as those that are derived from Scripture. We further deny that Christians can live justly in the world under any principles other than the biblical standard of righteousness. Relativism, socially-

constructed standards of truth or morality, and notions of virtue and vice that are constantly in flux cannot result in authentic justice.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 18:19; ISAIAH 61:8; MICAH 6:8; MATTHEW 5:17-19; ROMANS 3:31

14.4 God's Law

WE AFFIRM that God's law, as summarized in the ten commandments, more succinctly summarized in the two great commandments, and manifested in Jesus Christ, is the only standard of unchanging righteousness. Violation of that law is what constitutes sin.

WE DENY that any obligation that does not arise from God's commandments can be legitimately imposed on Christians as a prescription for righteous living. We further deny the legitimacy of any charge of sin or call to repentance that does not arise from a violation of God's commandments.

SCRIPTURE: DEUTERONOMY 10:4; ROMANS 6:14, 10:5; GALATIANS 2:16, 3:10, 12; COLOSSIANS 2:14- 17; HEBREWS 10:1

14.5 Sin

WE AFFIRM that all people are connected to Adam both naturally and federally. Therefore, because of original sin everyone is born under the curse of God's law and all break his commandments through sin. There is no difference in the condition of sinners due to age, ethnicity, or sex. All are depraved in all their faculties and all stand condemned before God's law. All human relationships, systems, and institutions have been affected by sin.

WE DENY that, other than the previously stated connection to Adam, any person is morally culpable for another person's sin. Although families, groups, and nations can sin collectively, and cultures can be predisposed to particular sins, subsequent generations share the collective guilt of their ancestors only if they approve and embrace (or attempt to justify) those sins. Before God each person must repent and confess his or her own sins in order to receive forgiveness. We further deny that one's ethnicity establishes any necessary connection to any particular sin.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 2:16, 17, 3:12,13-15; PROVERBS 29:18; ISAIAH 25:7, 60:2-3; JEREMIAH 31:27-34; EZEKIEL 18:1-9, 14-18; MATTHEW 23:29-36; ROMANS 1:16-17, 3:23, 5:12, 10:14-17; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-11; 2 CORINTHIANS 11:3; GALATIANS 1:6-9; TITUS 1:12, 13; REVELATION 13:8

14.6 Gospel

WE AFFIRM that the gospel is the divinely-revealed message concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ—especially his virgin birth, righteous life, substitutionary

sacrifice, atoning death, and bodily resurrection—revealing who he is and what he has done with the promise that he will save anyone and everyone who turns from sin by trusting him as Lord.

WE DENY that anything else, whether works to be performed or opinions to be held, can be added to the gospel without perverting it into another gospel. This also means that implications and applications of the gospel, such as the obligation to live justly in the world, though legitimate and important in their own right, are not definitional components of the gospel.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 3:15; PROVERBS 29:18; ISAIAH 25:7, 60:2, 3; ROMANS 1:16-17, 10:14,15,17; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11; GALATIANS 1:6-9; REVELATION 13:8

14.7 Salvation

WE AFFIRM that salvation is granted by God's grace alone received through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. Every believer is united to Christ, justified before God, and adopted into his family. Thus, in God's eyes there is no difference in spiritual value or worth among those who are in Christ. Further, all who are united to Christ are also united to one another regardless of age, ethnicity, or sex. All believers are being conformed to the image of Christ. By God's regenerating and sanctifying grace all believers will be brought to a final glorified, sinless state of perfection in the day of Jesus Christ.

WE DENY that salvation can be received in any other way. We also deny that salvation renders any Christian free from all remaining sin or immune from even grievous sin in this life. We further deny that ethnicity excludes anyone from understanding the gospel, nor does anyone's ethnic or cultural heritage mitigate or remove the duty to repent and believe.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 3:15; ACTS 20:32; ROMANS 3-4; EPHESIANS 2:8-9; GALATIANS 3:28-29; 1 JOHN 2:1-2

14.8 The Church

WE AFFIRM that the primary role of the church is to worship God through the preaching of his word, teaching sound doctrine, observing baptism and the Lord's Supper, refuting those who contradict, equipping the saints, and evangelizing the lost. We affirm that when the primacy of the gospel is maintained that this often has a positive effect on the culture in which various societal ills are mollified. We affirm that, under the lordship of Christ, we are to obey the governing authorities established by God and pray for civil leaders.

WE DENY that political or social activism should be viewed as integral components of the gospel or primary to the mission of the church. Though believers can and should utilize all lawful means that God has providentially established to have some effect on

the laws of a society, we deny that these activities are either evidence of saving faith or constitute a central part of the church's mission given to her by Jesus Christ, her head. We deny that laws or regulations possess any inherent power to change sinful hearts.

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 28:16-20; ROMANS 13:1-7; 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-3; 2 TIMOTHY 4:2; TITUS 1:9; 1 PETER 2:13-17

14.9 Heresy

WE AFFIRM that heresy is a denial of or departure from a doctrine that is essential to the Christian faith. We further affirm that heresy often involves the replacement of key, essential truths with variant concepts, or the elevation of non-essentials to the status of essentials. To embrace heresy is to depart from the faith once delivered to the saints and thus to be on a path toward spiritual destruction. We affirm that the accusation of heresy should be reserved for those departures from Christian truth that destroy the weight-bearing doctrines of the redemptive core of Scripture. We affirm that accusations of heresy should be accompanied with clear evidence of such destructive beliefs.

WE DENY that the charge of heresy can be legitimately brought against every failure to achieve perfect conformity to all that is implied in sincere faith in the gospel.

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 14:6; ACTS 4:12; GALATIANS 1:6-9; 1 JOHN 4:1-3, 10, 14, 15; 5:1, 6-12

14.10 Sexuality and Marriage

WE AFFIRM that God created mankind male and female and that this divinely determined distinction is good, proper, and to be celebrated. Maleness and femaleness are biologically determined at conception and are not subject to change. The curse of sin results in sinful, disordered affections that manifest in some people as same-sex attraction. Salvation grants sanctifying power to renounce such dishonorable affections as sinful and to mortify them by the Spirit. We further affirm that God's design for marriage is that one woman and one man live in a one-flesh, covenantal, sexual relationship until separated by death. Those who lack the desire or opportunity for marriage are called to serve God in singleness and chastity. This is as noble a calling as marriage.

WE DENY that human sexuality is a socially constructed concept. We also deny that one's sex can be fluid. We reject "gay Christian" as a legitimate biblical category. We further deny that any kind of partnership or union can properly be called marriage other than one man and one woman in lifelong covenant together. We further deny that people should be identified as "sexual minorities"—which serves as a cultural classification rather than one that honors the image-bearing character of human sexuality as created by God.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1:26-27, 2:24, 4:1, 19:24-28; MATTHEW 19:3-6; ROMANS 8:13; 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11; 1 TIMOTHY 1:10; JUDE 7

14.11 Complementarianism

WE AFFIRM that God created mankind both male and female with inherent biological and personal distinctions between them and that these created differences are good, proper, and beautiful. Though there is no difference between men and women before God's law or as recipients of his saving grace, we affirm that God has designed men and women with distinct traits and to fulfill distinct roles. These differences are most clearly defined in marriage and the church, but are not irrelevant in other spheres of life. In marriage the husband is to lead, love, and safeguard his wife and the wife is to respect and be submissive to her husband in all things lawful. In the church, qualified men alone are to lead as pastors/elders/bishops and preach to and teach the whole congregation. We further affirm that the image of God is expressed most fully and beautifully in human society when men and women walk in obedience to their God-ordained roles and serve according to their God-given gifts.

WE DENY that the God-ordained differences in men's and women's roles disparage the inherent spiritual worth or value of one over the other, nor do those differences in any way inhibit either men or women from flourishing for the glory of God.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1:26–28, 2:15-25, 3:1-24; EPHESIANS 5:22-33; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:7-9; 1 TIMOTHY 2:12-14; TITUS 2

14.12 Race / Ethnicity

WE AFFIRM God made all people from one man. Though people often can be distinguished by different ethnicities and nationalities, they are ontological equals before God in both creation and redemption. "Race" is not a biblical category, but rather a social construct that often has been used to classify groups of people in terms of inferiority and superiority. All that is good, honest, just, and beautiful in various ethnic backgrounds and experiences can be celebrated as the fruit of God's grace. All sinful actions and their results (including evils perpetrated between and upon ethnic groups by others) are to be confessed as sinful, repented of, and repudiated.

WE DENY that Christians should segregate themselves into racial groups or regard racial identity above, or even equal to, their identity in Christ. We deny that any divisions between people groups (from an unstated attitude of superiority to an overt spirit of resentment) have any legitimate place in the fellowship of the redeemed. We reject any teaching that encourages racial groups to view themselves as privileged oppressors or entitled victims of oppression. While we are to weep with those who weep, we deny that a person's feelings of offense or oppression necessarily prove that someone else is guilty of sinful behaviors, oppression, or prejudice.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1:26–28; ACTS 17:24-26; 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7; 2 CORINTHIANS 12:16-18

14.13 Culture

WE AFFIRM that some cultures operate on assumptions that are inherently better than those of other cultures because of the biblical truths that inform those worldviews that have produced these distinct assumptions. Those elements of a given culture that reflect divine revelation should be celebrated and promoted. But the various cultures out of which we have been called all have features that are worldly and sinful—and therefore those sinful features should be repudiated for the honor of Christ. We affirm that whatever evil influences to which we have been subjected via our culture can be—and must be— overcome through conversion and the training of both mind and heart through biblical truth.

WE DENY that individuals and sub-groups in any culture are unable, by God’s grace, to rise above whatever moral defects or spiritual deficiencies have been engendered or encouraged by their respective cultures.

SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 1:18-32; EPHESIANS 4:17-24; COLOSSIANS 3:5-11

14.14 Racism

WE AFFIRM that racism is a sin rooted in pride and malice which must be condemned and renounced by all who would honor the image of God in all people. Such racial sin can subtly or overtly manifest itself as racial animosity or racial vainglory. Such sinful prejudice or partiality falls short of God’s revealed will and violates the royal law of love. We affirm that virtually all cultures, including our own, at times contain laws and systems that foster racist attitudes and policies.

WE DENY that treating people with sinful partiality or prejudice is consistent with biblical Christianity. We deny that only those in positions of power are capable of racism, or that individuals of any particular ethnic groups are incapable of racism. We deny that systemic racism is in any way compatible with the core principles of historic evangelical convictions. We deny that the Bible can be legitimately used to foster or justify partiality, prejudice, or contempt toward other ethnicities. We deny that the contemporary evangelical movement has any deliberate agenda to elevate one ethnic group and subjugate another. And we emphatically deny that lectures on social issues (or activism aimed at reshaping the wider culture) are as vital to the life and health of the church as the preaching of the gospel and the exposition of Scripture. Historically, such things tend to become distractions that inevitably lead to departures from the gospel.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1:26-27;

Chapter 15: Of the Civil Magistrate

15.1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil magistrates to be under Him, over the people,¹ for His own glory and the public good;² and to this end has armed them with the power of the sword, for defense and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers.³

¹ Ps. 82:1; Lk. 12:48; Rom. 13:1-6; 1 Pet. 2:13-14

² Gen. 6:11-13, 9:5-6; Ps. 58:1-2, 72:14, 82:1-4; Prov. 21:15, 24:11-12, 29:14, 26:31:5; Ezek. 7:23, 45:9; Dan. 4:27; Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:3-4; 1 Tim. 2:2; 1 Pet. 2:14

³ Gen. 9:6; Prov. 16:14, 19:12, 20:2, 21:15, 28:17; Acts 25:11; Rom. 13:4; 1 Pet. 2:14

15.2 Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith; or give preference to any religion or denomination above the rest, or interfere with the full, free, and unquestioned liberty enjoyed by religious persons in the discharging every part of their sacred functions without violence, danger, harassment, or penalty; or obstruct, constrain, or handicap the due exercise of church government and discipline among the voluntary members of any religion or denomination, according to their own profession and belief.¹ It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people in such an effectual manner as that no person shall be abused, injured, or insulted on account of religious faith or lack thereof;² and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.³

¹ 2 Chron. 26:18; Matt. 18:17, 16:19; Jn. 18:36; Acts 5:29; Rom. 10:15; 1 Cor. 4:1-2, 12, 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11-12; Heb. 5:4, 6

² Lev. 24:16; Deut. 13:5-6, 12; 2 Kings 18:4, 23:1-26; 1 Chron. 13:1-9; 2 Chron. 34:33; Ps. 105:15, 122:9; Ezra 7:23-28; Is. 49:23; Rom. 13:1-6; Acts 18:14-16

³ 2 Chron. 19:8-11, 19-30; 2 Sam. 23:3; Matt. 2:4-5; Rom. 13:4; 1 Tim. 2:2

15.3 Civil magistrates being set up by God for the ends aforesaid, subjection¹ in all lawful things commanded by them,² including payment of taxes,³ ought to be yielded by the elect in the Lord, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake;⁴ and they ought to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for kings and all that are in authority so that (a) under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; and (b) they might be saved.⁵

¹ Prov. 16:14-15, 19:12, 20:2, 24:21, 22, 25:15, 28:2; Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-14, 17

² Dan. 1:8, 3:4-6, 16-18, 6:5-10, 22; Matt. 22:21; Acts 4:19-20, 5:29

³ Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:6-7

⁴ Rom. 13:5

⁵ Jer. 29:7; 1 Tim. 2:1-4

15.4 Jesus Christ is Lord of Lords and King of Kings,¹ who is reigning as absolute sovereign over all until His Father puts all His enemies under His feet,² has inaugurated the Kingdom of Heaven³—a borderless, spiritual kingdom that is not of this world⁴ consisting of His elect from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue.⁵ As passing foreigners, therefore, in a strange land,⁶ His saints have no fidelity to any earthly nation. Rather, as lambs among wolves,⁷ they are to declare, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!”⁸ Their commission as fools for Christ’s sake⁹ is to build Christ’s spiritual kingdom by spiritual reproduction.¹⁰ Therefore, as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, they do not become entangled in civilian affairs for they desire to please the One who enlisted them.¹¹ And in refraining from the power struggles of earthly kingdoms, their offense is solely that of the Cross rather than that of their politics.¹²

¹ Deut. 10:17; Josh. 22:22; Ps. 136:1-3; Dan. 11:36; Rev. 17:14; 19:16

² Ps. 110:1; Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 1:13, 2:8-9; Jude 1:4

³ Matt. 11:12, 12:28; Lk. 11:20

⁴ Jn. 15:18-19, 17:16, 18:36

⁵ Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:18; Ps. 22:27-28, 86:9; Is. 45:22-23, 66:18; Jer. 3:17; Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 14:6, 9, 11-12, 24, 28; Rev. 5:9, 7:9-10, 15:4

⁶ Phil. 3:20; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; Heb. 11:13-16, 13:14; 1 Pet. 2:11

⁷ Matt. 10:16; Lk. 10:3

⁸ Matt. 3:2

⁹ 1 Cor. 4:10

¹⁰ Matt. 28:19-20

¹¹ 2 Tim. 2:3-4

¹² Gal. 5:11

15.5 While the state by God-given mandate due to fallen necessity operates on the principle of force,¹ the elect of God do not wage war as the world does²—for they do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the

rulers of the darkness of this age.³ They are to abandon the sword, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.⁴ Instead, their weapons have divine power to throw down stronghold.⁵ they overcome by bearing the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.⁶

¹ Gen. 9:6; Prov. 16:14, 19:12, 20:2, 21:15, 28:17; Acts 25:11; Rom. 13:4; 1 Pet. 2:14

² 2 Cor. 10:3

³ Eph. 6:12

⁴ Matt. 26:52-53

⁵ 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-18

⁶ Gal. 5:22-23

15.6 In the spirit of Christ, the saints of God should oppose racism;¹ injustice;² every form of greed, selfishness, and vice (including all forms of gambling);³ all forms of sexual immorality (including but not limited to adultery, divorce, homosexuality, transgenderism, prostitution/sex trafficking, and pornography);⁴ and the sale, distribution, and use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.⁵ They should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick.⁶ They should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.⁷ They should encourage biblical sexuality, manhood, womanhood, marriage, parenthood and the family.⁸ And in order to promote these ends, the elect should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty and witness to Christ and the truth of His exclusivity; cooperating with unbelievers, but not being yoked with them; being in the world but not of the world.⁹

¹ Gal. 3:26-28

² Deut. 17:19, 25; Prov. 17:15; Micah 6:8; Zech. 8:16

³ Ex. 20:15, 17; Lev. 6:2-5; Deut. 27:17, 25; James 5:1-6

⁴ Gen. 1:27; Ex. 20:14; Deut. 27:20-23; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9

⁵ 1 Cor. 6:10, 10:23-11:1

⁶ Deut. 27:19; Matt. 25:35-36; Mk. 1:29-34, 2:3, 10:21; Lk. 4:18-21, 10:27-37, 12:33; James 1:27

⁷ Gen. 1:27; Ex. 20:13; Job 33:4, 10:11-12; Ps. 119:73a, 127:3-5a, 139:131-16; Is. 44:24, 49:15; Jer. 1:5; Lk. 1:15, 41, 44; Gal. 1:15

⁸ Gen. 2:18-25; Deut. 27:16; Eph. 5:22-6:4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Pet. 3:1-8

⁹ Gen. 41; Esther; Dan. 2; John 17:14–19; 2 Cor. 6:14; Gal. 6:10

15.7 When a government rebels against God’s authority by compelling God’s elect to disobey the revealed will of their Sovereign, they are no longer bound to obey any: (a) any law that requires a Christian to deny, by commission or omission, the Gospel;¹ (b) laws prohibiting the spread of the Gospel;² (c) law that limits their ability to declare go and sin no more, for the ability to call sin “sin” is essential to the Gospel of faith and repentance;³ and (d) law that compels the elect to, either directly or indirectly, facilitate, support, participate in, or otherwise condone sinful behavior.⁴

¹ Dan. 3:16-18, 6:10; Jn. 14:6

² Acts 4:19-20, 5:29

³ Jn. 8:11

⁴ Ex. 1:17, 21

Chapter 16: Sanctity of Human Life

All human life is created in the image of God and is therefore sacred to our Creator (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 9:6). Additionally, Scripture affirms that the unborn baby is a person bearing the image of God from the moment of conception (Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:2, 24; Luke 1:44). Therefore, because God commands His people to plead for protection for the innocent and justice for the fatherless (Psalm 72:12-14; Psalm 82:3; James 1:27), the elect are to oppose any and all methods used to terminate a human pregnancy for any reason. Likewise, suicide, assisted-suicide, and euthanasia are incompatible with Scripture.

Chapter 17: Of the Church

17.1 It is the will of God that the universal Church find expression in local, autonomous assemblies¹ with homegrown,² sometimes dual³ leadership whose executive function resides in a plurality of shepherd-teachers⁴ (called teachers, shepherds/pastors, and overseers/bishops in Scripture)⁵ complimented by the continuing Spirit-endowed offices of missionary, prophet, evangelist, and deacon, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until all the elect come to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that they should no longer be children.⁶ All these watch over the souls of their flocks, laboring as those who must give an account to Him who appointed them.⁷

¹ Acts 2:46, 5:42, 12:12 & 17, 16:40, 17:5, 18:7; Rom. 16:3-5, 15-15, 23; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 1:2

² Acts 6:3, 6, 14:23, 20:17; Titus 1:5

³ Acts 6:5 with 6:8,10; Acts 6:5 with 8:4-8, 26-40; 1 Thess. 2:6, 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:3 w 2 Tim. 4:5; 1 Tim. 2:7

⁴ Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:2, 6, 22-23, 20:17-18, 21:18-20; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 5:17-25; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-2

⁵ Acts 20:17 with 28; Titus 1:5 with 7; 1 Pet. 5:1 with 2; they have the same role (Acts 20:28-31; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:2, 5:17; Titus 1:9-16), and the same honor (Phil. 1:1, 2:29; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17)

⁶ Acts 6:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-14a; 1 Tim. 3:8-13

⁷ 1 Cor. 3:11-15; Heb. 13:17; James 3:1

17.2 All shepherd-elders equally are tasked with shepherding the local church¹ by laboring in the word and teaching² and training others, within the context of the local church, to do so as well,³ protecting the congregation from false teachers,⁴ training and correcting the saints in sound doctrine,⁵ praying for the sick,⁶ judging doctrinal issues,⁷ and leading by developing a consensus of the entire congregation.⁸

¹ Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-3

² 1 Tim. 3:2, 5:17; Titus 1:9

³ 2 Tim. 2:2

⁴ Acts 20:28-31

⁵ 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 3:13-17; Titus 1:9

⁶ James 5:14

⁷ Acts 15:6

⁸ Matt. 18:1-5; Lk. 22:24-27; Jn. 17:11, 20-23; Acts 1:23, 26, 6:1-7, 15:22, 30; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 8:19; 1 Pet. 5:1-3

17.3 Deacons are servants¹ tasked with the local church's response to the material needs of their own members and those of the city at large.² Evangelists publicly herald the good news of Christ, often³ though not always⁴ as part of an itinerant ministry. Missionaries are those sent out, often in pairs,⁵ by a local congregation to plant and equip another local congregation.⁶ Prophets proclaim a spontaneous revelation from the Holy Spirit⁷ in an assembly of believers⁸ for the purpose of edification and exhortation and comfort,⁹ conviction,¹⁰ and guidance.¹¹

¹ Matt. 23:13; Rom. 15:8; Col. 4:7

² Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 5:3-16

³ Acts 8:4-8, 26-40

⁴ 2 Tim. 4:5

⁵ Prov. 27:17; Ecc. 4:12; Mk. 6:7; Lk. 10:1; Acts 13:2-3, 15:39-40

⁶ Acts 18:27; 1 Cor. 4:6-9, 9:5; 2 Cor. 8:18; 1 Thess. 2:6, 3:2

⁷ Lk. 7:39; Jn. 4:19; 1 Cor. 14:30

⁸ Acts 11:27-30, 20:23, 21:4, 10-11

⁹ 1 Cor. 14:3

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 14:24-25

¹¹ Acts 11:27-30, 20:23, 21:4, 10-11

17.4 Though Christ has established certain offices in the local church, there is no laity/clergy dichotomy among the elect; the the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament—and its modern equivalents—have been done away with by the Incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ.¹ For He is the the one mediator between God and men,² our one and only great High Priest.³ Every saint, therefore, has become part of the chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession.⁴ All who have received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become God’s children.⁵ And if they are children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,⁶ able in their individual capacity—without the need for a priest—to boldly approach the throne of grace.⁷ Every believer, therefore, is to be a minister to one another and an evangelist to the lost.

¹ Matt. 23:8-12

² 1 Tim. 2:5

³ Heb. 4:14

⁴ Jerm. 3:31-34; Heb. 8:10-13; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9-10

⁵ Jn. 1:12

⁶ Rom. 8:17

⁷ Heb. 4:16

17.5 The qualifications for each of these office are simply that of a mature saint: full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom;¹ servant-leadership—not as lords but as examples who exhort, “Follow me as I follow Christ;”² baptized;³ already engaged in a ministry of prayer and spiritual reproduction that is feared by demons;⁴ blameless with a clear conscience, holy, just, a lover of what is good, and holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught; willingly and not for dishonest gain, not covetous nor greedy for money; hospitable; temperate, sober-minded, not given to wine; not violent nor quarrelsome, but gentle, not self-willed but self-controlled, not quick-tempered but of good behavior, not double-tongued; the husband of one wife who rules his own house well with his children: (a) in submission with all reverence and (b) not accused of dissipation or insubordination; not a new believer but tested and found faithful, and having good testimony among non-believers.⁵

¹ Acts 6:3

² Matt. 20:25-28, 23:11; Mk. 9:33-37, 10:42-45; Lk. 22:25-27; 1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:3

³ Matt. 3:6, 28:19-20; Acts 2:38, 8:12, 36-38, 10:47-48, 16:33, 18:8

⁴ Acts 6:10, 19:15

⁵ 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:2

17.6 While all shepherd-teachers must be able to teach,¹ and though it be incumbent upon them to be instant in the expository exultation of the Word,² by way of office, yet the work of heralding the Word is not so peculiarly confined to them but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and affirmed and called by the church, may and ought to perform it.³

¹ 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:2

² 2 Tim. 4:2

³ Acts 11:19-21; 1 Pet. 4:10-11

127.7 Women shall not teach or exercise authority over a man, but rather she is to remain quiet, for Adam was formed first, then Eve.¹ This is not an issue of equality, for men and women are equal before God;² nevertheless, Scripture is clear that men and women do not have the same roles.³ Therefore, women shall not serve in any church office save that of deaconess⁴ and prophet.⁵

¹ 1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-13

² Gal. 3:28

³ 1 Cor. 14:34-38; 1 Tim. 2:11-3:13; Titus 1:5-9

⁴ Rom. 16:1; 1 Tim. 3:11

⁵ Lk. 2:36; Acts 21:9

17.8 The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto a Spirit-office in a local church, is that he be affirmed thereunto by the common suffrage¹ of the church itself,² with guidance of a missionary church planter as applicable,³ and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer,⁴ with laying on of hands.⁵

¹ Acts 14:23

² Acts 1:23-26, 6:3, 6

³ Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5

⁴ Acts 13:3, 14:23

⁵ Acts 6:6, 13:3

17.9 The primary task of shepherd-elders, missionaries, and evangelists is to devote themselves entirely to prayer and the ministry of the word,¹ and therefore those that herald the Gospel should live from the Gospel in a manner worthy of the Lord.² However, there may be times and seasons, particularly within the context of domestic ministry, when (part-time) bi-vocational tent-making ministry is appropriate³ in order to: (a) provide for the weak and in so doing confirm by example Christ's teaching that it is better to give than to receive;⁴ (b) to provide an example of working with one's own hands in labor and toil and in so doing confirm the precept that if anyone does not work, neither shall he eat;⁵ (c) to avoid even the appearance of peddling the Gospel as a cloak for covetousness;⁶ (d) to better allocate Kingdom resources where they are needed the most;⁷ and (e) provide their congregations with a pacesetter of fuller dimensions as they exhort their flock to, "Follow me, as I follow Christ."⁸ In weighing this balance, it is imperative that each local church recognize that living by the Gospel encompasses only the wage of a day laborer⁹ rather than an affluent Western middle-class lifestyle.¹⁰

¹ Acts 6:4

² Matt. 10:9-10; Mk. 6:8-10; Lk. 9:3-4, 10:1-8; Acts 18:5 w/ 2 Cor. 11:8-9 & Phil. 4:14-16; Rom. 15:24, 27; 1 Cor. 9:6-14, 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16; Gal. 6:6; 3 Jn. 3-8

³ Acts 18:3; Eph. 20:34; 1 Thess. 2:6, 9

⁴ Acts 20:35

⁵ 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:8-10

⁶ 1 Cor. 9:1-18; 2 Cor. 2:17, 11:7-9; 1 Thess. 2:5-6, 9

⁷ 2 Cor. 8:13-15

⁸ 1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:3

⁹ Matt. 10:9-11; Mk. 6:8-10; Lk. 9:3-4, 10:4-8; 1 Cor. 9:1-18; 1 Thess. 2:6; 2 Thess. 3:8-9

¹⁰ Matt. 8:20, 19:21, 27; Lk. 9:58, 12:33; Acts 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9-13; 2 Cor. 11:23-30; Phil. 4:11-3

17.10 The purpose of the community of the elect is to glorify God¹ in the everlasting and ever-increasing gladness of worship,² and by such theology-fueled doxology the world confesses that God is truly among them.³

¹ Matt. 5:14-16; Eph. 3:10

² Ps. 79:13; Is. 43:21; Eph. 1:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 5:9-12

³ Is. 45:14; Zech. 8:23; Acts 4:13; 1 Cor. 14:25

17.11 The communal worship of the elect of God: (a) is centered on a devotedness to Scripture,¹ examining it daily,² and meditating upon and memorizing it,³ in order to study to show themselves approved unto God⁴ and obedient from the heart;⁵ (b) encompasses large amounts of communal prayer and fasting together;⁶ (c) confessing their sins one to another;⁷ and (d) in which every regular attender is encouraged in an orderly manner to minister to each other with psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, teaching, revelation, or other Spirit gift.⁸

¹ Acts 2:42

² Acts 17:11

³ Ps. 1:2, 37:31, 40, 119:11; Lk. 2:19, 51

⁴ 2 Tim. 3:15

⁵ Rom. 6:17; 2 Tim. 2:13

⁶ Acts 1:14, :24, 2:42, 4:23-31, 12:5, 13:2-3, 14:23, 20:36, 21:5

⁷ Matt. 3:6; Mk. 1:5; Acts 19:18; James 5:16

⁸ 1 Cor. 14:26; Col. 3:16

17.12 The community of the elect is one intended to be marked by its unity—being of one heart and soul,¹ of one accord,² with one mind,³ in harmony with one another,⁴ aiming for restoration, comforting one another, agreeing with one another, and living in peace.⁵ Unity, however, is only possible when founded on God’s Truth as revealed in Scripture, not at its expense.⁶ Therefore, while all who genuinely seek Him who alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life⁷ are welcome, those who rebelliously and unrepentantly persist in known and public sin—including belonging to heretical cults (including Roman Catholic Church, Unitarianism, Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses, and Christian Science) and false religions (including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and any other religious -ism)—may not become regular participants.⁸

¹ Jn. 17:11b, 20-23a; Acts 4:32-35

² Acts 1:14, 2:46, 5:12

³ Phil. 1:27

⁴ Rom. 15:5

⁵ 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:2-6; Phil. 2:1-3; 1 Pet. 3:8

⁶ 2 Cor. 6:14-18

⁷ Jn. 14:6

⁸ Deut. 17:7, 19:19, 22:21, 24, 24:7; Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:2-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 3:5; Titus 3:10

17.13 Because the family of the elect are commanded to be each other’s social safety net, for by failing to do so they would deny the faith and become worse than an unbeliever,¹ they give to all according to their need so that no one among them lacks anything.² Such giving is proportional, so that a willing and voluntary gift is acceptable if given according to what one has rather than according to what he doesn’t have.³ Long-term stipends,⁴ however, are not provided to those able to work⁵ and those who have family to support them.⁶ Recipients are to continue in petitions and prayers night and day, be well reported for good works, have lodged strangers, have washed the believer’s feet, relieved the afflicted, and diligently followed every good work.⁷ This generosity of the local church not only extends to their own church family, but also other church families so that there may be equality in the Church universal.⁸

¹ 1 Tim. 5:4b, 8, 16; James 2:15-17

² Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-35, 5:4

³ Acts 11:29; 2 Cor. 8:12

⁴ Acs 6:1; 1 Tim. 5:9a

⁵ 2 Thess. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:9a

⁶ 1 Tim. 5:4b, 8, 16

⁷ 1 Tim. 5:5-7, 9-10

⁸ Acts 11:29; 2 Cor. 8:12-14

17.14 The family of the elect are not to sue each other before the unrighteous in civil tribunals because: (a) they should be willing to accept the wrong and be cheated, and (b) since even the lowliest saint will judge the sinners and angels at the second coming of Christ, then certainly all are able to peaceably discern the things pertaining to this life as well; therefore, if arbitration is unavoidable, saints are to bring the matter before a wise Christian man among them who is able to judge between his brethren.¹

¹ 1 Cor. 6:1-11

17.15 The goal of all church discipline is restoration of the saint to God and his brethren; it is to be for their profit, that they may be partakers of His holiness and yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.¹ When a member lives in sin, the witnessing member(s) is to individually confront him in love.² If the sinner does not listen, the witnessing member(s) is to take along one or two other witnesses, preferably with at least one shepherd-teacher among them,³ in a second attempt at reconciliation.⁴ If the sinner still does not repent, the witnessing members are commanded to bring the matter before the entire assembly.⁵ Charges, however, should not be brought hastily but only upon probable cause, especially against shepherd-elders who are due double honor, for failure to do so implicates the accusers in other people's sins.⁶

¹ Heb. 12:10-11

² Matt. 18:15-16; Titus 2:24-25, 3:10

³ Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 3:13-17; Titus 1:9

⁴ Matt. 18:15-16; Titus 3:10

⁵ Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 1 Tim. 5:20

⁶ 1 Tim. 5:17-22

17.16 At a disciplinary trial, conducted without prejudice or partiality,¹ the offense must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses² or a confession during the proceedings,³ with the entire congregation serving as jury.⁴ If the offender is found guilty and remains unrepentant, the only Scriptural sentence is excommunication⁵—shunning him as the New Testament Jews did the pagans and tax collector,⁶ removing him from among the congregation,⁷ delivering him to Satan,⁸ refusing to associate or even eat with him,⁹ keeping away from him,¹⁰ having no company with him,¹¹ and turning away from him.¹²

¹ 1 Tim. 5:21

² Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1

³ Josh. 7:20-26; 2 Sam. 1:16; Job 15:6; Matt. 26:65-66; Mk. 14:63-64; Lk. 19:22, 22:71; Acts 7:1, 54, 57-58

⁴ Matt. 18:16; 1 Cor. 5:4; 1 Tim. 5:20

⁵ Deut. 17:7, 19:19, 22:21, 24, 24:7; Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:4, 7, 13; Titus 3:10)

⁶ Matt. 18:17

⁷ 1 Cor. 5:2

⁸ 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20

⁹ 1 Cor. 5:9-11

¹⁰ 2 Thess. 3:6

¹¹ 2 Thess. 3:14-15

¹² 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:10

17.17 No accusing witnesses, should the offender be acquitted, ought to disturb any church order, or foment a withdrawal from the local church or administration of any

ordinances, but are to wait upon Christ, in the further proceeding of the church, or, if compelled by conscience, are to leave quietly.¹

¹ Matt. 18:15-17; Eph. 4:2-3; Col. 3:12-15; 1 Jn. 2:7-11, 18-19

Doctrine 18: Of the Church & Her Great Commission

18.1 The Great Commission is theology urgently acted out as doxology for the fame of God's name¹ that creates contagious worshippers² who glorify Him through glad-hearted, faith-producing repentance and obedience.³

¹ Ps. 9:11, 18:49, 57:9, 96:3, 10, 105:1, 108:3; Is. 12:4, 43:6-7 48:9-11; Mal. 1:11; Acts 15:14; Rom. 1:5, 9:17, 15:9; 3 Jn. 7

² Ps. 45:17, 47:1, 66:8, 67:3-4, 72:17, 86:9, 96:7, 97:1, 102:15, 22, 117:1; Is. 56:7, 66:18-19; Rev. 15:3-4

³ Jn. 4:23; Rom. 1:5, 15:8-11

18.2 Christ has commanded each and every one of His elect to actively and individually become fellow workers¹ in making disciples,² domestically and/or abroad, of every nation, tribe, people, and tongue,³ within the context of the local church,⁴ by indiscriminate, universal call⁵ of public evangelism,⁶ in the power of the Spirit,⁷ with sleepless labor and toil, constant warnings, and tearful wrestlings in prayer,⁸ teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded,⁹ baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,¹⁰ and gathering them into local self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches under the lordship of Christ, the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and the authority of Scripture as their sole church manual,¹¹ confident that all authority has been given to Christ,¹² that He will be with them always,¹³ and that He will have His sheep.¹⁴

¹ 3 Jn. 1:8

² Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:8

³ Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:18; Ps. 22:27-28, 86:9; Is. 45:22-23, 66:18; Jer. 3:17; Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 14:6, 9, 11-12, 24, 28; Rev. 5:9, 7:9-10, 15:4

⁴ Acts 8:14, 11:22-26, 14:23, 26-27, 15:40, 18:27

⁵ Prov. 1:20-21; Is. 45:10-11, 22, 55:1-3, 65:2; Lk. 13:34, 24:47; Jn. 5:6, 6:57, 7:37, 11:27-28; Acts 2:30-36 w/ 37-39, 17:22-23 w/ 27 & 30, 26:26-27; 2 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 22:16 w/ 27

⁶ Ezra 10:9-14; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Jeremiah 7:1-3; John 3:1-5; Isaiah 5:29; Amos 5:10; Matt. 3:12, 4:17, 10:5-15; Mk. 1:4, 14-15, 6:7-13, 16:15; Lk. 3:3, 4:14-15, 9:1-6, 10:1-12; Acts 2:14-41, 3:11-16, 8:6-8, 40, 9:20, 29, 10:27, 34, 13:44-52, 17:17-34, 18:27-28, 20:20, 21:40; 2 Peter 2:5

⁷ Mk. 16:20; Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:1-7, 12-13; 1 Thess. 1:5; Heb. 2:4

⁸ 1 Sam. 1:10; Hosea 12:4; Acts 20:31; 2 Cor. 11:27; Col. 4:12

⁹ Matt. 28:19-20

¹⁰ Matt. 28:19-20

¹¹ Acts 14:21-23, 15:41; Titus 1:5

¹² Deut. 10:17; Josh. 22:22; Ps. 110:1, 136:1-3; Dan. 11:36; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 1:13, 2:8-9; Jude 1:4; Rev. 17:14; 19:16

¹³ Matt. 28:19-20

¹⁴ Ps. 29; Matt. 22:14; Jn. 5:25, 6:37, 44, 10:16, 26-28, 12:32; Rom. 1:6, 4:17, 8:28; 1 Cor. 1:26-28; Jude 1

18.3 While acts of mercy, such as meeting medical, educational, infrastructural, and other humanitarian needs, may have a role in fulfilling the Great Commission, it is only as a compliment and not as the primary task of the shepherd-elder-missionary, which is the public proclamation¹ and teaching² of the Gospel for the conversion of souls and maturing of them into reproducing saints within the context of local indigenous churches.³

¹ Ezra 10:9-14; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Jeremiah 7:1-3; John 3:1-5; Isaiah 5:29; Amos 5:10; Matt. 3:12, 4:17, 10:5-15; Mk. 1:4, 14-15, 6:7-13, 16:15; Lk. 3:3, 4:14-15, 9:1-6, 10:1-12; Acts 2:14-41, 3:11-16, 8:6-8, 40, 9:20, 29, 10:27, 34, 13:44-52, 17:17-34, 18:27-28, 20:20, 21:40; 2 Peter 2:5

² Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 1:15-23, 3:14-21, 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 3:2, 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:9

³ Acts 14:21-23, 15:41; Titus 1:5

18.4 While prudence and wisdom may result in the formation of missionary societies or agencies for logistical purposes only, the Great Commission and the discipleship,

training, qualifying, sending, supporting, shepherding, and disciplining (including removal from the field) of home-grown shepherd-teacher-missionaries is the sole responsibility of the local church,¹ and any such missional organization must be under the oversight of a local church with all its staff and volunteers actively serving members in it.²

¹ Acts 8:14, 11:22-26, 13:1-3, 14:23, 26-27, 15:40, 18:27

² 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Heb. 13:17

Chapter 19: Of Elect Infants

19.1 In regards to the possibility of elect persons, including children dying in infancy and individuals with mental disabilities, among those who are physically incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word, the only thing Scripture makes explicitly clear is that, as Adam's posterity descending from him by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, they are by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal.¹ Irregardless of whatever we may privately speculate based on scant Scriptural inferences,² we will not bind the consciences of men in this Confession by going further than what is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scriptures.³

¹ Gen. 8:21; Job 14:4, 15:14; Ps. 51:4-5, 58:3; Prov. 22:15; Jonah 4:1-11; Rom. 5:12-19, 6:20; 1 Cor. 15:20-22; 45, 49; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Thess. 1:10; Heb. 2:14-15

² That some experienced at least a measure of the work of the Spirit in the womb (Ps. 22:9-10; Jer. 1:5; Lk. 1:15) and some did not (Ps. 58:3); that David took solace in the fact that he would be reunited with his dead baby (2 Sam. 12:15-24) and that both Job (Job 3:11, 10:18-19) and Jeremiah (Jer. 20:17) desired at times that they had died in the womb rather than suffer in life, all of which only makes sense if at least some unborn may be among the elect; that the lack of or diminished (a) actual knowledge of God's will (Deut. 1:39; Mk. 6:11, 10:15, 11:20-24; Lk. 10:13-16, 12:47-48; Jn. 9:41; Rom. 1:20; James 4:17), or (b) actual ability to commit sin (Ps. 62:12; Prov. 24:14; Ecc. 3:17; Jer. 32:19; Rom. 2:6; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 11:12-13) is at least a basis for some measure of lesser punishment, at least in comparison with those who have such capacities; that the elect are to hallow God in their hearts (1 Pet. 3:15) by continually entrusting themselves to God as to a faithful Creator (1 Pet. 4:19) who judges righteously (1 Pet. 2:23; Deut. 32:3-4).

³ See Chapter 1 of the *1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith*.

Chapter 20: On Sin in the Believer

The corruption of nature, during this life, does remain in those that are regenerated;¹ and both itself, and the first motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.² This nature, however, has through Christ been both pardoned and mortified so that the elect are now freed from the law of sinning and have become slaves of righteousness for holiness,³ and being thus dead to sinning—both its power and presence—they therefore cannot continue enslaved to habitual, deliberate, premeditated sins.⁴ There is no such thing as a carnal Christian mired in a lifestyle of sin; rather there are only two kinds of people in the world—the unregenerate who are dead *in* their sins and the regenerate who are dead *to* their sins.⁵

¹ 1 Kings 8:46; Ps. 130:3, 143:2; Prov. 20:9; Ecc. 7:20; Rom. 7:14-25; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8-10

² Gen. 8:21; Ps. 51:4-5; Prov. 15:26, 21:4, 22:15; Matt. 5:27-28

³ Matt. 1:21; Jn. 8:31-36; Rom. 6:1-7:6; Rom. 8:3-13; Gal. 5:17-24, 6:14; Eph. 2:3

⁴ Jn. 8:36, 14:15; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Heb. 12:14; James 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:6, 15-17, 29, 3:5-10; Rev. 21:8

⁵ Rom. 6:1-7, 11, 7:1-6

CHAPTER 21: OF PEYOTE USE

First, peyote is a hallucinogenic drug, and the Bible clearly prohibits the use of a psychoactive substance that alters or distorts an individual's perception of reality (Rom. 13:13; Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:3). In fact, it goes so far as to declare that one who regularly imbibes of such substances cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21).

Secondly, it is absolutely no defense to appropriate it from one's native religion to Christianity. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked (Gal. 6:7). Native American religions, as with all false religions, worship demons (Ps. 106:37; 1 Cor. 10:20-22). One cannot, therefore, smoke peyote to the glory of a demon and then to the glory of God (*Id.*). It is no more biblical than eating meat sacrificed to idols and then partaking of the Lord's supper, or using incantations and witchcraft in a worship service, or fornicating with a temple prostitute to the glory of God. Christians are to have no fellowship with demons (*Id.*; see also 2 Cor. 6:14-18).