



# **THIS WE BELIEVE**

*Resources  
for Faith*

*A Baptist study guide*



# **This We Believe: Resources for Faith with Baptist Distinctives**





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With Addendum, *Baptist Distinctives*

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**Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec**

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# Preface

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

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

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

In Christian service,

Ken Bellous  
Executive Minister, CBOQ

2008



## INTRODUCTION

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

The process began with approval of the Report of Council at the 1984 Hamilton Assembly, which stated:

Council directed the Faith and Order Committee to press toward the formulation of a Convention “Statement of Faith” in addition to the proposed compilation of historic Baptist statements of faith.

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

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

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

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

*Living Faith* so commended itself to your committee that a decision was made to



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## CHAPTER ONE

### *God*

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

the Son through Whom we come,  
the Spirit by Whom we come.

- 1.6 We worship almighty God, the source of all life.  
With thanks we acknowledge  
God's wisdom, power, faithfulness and love.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit!

## CHAPTER TWO

### *God, Creator and Ruler*

#### 2.1 **God Creates and Rules**

2.1.1 The living God is Lord,  
Creator of all, Sustainer and Ruler of the universe.  
In the seasons and the harvest,  
in the rise and fall of nations,  
in all events of this world  
God's judgments are present.

2.1.2 We hold in reverence the whole creation  
as the theatre of God's glory and action.  
God rules the lives of individuals and nations  
yet does not negate our human freedom and responsibility.  
Ever at work in the world and in the lives of men and women,  
God directs all things towards fulfillment in Christ.

2.1.3 We affirm God's righteous and loving purpose  
even in a world where evil abounds.  
This purpose is uniquely disclosed in Jesus Christ.  
In Christ we see the apparent paradox of God's action  
in that the mighty God chose  
to come into this world in weakness.  
In Christ, God entered most deeply into our suffering.

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

#### 2.2 **Our Creation**

2.2.1 The mystery of human existence  
is that we belong to God

and have been made in the Divine image.  
In God we live and move and have our being.  
As such we are created as God's stewards  
but we are also dependent upon God  
for our very existence.  
Therefore, we truly know ourselves  
only when we know God.  
Our lives are made to reflect  
the Creator's love and purpose for all creation.  
We acknowledge God as Creator and Lord.

2.2.2 We have been made as sexual beings, male and female,  
for our mutual help, comfort and joy.  
We are dependent on each other  
and need one another in all of life.

### 2.3 **Our Calling**

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

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

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

### 2.4 **Our Care for the World**

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

of all human skill and science  
about the world and the universe.

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

## 2.5 **Sin Separates Us from God**

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

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

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

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

gluttony, envy and selfish anger.

- 2.5.5 We cannot escape our sin,  
nor the sin of the world.
- 2.5.6 Because we are sinful  
the societies we live in are sinful.  
There are no exceptions;  
every system is flawed.  
We are part of the evil of the world,  
of its violence, neglect, injustice.
- 2.5.7 All people fall short of God's standards  
and need salvation.  
God's way to salvation  
has been revealed in Jesus Christ.  
Through the death and resurrection of Christ  
sin is forgiven.  
Salvation means forgiveness, healing, wholeness and life.  
It comes from God's grace  
and is received through faith in Christ alone.
- 2.5.8 Thanks be to God!

## CHAPTER THREE

### *God in Christ*

#### 3.1 **Jesus Christ and Israel**

- 3.1.1 To the world in its rebellion and alienation  
God promised blessing and restoration.  
The Lord chose Abraham and his descendants  
and through a covenant with them  
destined them to be bearers of that promise to all people.
- 3.1.2 The Old Testament records God's message  
and His mighty acts.  
It speaks of God's judgment and mercy.  
It declares God's promise  
and points to the One to come.
- 3.1.3 From Israel came the Messiah;  
in Jesus of Nazareth God kept the promise of salvation.  
We understand His coming in the light of the Old Testament.  
Born of the line of David, He lived a Jew among Jews.  
Child of a Jewish woman, He fulfilled God's promise  
that Israel would be a light to the nations.

#### 3.2 **Jesus Christ: Truly God**

- 3.2.1 In Christ, God came to dispel the world's darkness.  
The Word became flesh  
and dwelt among us.  
In silence we ponder,  
in awe we confess  
this amazing truth.  
Conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
the eternal Son of God  
emptied Himself  
to be one with us.  
To Israel and to the world  
came God in Christ.

3.2.2 To call Jesus Christ the Son of God  
is to say that He is God of God,  
Light of Light, begotten, not created.  
To see Jesus is to see God incarnate.  
To know the Son is to know the Father.

3.2.3 God's nature is expressed in Jesus,  
the very Word of God.  
Through Him were all things made.  
His life is the light of the world.

3.2.4 Jesus Christ is Lord.  
He is one with the Father  
and the Holy Spirit.

### 3.3 **Jesus Christ: Truly Human**

3.3.1 Jesus was truly human,  
Tried and tested as we are,  
yet without sin,  
He experienced the depths of life.  
Jesus understands us.  
He felt the joy of friendship  
and the pain of rejection.  
He died a human death.  
He trusted and obeyed the Father completely  
and lived in the Holy Spirit.  
Neither temptation nor threat  
prevented Him from loving God  
and His neighbour as Himself.  
He showed us what it means  
to be a child of God.

### 3.4 **Jesus is Saviour**

3.4.1 Jesus is the Mediator  
through Whom God has come to us  
and through Whom we come to God.

3.4.2 Christ died for our sins.  
The innocent One bore our condemnation on the cross.  
He suffered and was put to death

for the sin of the world.

- 3.4.2 God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery which the Scriptures describe as the sacrifice of a lamb, a shepherd's life given for his sheep, atonement through a priest. It is also the innocent dying for the guilty, the ransom of a slave, love drawing all people to Himself, payment of a debt, and victory over the powers of evil. These expressions interpret the love of God, revealing the gravity, cost, and sure achievement of our Lord's work. Such love we cannot fully explain. God's grace, received by faith alone, pardons and justifies, redeems and reconciles us.

### 3.5 **Jesus is Lord**

- 3.5.1 Jesus suffered, died, and was buried, but God raised Him from the dead. Clothed in His resurrection body He is alive now and, ascended, reigns our living Lord.
- 3.5.2 His resurrection gives substance to our faith: the assurance of final victory over all evil powers which destroy and deform life; the confidence that death, the last enemy, is conquered.
- 3.5.3 The forces of Satan, the evil one, still wage war against us. The destructive powers are still present, but their end is not in doubt. We await the full consummation of our Lord's triumph.
- 3.5.4 We worship our ascended Lord, reigning in glory and power. He is our High Priest and Advocate

interceding before the Father.  
Through Him we offer sacrifices of praise  
and prayers of intercession to the Father.

### 3.6 **Salvation in Christ**

3.6.1 Salvation comes from God's grace alone  
received through faith in Christ.  
From all eternity, and through no merit on our part,  
God calls us to live in Christ.  
Here is the good news of the Gospel!  
Jesus Christ is our Saviour.  
In Him we are reconciled to God.  
Responding through faith to God's call to us in Christ  
and elected by God's grace according to His foreknowledge  
we become part of the family of God.

3.6.2 We are called for a purpose:  
to be like Christ;  
to worship and serve God.  
As with Israel in the Old Testament,  
so with the redeemed humanity in the New Testament,  
God chooses us.  
We find assurance and challenge in the knowledge  
that the living God has eternal purposes to achieve through us.  
God will bring to completion  
His work of grace.

3.6.3 Thanks be to God who has given us the victory  
through Jesus Christ our Lord!

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *God the Holy Spirit*

#### 4.1 **The Holy Spirit is God with Us**

- 4.1.1 The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son.  
The Holy Spirit is the Lord and Giver of Life,  
the Renewer and Helper of God's people.  
The Holy Spirit is God present in the world,  
the source of all goodness and justice.  
The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin  
and testifies to the truth of Christ.  
By the Spirit, Christ is with His Church.

#### 4.2 **The Holy Spirit Enables People to Believe and to Grow**

- 4.2.1 The Spirit leads people to saving faith and to growth  
by enabling them to receive  
the Good News of Christ  
and repent of their sins.  
By the Holy Spirit  
people are born again  
into new life in Christ.
- 4.2.2 The Holy Spirit leads us on our journey of faith,  
and enables us to grow in holiness.  
God's Spirit is in us,  
sometimes gently, sometimes powerfully,  
guiding us in the midst of life,  
our comfort and our help.  
Christian life is a pilgrimage:  
it begins, continues and ends in God.

#### 4.3 **The Holy Spirit Forms and Equips the Church**

- 4.3.1 God's Spirit dwells in each believer.  
By the Spirit, Christ calls the Church into being  
and unites us to Himself and to each other.
- 4.3.2 The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth.  
We pray as members of Christ's Church to be guided into truth,

knowing that such truth may disturb and judge us.

- 4.3.3 The harvest of the Spirit is  
love, joy, and peace,  
patience, kindness, and goodness,  
loyalty, gentleness, and self-control.
- 4.3.4 The Spirit blesses the Church with various gifts.  
Together we seek to discover those gifts  
and to use them for our Lord.  
Faithful loving service is a sign  
that the Spirit is present.  
The presence of the Spirit is evident  
where people are made whole, encouraged,  
and enabled to grow in Christ.
- 4.3.5 Come, Holy Spirit!

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *The Bible*

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

We interpret Scripture as we compare passages,  
seeing the two Testaments in light of each other,  
listening to commentators past and present,  
and seeking the application of God's word for our time.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *Faith*

#### 6.1 **Faith**

6.1.1 Faith is a gift of God  
constantly renewed in word and worship  
and in the shared life of God's people.  
It is trust in God;  
it involves personal repentance of sin,  
acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour,  
and commitment to Him as Lord.  
It includes assent  
to the truth of the Gospel.  
By faith we receive the very life of God  
into our lives  
and joyfully discover  
that God knows, loves, and pardons us.

6.1.2 God brings us to faith in many ways.  
We may have trusted in God from childhood;  
or our faith may have come later in life.  
Faith may come suddenly  
or only after a struggle to believe.  
Whatever the spiritual journey we have traveled,  
God honours our faith, great or small.

6.1.3 Faith is a continuing response  
to God's presence in the midst of life,  
an attitude of acceptance  
and obedience to His will.

#### 6.2 **Doubt: The Trial of Faith**

6.2.1 We may not always feel that God is with us.  
At times we live in this world  
unaware of the Divine presence,  
often discerning God's nearness  
only as we look back.  
Through such struggle we mature in faith.

God may also chasten and strengthen us  
through the hard circumstances of life.

- 6.2.2 Questioning may be a sign of growth.  
It may also be disobedience:  
we must be honest with ourselves.  
Since we are to love God with our minds,  
as well as our hearts,  
the working through of doubt  
is part of our growth in faith.  
The Church includes those who wrestle with doubt.  
Jesus accepted the man who prayed,  
“Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.”
- 6.2.3 Though the strength of our faith may vary  
we may find assurance in Christ  
through confidence in His word,  
the fellowship of His Church,  
and the work of His Spirit.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *God's Church*

#### 7.1 **The Church**

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

- 7.1.8 The Church is present  
where the Word is preached  
and the Ordinances practised,  
where fellowship abounds  
and loving service is carried out.
- 7.1.9 Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church.  
The believing community must be free  
to seek and to follow His will.  
The local church manages its own affairs  
in accordance with Divine guidance.
- 7.1.10 The local church freely co-operates with other congregations  
through Associations and Conventions  
in the furtherance of Christ's will.  
The local church is not subject to any church hierarchy  
which could interfere with its understanding of God's will.
- 7.1.11 The local church is free,  
in accordance with its mission,  
to commend or criticize government agencies and policies,  
but it is not bound by any state control  
which could interfere with its life.  
We hold with the separation of Church and State  
from each other's control.

## 7.2 **Pastoral Ministry**

- 7.2.1 The Lord continues His ministry  
in and through the Church.  
All Christians are called  
to participate in the ministry of Christ.  
As His body on earth  
we all have gifts to use  
in the Church and in the world  
to the glory of Christ, our King and Head.
- 7.2.2 Among our churches God furthers this ministry  
by calling some to special tasks  
in the equipping of the saints  
for the work of ministry,  
for building up the body of Christ.

7.2.3 Pastors, both men and women,  
are set apart to preach the Gospel,  
teach the word,  
lead in worship,  
and exercise pastoral care in Christ's name.  
Their ministry is a calling  
initiated by God  
and recognized by the local church  
through ordination and induction.

7.2.4 Local congregations choose others  
to share with the pastors  
the leadership, pastoral care,  
and oversight of the congregation.

7.2.5 Others, such as  
missionaries, church educators,  
professors and administrators,  
evangelists, chaplains and musicians,  
exercise special ministries.

7.2.6 Through all these ministries  
the Word is proclaimed,  
God's people are nourished and nurtured,  
supported and guided.  
One in Christ  
we seek to serve God.

### 7.3 **Worship**

7.3.1 The Church lives to praise God.  
We have no higher calling  
than to offer the worship that belongs to God  
day by day, Sunday by Sunday.

7.3.2 Through the preaching of the Word  
and the celebration of the Ordinances  
in praise, prayer, teaching and fellowship,  
God sustains the life of the Church.  
We worship God  
offering ourselves in the service of Christ,

rejoicing that we have been brought from darkness to light.

7.3.3      Worship draws us into the work of Christ.  
Even now He intercedes for the world  
to which He came and for which He died.  
In union with Him, the Church prays for the healing  
and salvation of the world.

7.3.4      Blessing and honour and glory and power  
be to our God for ever and ever!

#### 7.4      **Preaching**

7.4.1      To the Church and to the world  
Christ sends ambassadors to preach the Good News.  
The reconciling work of Jesus  
is the supreme turning point in the life of the world.  
The proclamation of His cross and resurrection  
calls for personal response  
and offers present hope.  
The Holy Spirit enables God's Word to be heard  
in the word of preaching.  
Faith comes and is renewed by hearing  
the proclamation of the word of Christ.

7.4.2      Preachers are servants of the Word.  
The spoken word is food for all believers.  
They are hungry to hear what the Lord has to say.  
Let those who listen pray for those who speak.

#### 7.5      **Ordinances**

7.5.1      In obedience to our Lord's command and example  
we practise Believer's Baptism  
and participate in the Lord's Supper.  
Authorized by Christ,  
these are the two Ordinances of the Church.

7.5.2      Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper  
are visible expressions of the Gospel.  
Baptism is the symbol  
of the entrance of an individual

into the Christian life and community.  
The Lord's Supper is the repeated symbol  
given for the nourishment  
of the gathered community.

7.5.3 God's grace in the Ordinances  
comes not from any power inherent in them  
but from the work of the Holy Spirit.  
As we participate in faith and repentance  
we open our hearts more fully to God.

## 7.6 **Baptism**

7.6.1 Baptism is the immersion of a believer  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

7.6.2 In obedience to the Lord's command  
Christians are baptized upon repentance toward God  
and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.  
By the work of the Holy Spirit  
God effects regeneration in the believing heart.  
Baptism proclaims what God has done  
and does for us in Christ.

7.6.3 Baptism is a sign of our union with Christ  
through which we put on Christ and are identified  
with His death and resurrection.  
Baptism signifies the washing away of sin,  
the start of new life in Christ,  
and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

7.6.4 Baptism is a public act of discipleship.  
It requires commitment  
and looks towards growth in Christ,  
nurtured by the believing community.

7.6.5 Baptism witnesses that we are children of God  
born from above.  
Baptism testifies that  
in life and in death

we belong to our faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## 7.7 **The Lord's Supper**

- 7.7.1 In breaking bread and drinking wine  
Jesus told us to remember Him.  
In this action,  
called the Lord's Supper, or Communion,  
Christ offers Himself to us  
and we present ourselves to Him  
in worship and adoration.
- 7.7.2 The Lord's Supper is a joyful mystery  
whereby Jesus takes the bread and the cup  
to represent His atoning sacrifice,  
deepening our union with Himself  
and with each other.
- 7.7.3 In Communion  
Christ places His table among us  
to feed and bless His people.  
The Holy Spirit so unites us in Christ  
that in receiving in faith the bread and wine  
we share in His body and blood.
- 7.7.4 In this Ordinance we give thanksgiving to God.  
We pray for the world  
and with gratitude offer our lives to God.  
We celebrate Christ's victory over death  
and anticipate His coming kingdom.
- 7.7.5 Those who belong to Christ come gladly to His table  
to remember His life and death and resurrection,  
a symbol of hope for a troubled age.  
We celebrate His presence,  
and together as His Church offer Him thanks,  
proclaiming salvation until He returns.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Our Life in Christ*

#### 8.1 **Discipleship**

- 8.1.1 Disciples of Christ are called to obedience.  
Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.”  
Obedience involves our total being.  
As we give ourselves to Christ  
we discover that in Christ’s service  
there is true freedom and full meaning.
- 8.1.2 Jesus Christ is Lord of the believer.  
Religious freedom is not freedom to be selfish.  
With the Apostles we affirm  
that we must obey God rather than man.
- 8.1.3 Jesus promised that His Spirit  
will guide us into all truth.  
In response to prayer,  
the believer is enabled to find the will of God.
- 8.1.4 The Christian must be free  
to follow where Christ shall lead.  
Nothing can be permitted  
to come between the believer and the Lord  
or to interfere with the believer’s discipleship.
- 8.1.5 Life in Christ is nurtured within a believing community  
and expressed in daily living.  
We seek to bring Christ’s healing presence  
to the world for which He died,  
and to bring Christ’s peace  
to its brokenness and pain.
- 8.1.6 Life in Christ brings joy, peace, and liberation.  
It also involves us in a struggle —  
a struggle with timidity, unbelief and temptation.  
Throughout our lives  
we experience both victory and defeat.  
Yet in life’s bittersweet experiences

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

- 8.1.7 Life in Christ involves prayer,  
the seeking of God's will and blessing  
upon oneself and others.  
Prayer is receptivity to the presence of God.  
In speech or in silence  
our lives are brought into focus before God.  
As we commune with God through Jesus Christ  
the Holy Spirit enables us to express our deepest desires,  
and we feel the touch and healing power  
of God's gracious presence.
- 8.1.8 We live in Christ as we study the Scriptures,  
learning to think and act in Christian ways.  
The Scriptures are given that Christians may be complete,  
equipped for every good work.
- 8.1.9 We observe the Lord's Day  
as the weekly festival of Christ's resurrection,  
for the worship of our Lord,  
and the enjoyment of God's world.
- 8.2 **The Christian Family**
- 8.2.1 Christian marriage is union in Christ  
whereby a man and a woman  
become one in the sight of God.  
It is a commitment of two people  
to love and to support each other faithfully for life.  
God's law forbids adultery.  
Marriage thrives in the soil of loyalty  
and blossoms under the light of kindness.  
Sexual union in marriage is intended to provide  
mutual joy and comfort as well as  
the means of creating new life.
- 8.2.2 Parents in caring for their children  
are to be mediators of God's love and concern.

They are called to raise their children  
within the gathered community,  
to nurture them in the Christian faith  
by teaching and example.

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

8.2.4 God's purpose for us can be realized  
in both single and married life.  
Marriage may not be God's will for everyone.  
Fullness of life can be experienced by all,  
both single and married.

8.2.5 The Church is the family of God.  
Here all are valued for themselves.  
We are one body in Christ,  
together rejoicing when things go well,  
celebrating the goodness of God  
and the wonder of our redemption.

### 8.3 **Love**

8.3.1 We bow before the mystery of God's love.  
From it came our creation.  
By it we are sustained.  
We respond to the God who loves  
by loving in return.

8.3.2 Love seeks the best for others.  
It is the mark of a Christian.  
We cannot claim to love God, Whom we do not see,  
if we hate or ignore those about us, whom we do see.  
Love of God and love of neighbour  
fulfill the law of God.

- 8.3.3 We should also love ourselves.  
Self-love is not selfishness.  
We love and accept ourselves  
because God has already loved and accepted us in Christ,  
providing the foundation for our sense of self-worth.
- 8.3.4 Love follows the example of Jesus Christ.  
Love seeks not her own, love is not selfish.  
Love bears all things, believes all things,  
endures all things.  
Love never ends.
- 8.4 **Justice**
- 8.4.1 God calls all people,  
especially Christ's Church,  
to seek the kind of justice in the world  
which reflects the Divine righteousness  
revealed in the Bible.
- 8.4.2 We strive towards God's justice  
when we deal fairly with each other  
and seek to change customs and practices  
that enslave and oppress.  
Justice protects the rights of others  
and protests against that which destroys human dignity.
- 8.4.3 Justice requires concern for the poor  
and seeks the best way to create  
well-being in every society.  
It demands fairness,  
equity in employment, education and health,  
and supports human rights and responsibilities.
- 8.4.4 Justice calls forth compassion in society.  
It involves the protection of human beings,  
concern for the victims of crime  
as well as offenders.  
It requires fair laws justly administered,  
courts and penal institutions that are just and humane.
- 8.4.5 Justice opposes prejudice in every form

and the discrimination that arises from it.  
Justice calls us to stand with our neighbours  
in their struggle for dignity and respect.  
It demands the exercise of power for the common good.

## 8.5 **World Peace**

8.5.1 Christ, the Author of true peace,  
calls us to be peacemakers.

8.5.2 War is never pleasing to God.  
Resort to war even in causes believed to be just  
must involve repentance.  
The tragic evils that come with war,  
the slaughter of men, women and children,  
must rouse us to work for peace.  
We affirm the right of informed conscience  
when participation in armed conflict  
is demanded by the state.

8.5.3 We lament endless military build-ups  
and the making of profit  
through the selling of arms,  
and terrorist activity which exploits the innocent.  
We decry the world arms race  
which diminishes our ability  
to fight hunger, ignorance, poverty and disease.  
We deplore totalitarianism  
and fear nuclear war  
and the devastation it would bring.

8.5.4 We seek to be peacemakers.  
But peace without justice  
is no peace at all.

8.5.5 We affirm that the true peace  
promised in the Scriptures  
will be realized only through obedience to God  
and acceptance of Christ's love.  
Therefore we pray for peace  
to the One Who is the Prince of Peace.

## CHAPTER NINE

### *The Church Reaches Out*

#### 9.1 **Our Mission**

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

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

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

#### 9.2 **Our Mission and Other Faiths**

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

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

### 9.3 **Our Mission and Unbelief**

- 9.3.1 For some today “God” is an empty word  
indicating no reality  
they have ever consciously known.  
They do not believe there is a God.
- 9.3.2 Many find it hard to believe in a loving God  
in a world where so many suffer.  
Unbelief threatens many with despair,  
the feeling that nothing really matters  
and that beyond this world is emptiness.
- 9.3.3 The Bible witnesses to God in Christ  
entering deeply into human suffering.  
As we behold our Saviour on the cross  
we are convinced of God’s love for all.  
Faced with the pain and agony of the world,  
only a suffering God can help.  
God is with us in our anguish.
- 9.3.4 Faithful men and women of the Bible  
also knew pain and uncertainty.  
Yet they experienced God and felt compelled  
to speak of God moving powerfully in life.  
Christian faith is a response  
to the searching presence of God.  
Christian belief brings new meaning into one’s life.  
Life’s true purpose  
is to glorify and to enjoy God.

## CHAPTER TEN

### *Our Hope in God*

- 10.1 God has prepared for us  
things beyond our imagining.  
Our hope is for a renewed creation  
and for fullness of life in the age to come.  
As Jesus taught us, we pray,  
“Thy kingdom come.”
- 10.2 Life in the age to come  
is pictured in the Bible in different ways:  
an eternal kingdom,  
a new heaven and earth,  
a marriage feast,  
an unending day,  
the Father’s house,  
and the joy of God’s presence.  
God’s triumph over all opposition will be revealed.  
God will bind together everything in eternal harmony.
- 10.3 We shall all stand under the final judgment of God,  
receiving the divine verdict on our lives.  
Deserving of hell, eternal separation from God,  
we are assured of heaven, eternal life with God,  
through the grace bestowed on us in Christ.  
To say “no” to Christ is to refuse life  
and to embrace death.  
The destiny of all people  
is in the hands of God  
Whose mercy and justice we trust.
- 10.4 Eternal life is resurrection life.  
As God raised Christ,  
so shall we be raised  
with a spiritual body fit for life with God.  
Eternal life begins in this life:  
whoever believes in the Son of God  
already has eternal life.  
In death we commit our future confidently to God.

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

## SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

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

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

### Chapter One - GOD

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

- 1.1 Ps. 19:1-6, 100:1-2, 102:24-27, 148:1-5, Jer. 10:10, Jn. 17:3, Rom. 14:17, 2 Tim. 1:8-10, Rev. 4:11, 15:1-4
- 1.2 Gen. 3:8-9, Ex. 2:23-25, 19:1-20, Deut. 29:29, Ps. 111:9-10, Jer. 31:31-34, Mt. 1:1, Mk. 1:1, Lk. 3:16,22, Jn. 1:14, Acts 1:4-5, 16:6-10, Rom. 5:1, 10:4-9, 1 Cor. 2:12-16, 11:23-25, 2 Cor. 3:17-18, Gal. 6:14-16, 2 Tim. 2:8
- 1.3 Ps. 99:6-9, 106:1-48, Jn. 17:25-26, 20:31, Acts 2:14-36, 1 Cor. 2:12-13, Eph. 3:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:14-16, 2 Tim. 1:13-14, 2 Pet. 1:16-18
- 1.4 Acts 2:42, Rom. 16:17-18, 1 Cor. 15:1-4, Gal. 1:1-4, Eph. 2:20, 2 Th. 2:15, Heb. 13:7-9, 2 Pet. 3:14-18, 1 Jn. 4:1-6
- 1.5 Mt. 6:9, 28:19, Mk. 1:9-11, Jn. 14:6, 16:15, Rom. 1:1-4, 1 Cor. 2:7-11, 12:3, 2 Cor. 13:14, Eph. 2:18, 4:1-6, Heb. 4:14-16, 1 Jn. 4:13-14, Jude 20-21, Rev. 7:9-12
- 1.6 Ps. 85:1-13, 95:1-11, 107:1-43, Jn. 5:22-23, Acts 17:24-28, Rom. 8:26-27, 16:25-27, 1 Cor. 1:27-31, Eph. 3:14-21, Col. 3:16-17, 1 Tim. 1:17, Heb. 13:20-21, Jude 24-25, Rev. 5:11-14

## **Chapter Two - GOD, CREATOR AND RULER**

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

- 2.1 **God Creates and Rules**  
Ps. 33:4-19, Amos 1:1-3:8, Romans 11:33-36
- 2.1.1 Gen. 8:21-22, Ps. 89:5-14, 136:3-9, Is. 10:5-27, 46:8-11, Mt. 10:29-31, Rom. 11:22, Col. 1:16,17,20
- 2.1.2 Gen. 50:20, Deut. 30:19, Ps. 2:1-11, 102:12-28, 103:19-22, 113:5-9, Acts 2:22-23, Rom. 8:28, Eph. 1:10, Rev. 11:15
- 2.1.3 Gen. 6:11-12, Mt. 12:15-21, Rom. 2:4-11, 3:21-26, 5:20, 2 Cor. 8:9, 12:8-10
- 2.1.4 Job 14:1-2, Is. 55:8-9, Rom. 9:14-28, 1 Cor. 15:25-26, Col. 3:1-3
  
- 2.2 **Our Creation**  
Gen. 1:26-28, 2:18-24, Ps. 8:1-9
- 2.2.1 Gen. 1:26, Ps. 139:13-18, 145:10, 147:7-11, Mt. 18:1-3, Acts 17:28, I Cor. 3:18-23, Jas. 3:13-18
- 2.2.2 Gen. 1:27, Ps. 148:12-13, Lk. 8:1-3, 1 Cor. 11:11-12, Phil. 4:1-3
  
- 2.3 **Our Calling**  
Job 28:28, Mt. 22:35-40, Mk. 8:34-38.
- 2.3.1 Mk. 12:28-31, Phil. 2:12-13.
- 2.3.2 Deut. 11:8-15, Ps. 41:1, Eccl. 11:6, 1 Cor. 7:17, Eph. 4:28, 2 Th. 3:10-13.
- 2.3.3 Mk. 10:35-45, Lk. 9:57-62, Jn. 8:36, Jas. 3:16.
  
- 2.4 **Our Care for the World**  
Gen. 1:27-31, 2:15, Deut. 8:7-20.
- 2.4.1 Ps. 8:4-6, 24:1, 65:9-13, Jn. 6:12, Acts 17:24-25
- 2.4.2 Is. 1:17, Mt. 5:6, 2 Cor. 8:12-15
  
- 2.5 **Sin Separates Us from God**  
Gen. 3:22-24, Ps. 51:1-14, Mt. 15:10-20, Rom. 1:18-3:20
- 2.5.1 Ex. 20:1-17, Mic. 6:8, Mt. 12:35-37, Jn. 8:29, 15:22, Rom. 7:21-24, Rev. 2:4
- 2.5.2 Ex. 32:30-31, Judg. 21:25, Neh. 1:5-7, Ps. 143:1-2, Lk. 12:16-19, I Jn. 1:8-9, 3:4
- 2.5.3 Is. 6:1-5, 53:6, 57:20-21, Jer. 17:9, Jn. 13:30, Rom. 6:21, Gal. 5:19-21
- 2.5.4 Ps. 58:3, Prov. 6:6-19, Ezek. 16:48-49, Mk. 7:21-23, Lk. 18:2-4, Jn. 8:34, Jas. 1:14-15

- 2.5.5 Rom. 3:19-20,23, Gal. 3:22.
- 2.5.6 Ps. 46:6, 130:1-4, Jer. 3:25, 9:1-3, Lk. 10:13-15,  
1 Cor. 1:19-20
- 2.5.7 Acts 13:26,38, Rom. 2:1-2, 4:23-5:1, 1 Cor. 1:30-31, 2:2,  
Tit. 2:11-14, 3:3
- 2.5.8 1 Cor. 15:56-57

### **Chapter Three - GOD IN CHRIST**

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

#### **3.1 Jesus Christ and Israel**

- Mt. 5:17-18, Mk. 7:5-9, Lk. 4:16-22, Jn. 12:12-16
- 3.1.1 Gen. 6:11-12, 12:1-3, Deut. 29:10-15, Is. 49:5-6, Hab. 2:14
- 3.1.2 Ex. 12:25-27, Deut. 4:5-8, Ps. 126:3, Jer. 3:14-18, 4:5-8,  
Dan. 7:13-14, Mic. 5:2, Rom. 16:25-27
- 3.1.3 Is. 60:1-3, Mt. 1:1, Mk. 1:14-15, Lk; 2:25-32, Jn. 8:12,  
Acts 13:22-23, Rom. 1:1-2

#### **3.2 Jesus Christ: Truly God**

- Jn. 1:1-14, 20:28, 1 Cor. 8:6, Phil. 2:5-11, Col. 2:8-9
- 3.2.1 Mt. 1:22-25, Lk. 1:30-38, Jn. 1:14, 17:5, Rom. 15:7-12,  
2 Cor. 1:18-20, 5:19, 8:9, Heb. 1:1-13, 2:18
- 3.2.2 Mt. 11:25-27, Jn. 1:18,49, 14:8-9, Col. 1:19, Heb. 1:5-13
- 3.2.3 Jn. 1:4-5, 2 Cor. 4:4, Col. 1:15-16, Rev. 19:11-13
- 3.2.4 Jn. 10:30, Acts 10:36, Rom. 8:9-10

#### **3.3 Jesus Christ: Truly Human**

- Mk. 14:1-15:47, Lk. 2:1-7, Heb. 5:7-10
- 3.3.1 Mt. 4:1-11, Mk. 14:33-36, Lk. 2:21-22, 41-52, 4:14-18,  
13:31-33, 19:41-42, Lk. 22:28-30, Jn. 14:30-31, 15:13-15,  
19:31-42, Heb. 2:17, 4:15

#### **3.4 Jesus is Saviour**

- Lk. 2:11, Phil. 3:20-21, 1 Jn. 4:14
- 3.4.1 Jn. 16:24, 1 Tim. 2:5, 1 Jn. 1:1-3
- 3.4.2 Jn. 1:29, 1 Cor. 15:3, 2 Cor. 5:20-21, 1 Pet. 4:1
- 3.4.3 Is. 53:1-12, Mk. 10:45, Jn. 10:11, Acts 8:32-35, Rom. 5:1-11,19, Eph.  
3:1-5,19, Col. 2:15, Heb. 7:26-27, 1 Pet. 3:18, 1 Jn. 4:8

#### **3.5 Jesus is Lord**

- Acts 2:22-36, 1 Cor. 15:1-11, Rev. 1:12-19
- 3.5.1 Mk. 15:37-41, Acts 13:30, Rom. 14:9, 1 Pet. 3:22

- 3.5.2 1 Cor. 15:12-25, 2 Tim. 1:10, 1 Pet. 5:8-9
- 3.5.3 2 Cor. 2:10-11, Eph. 4:27, 2 Th. 1:4-10, 1 Jn. 3:8
- 3.5.4 Rom. 8:34, 1 Tim. 2:1-4, Heb. 9:24, 13:15, Rev. 1:4-5, 7:9-12

### 3.6 **Salvation in Christ**

- Mt. 12:15-21, Eph. 1:1-14, Tit. 2:11-14
- 3.6.1 Lk. 3:22, Jn. 10:10, Rom. 11:5-6, Eph. 1:4-5, 2:8, Col. 2:9-10, 2 Tim. 1:8-9, Tit. 3:3-8, Heb. 2:11-13, 1 Pet. 2:3-7
- 3.6.2 Ps. 138:8, Is. 43:1-7, Jn. 12:25-26, 15:16, Rom. 3:21-24, 8:29, Phil. 1:6, Col. 3:12-15, 2 Th. 2:13-14, Jas. 1:18
- 3.6.3 1 Cor. 15:57, 2 Cor. 2:14

## **Chapter Four - GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**

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

### 4.1 **The Holy Spirit is God with us**

- Ps. 138:7-12, Lk. 3:15-16, 1 John 3:24
- 4.1.1 Gen. 1:2, Mic. 3:8, Jn. 16:7-11, Acts 4:31, Rom. 8:9, 1 Cor. 2:9-16, Gal. 4:6, Eph. 1:13-14, 4:1-6, 2 Pet. 1:21

### 4.2 **The Holy Spirit Enables People to Believe and to Grow**

- Acts 11:19-21, Rom. 8:14-16, 1 Cor. 2:1-5
- 4.2.1 Lk. 15:17-20, Jn. 8:30, Acts 11:15-18, 16:14, Rom. 5:17, 9:16, 1 Cor. 12:3, Gal. 4:4-7, 1 Th. 1:5
- 4.2.2 Is. 59:21, Lk. 1:35, Jn. 3:7-8, 14:26, Acts 10:19-20, Eph. 4:30, Heb. 13:14, 1 Pet. 1:2, 1 Jn. 2:20-27, Rev. 22:12-14

### 4.3 **The Holy Spirit Forms and Equips the Church**

- Acts 2:1-21, Eph. 2:19-22, 1 Pet. 1:1-2
- 4.3.1 Acts 2:38-39, Rom. 8:1-2,9, 15:18-19, Phil. 2:1-3
- 4.3.2 Ps. 5:7-8, Jn. 14:15-17, Rev. 3:14-22
- 4.3.3 Gal. 5:22-23
- 4.3.4 Acts 8:5-8, 19:1-20, Rom. 12:6-13, 1 Cor. 12:4-7, 1 Pet. 4:10-11
- 4.3.5 Lk. 11:13

## **Chapter Five - THE BIBLE**

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

- 5.1 Deut. 13:1-4, Jer. 23:26-32, Mt. 4:4,7,10, 22:43-44, Jn. 1:1, 5:39, Acts 17:10-11, Rom. 16:25-27, Gal. 4:21-31, Heb. 3:7-11, 1 Jn. 2:21, 4:1-6

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

## **Chapter Six - FAITH**

GENESIS 15:1-6, MATTHEW 8:5-13, JOHN 14:1-14,  
HEBREWS 3:12-4:11

- 6.1 **Faith**  
Mt. 15:21-28, Rom. 4:1-25, Heb. 11:1-12:2
- 6.1.1 Mk. 11:22, Lk. 13:1-5, Jn. 3:14-15, 4:39-42, Acts 2:37-42, 16:27-34, Eph. 2:8, Col. 2:6-7, 1 Th. 2:13
- 6.1.2 Mt. 18:1-6, Lk. 19:1-10, Jn. 20:24-28, Acts 2:21, 9:3-6
- 6.1.3 Gen. 28:16-21, Jn. 11:25-27
- 6.2 **Doubt: The Trial of Faith**  
Job 3:1-26, 23:1-3, Ps. 77:1-10, Mt. 14:22-33, 2 Cor. 4:8-9
- 6.2.1 2 Chr. 32:31, Ps. 119:67,71,75, Lam. 1:1-3:18, 2 Cor. 7:5, Heb. 12:4-11, 1 Pet. 1:6-7
- 6.2.2 Ps. 78:19, Mt. 22:37, Mk. 9:9-10,24, Lk. 7:18-23, 2 Cor. 13:5, Gal. 1:1-6
- 6.2.3 Num. 21:4-5, Mk. 13:31, Gal. 5:7, Col. 2:10-14, Heb. 6:11-12, 1 Jn. 5:4-7

## Chapter Seven - GOD'S CHURCH

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

### 7.1 The Church

- Jn. 10:14-16, Acts 9:31, Eph. 2:1-10, 19-22, 1 Tim. 3:14-16
- 7.1.1 Ps. 107:1-3, Mt. 16:16-19, Col. 3:9-11
- 7.1.2 Mt. 18:20, Acts 14:23, 15:41
- 7.1.3 Mt. 28:16-20, 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 13:13
- 7.1.4 Gal. 3:15-29, Eph. 4:4-6
- 7.1.5 Jn. 17:6-23, Acts 2:42, Eph. 2:20, Jude 3
- 7.1.6 Rom. 12:9-13, Gal. 6:2,9-10, Col. 3:17,23-24
- 7.1.7 Mk. 6:20, Lk. 11:27-28, 1 Cor. 10:16-17, 2 Cor. 1:3-4, 3:2-3, 6:14-18, Eph. 6:10-18, 2 Tim. 1:7-10, Heb. 3:6, Jas. 2:1-9, 4:1-4, Rev. 2:5
- 7.1.9 1 Cor. 12:27, Eph. 4:11-16, Col. 1:18
- 7.1.10 Acts 11:27-30, 1 Cor. 1:2, 16:1-2, 2 Cor. 8:1-5, 16-19,24
- 7.1.11 Acts 4:18-21, 5:29, 25:10-12, Rom. 13:1-7

### 7.2 Pastoral Ministry

- Mk. 10:35-45, Eph. 4:11-16, 1 Tim. 3:1-13
- 7.2.1 Jn. 20:21, Rom. 12:4-9, 1 Cor. 12:12-27, Phil. 2:14-16, Heb. 13:20-21, 1 Pet. 4:10-11
- 7.2.2 Acts 13:1-3, Rom. 1:11-12, Eph. 4:12, Col. 4:17
- 7.2.3 Acts 2:18, 20:28, 1 Th. 5:12-13, 1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 2:1-2, Heb. 13:7
- 7.2.4 Acts 14:23, Rom. 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:28
- 7.2.5 1 Cor. 12:4-7
- 7.2.6 Jn. 15:12, 21:15-17, 2 Tim. 4:1-5, 1 Pet. 2:16

### 7.3 Worship

- Ps. 84:1-12, Eph. 5:15-20, Rev. 15:2-4
- 7.3.1 Ps. 48:9-10, 145:2, Lk. 24:52-53, Jn. 4:23-24, Rev. 1:10
- 7.3.2 Ps. 96:7-9, Is. 41:17-18, Mk. 2:2, Acts 2:46-47, 10:47-48, Rom. 12:1-2, 1 Pet. 2:9
- 7.3.3 Jn. 12:28-32, 2 Cor. 6:1-2, 1 Tim. 2:1-4, Heb. 7:24-25, 1 Jn. 2:2
- 7.3.4 Rev. 7:12

### 7.4 Preaching

- Lk. 24:44-49, Rom. 10:4-17, 1 Cor. 9:16, 2 Tim. 4:1-5
- 7.4.1 Jn. 12:31-32, 20:19-23, Acts 20:21, Rom. 10:17, 1 Cor. 1:23-24, 2:4, 2 Cor. 5:20, Col. 1:19-20, 24-29, 1 Tim. 1:1, 1 Pet. 1:25
- 7.4.2 Ps. 85:8-9, Mt. 4:4, 5:6, Eph. 6:18-19, 2 Tim. 2:14-16

## 7.5 **Ordinances**

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7.5.1 Mt. 28:18-20, Mk. 14:22-24, Jn. 6:52-59, Acts 18:8

7.5.2 Lk. 22:19-20, Acts 22:16

7.5.3 Ps. 51:15-17, Jn. 6:63, Eph. 2:5, 1 Pet. 3:11

## 7.6 **Baptism**

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7.6.2 Acts 2:38-39, 8:36-38, 10:44-48

7.6.3 Rom. 6:1-4, 2 Cor. 7:1, Gal. 3:26-27, Col. 2:12-13

7.6.4 Lk. 12:50, Jn. 15:6, Rom. 10:9-10, Heb. 6:4-6, Jas. 4:6-10,  
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7.6.5 Jn. 14:27, Rom. 14:8, Col. 3:1-4, 1 Jn. 3:1-2

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7.7.1 Mk. 14:22-23, 1 Cor. 5:6-8, 11:23-25, 1 Pet. 5:6-7

7.7.2 Lk. 24:30-31, Heb. 9:27-28, Rev. 3:20

7.7.3 Jn. 15:1-10, Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 10:16, 11:26

7.7.4 Ps. 78:23-25, Mt. 8:11, 24:14, Lk. 14:15-24, 22:15-16, Jn. 6:11,  
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8.1.1 Jn. 8:31-32, 36, 14:15, Phil. 3:7-8

8.1.2 Mt. 5:21-27, Acts 5:29, Gal. 5:13

8.1.3 Mt. 7:7-8, Jn. 16:13-15

8.1.4 Acts 4:19-20, 5:38-39, Gal. 5:1

8.1.5 Mt. 10:16, Gal. 2:20, Jas. 3:17-18

8.1.6 Acts 18:27, Rom. 7:21-25, 8:13, 2 Cor. 1:11, Phil. 1:27-30,  
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8.1.7 Ps. 62:1-8, 116:1-19, 139:1-6, Mt. 6:10, Lk. 18:1,  
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8.1.8 Ps. 19:7-14, Jn. 17:17, Eph. 6:17, 2 Tim. 3:16-17

8.1.9 Is. 58:13-14, Mk. 2:27, Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:2, Col. 2:16

- 8.2           **The Christian Family**  
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- 8.2.1        Gen. 1:27-28, Ex. 20:14, Ps. 85:10-11, Song of Solomon,  
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- 8.2.2        Deut. 5:16, 6:6-7, Ezra 8:21, Ps. 78:1-8, Prov. 3:1-8,  
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- 8.2.3        Gen. 26:28, 1 Cor. 7:12-16, Gal. 6:1-2, Eph. 4:32, 1 Tim. 1:15
- 8.2.4        Prov. 18:22, Is. 56:4-5, Jer. 16:1-2, Lk. 18:29-30,  
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- 8.2.5        Rom. 12:5,15, 1 Cor. 12:12-13,27
- 8.3           **Love**  
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- 8.3.1        Jn. 5:20-23, 2 Cor. 5:14, 1 Jn. 4:8-12,19, Rev. 21:4-5
- 8.3.2        Jn. 13:34-35, 15:12-13, Rom. 13:10, 1 Jn. 4:20-21
- 8.3.3        Ps. 145:8-9, Mt. 22:37-40, Lk. 10:26-28, Rom. 8:38-39,  
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- 8.3.4        Ps. 73:24-26, Mt. 6:25-33, Mk. 8:34-36, Lk. 10:33, Jn. 15:17,  
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- 8.4           **Justice**  
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- 8.4.1        Gen. 18:22-25, Prov. 13:34, Is. 45:8, 23-24, Jer. 9:23-24
- 8.4.2        Ex. 9:1, Deut. 15:7-11, Ps. 9:7-8, Jer. 22:15-16, Hab. 2:5-20,  
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- 8.4.3        Ps. 41:1, Prov. 4:1-19, 8:1-21, Is. 1:16-17, Mt. 20:1-7, 3 Jn. 1-2
- 8.4.4        Lev. 19:11, 2 Sam. 23:1-4, Neh. 5:1-13, Job 24:1-4, 13-17,  
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- 8.4.5        Ex. 18:21-22, Lev. 19:13-18, Ps. 72:1-7, Prov. 24:23-25,  
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- 8.5           **World Peace**  
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- 8.5.1        Mt. 5:9, Jn. 12:14-15
- 8.5.2        2 Chr. 20:1-30, Ps. 74:1-11, Amos 1:13, Mk. 13:7, Heb. 12:14
- 8.5.3        Ps. 46:9, 120:6-7, Is. 9:5-6, 55:2, Mt. 26:52, Lk. 9:1-2, 23:28-31,  
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- 8.5.4        Jer. 6:13-14, Ezek. 13:8-11
- 8.5.5        Is. 9:2-7, 12:1-6, Jn. 14:27, 20:19-21, Rom. 5:1

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9.1.1 Mt. 5:13-16, Jn. 20:21, Gal. 4:4-5, Jas. 1:22,

9.1.2 Mk. 6:12, Jn. 14:1, Acts 8:4, 10:48, 13:38-39, 1 Cor. 4:20,  
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9.1.3 Mt. 5:7, Gal. 5:13, 1 Jn. 3:17-18

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9.2.1 Deut. 8:3, Is. 37:37-38, Lk. 10:33-34, 18:9-14, Acts 8:27-28,  
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9.2.2 Mic. 7:18-19, Jn. 14:6, Acts 2:39-40, 4:20, 2 Cor. 4:5

### **9.3 Our Mission and Unbelief**

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9.3.1 Ps. 94:3-7, 115:2, Jn. 18:37-38

9.3.2 Ex. 6:8-9, Judg. 6:13, 1 Kings 19:1-4, Ps. 73:2-15, Is. 38:18

9.3.3 Is. 63:8-9, Jn. 19:17-20, Acts 8:32-35, 20:28, Rom. 8:22,  
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9.3.4 Gen. 41:14-43, Ps. 32:10-11, Jer. 20:9, Mic. 6:8, Jn. 6:37,  
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1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-58, 2 CORINTHIANS 4:15 AND 5:17,

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10.2 Mt. 22:1-10, Lk. 1:31-33,37, 20:34-36, Jn. 14:2,  
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10.3 Ps. 96:11-13, Ezek. 18:20, Mt. 7:26-27, 24:14, 25:41-46,  
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10.4 Ps. 31:5, Lk. 23:46, Jn. 3:36, 5:24, 6:40, 11:25-26, Acts 10:40,  
1 Cor. 15:53-54, Gal. 3:26-27, Col. 2:11-14, 1 Jn. 5:13

10.5 Gen. 2:7, Mk. 13:32-33, Jn. 13:7, Rom. 11:36, 1 Cor. 13:12,  
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10.6 Rom. 15:13, Rev. 22:20

## **Addendum, *Baptist Distinctives***

### **CANADIAN BAPTISTS**

We are Canadian Baptists. Working together in federation are Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (The Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches), Canadian Baptists of French Canada (l'Union d'Églises Baptistes Françaises au Canada), Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec) and Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (formerly the Baptist Union of Western Canada). Our mission agency that also links us together nationally is Canadian Baptist Ministries. Each regional group works to extend Christian ministry and mission in its own territory, and we cooperate in national and international enterprises through Canadian Baptist Ministries. There are also several other smaller Baptist groups in Canada. We affiliate with churches worldwide through the Baptist World Alliance, joining with over 43,000,000 Baptist Christians.

In Ontario and Quebec our Convention is an array of diversity. Among our 365 churches, our congregations worship in 27 different languages each week. We are both rural and urban, traditional and contemporary in style, conservative and open theologically. We seek to transform our world in the name of Jesus Christ as we ourselves are reconciled to God through Christ. Our mission is to support and enable our member churches to become healthy, mission-minded congregations as we serve God together. We operate in four broad areas: resourcing churches, developing leaders, fostering partnerships and strengthening relationships and identity. Our current theme is expressed as T3 – Transforming Leaders, Transforming Churches, Transforming Communities.

More about our Convention can be found on our website, [www.baptist.ca](http://www.baptist.ca).

### **BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES**

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

### **1. Jesus is Lord**

Baptists believe that Jesus Christ, being eternally God, only begotten Son and the visible expression of the invisible God, effectively procured salvation for all creation through his death, burial and resurrection. Basic to Baptists is a conviction that Christian life begins, continues and ends as a personal experience with God revealed in Jesus Christ through the witness of the Holy Spirit. Every area of the believer's life and the life of the church is to be subject to the Lord.

### **2. The Sufficiency of Scripture.**

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

### **3. The Priesthood of All Believers**

The Bible affirms the value of each person as having been created in the image of God, and also declares each person morally responsible for his/her own nature and behavior.

Baptists believe that inherent in the worth of each person is also the right and competency of each individual personally to deal directly with God through Jesus Christ. In essence, each person, by faith, becomes his/her own priest before God; hence, the cherished term "priesthood of all believers." This implies that all believers share as equals in Christ's Body, the church, and in turn, have a priestly role toward each other. Baptists believe that everyone that attends a Baptist church has a role to play and can use their God-given skills and talents for the good of the church and the community. These gifts include teaching, evangelism, social action, pastoral care, prayer, healing, taking part in worship, administration or hospitality.

A further extension of this principle means that Baptists believe that no group or individual has any right to compel others to believe or worship as they do. Baptists ideally are champions of the cause of religious liberty.

### **4. Mission and Evangelism**

We have a story to tell that is mandated by our Lord in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. Our calling is to share God's message of love and salvation with each person. Each Christian has a duty to share their faith with others. Baptists continue to be very active in mission efforts, both in local and global contexts.

We recognize that mission is not just evangelism, but also includes promoting justice, social welfare, healing, education and peace in the world. It is a holistic

approach that expresses care for both the needs of the human soul and the social needs that affect all of life.

### **5. A Believers' Church**

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

Baptists believe that baptism is an ordinance required by the New Testament, and is to be administered by the local church. Baptism is intended to represent Jesus' death, burial and resurrection; baptism by completely immersing the candidate in water is seen as the only adequate outward expression for the spiritual faith-union with Jesus Christ. Baptism should be administered only to believers. It is one of the first significant acts through which the believer proclaims personal faith in Christ and is initiated into church life and ministry.

Another ordinance observed by churches is the Lord's Supper. The bread and the cup are visible reminders of the spiritual graces of Christ's death for our salvation to eternal life.

### **6. Church Autonomy and Association**

Government in a local church is controlled by the principles of the priesthood of all believers, the Lordship of Christ, the authority of the Scriptures and the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. Christ, present in the lives of congregational members, leads them corporately to discover and obey his mind and will. Such "congregational government" calls for and expresses the equality and responsibility of believers under the Lordship of Christ. When a person is baptized in a Baptist church, they normally become a church member. Church members are called to prayerfully discern God's will for their shared life.

Baptists believe that the principle of the Lordship of Jesus Christ gives each individual congregation a certain degree of autonomy and freedom from coercion by other bodies. However, just as a believer must temper his/her doctrinal interpretation and personal behavior to satisfy the greater needs and unity of the community of believers, Baptist churches also recognize the need to temper the exercise of their autonomy in order to "associate" with a larger body of churches. We covenant together in cooperative ministry and mission ventures and organize ourselves to work together to accomplish ministry that no single congregation could do alone. Our Baptist churches are linked regionally, nationally and

internationally for support and fellowship. Baptists believe that churches should not live in isolation from one another but rather be interdependent.

## **7. Freedom & Equality**

Emerging from our convictions about the priesthood of all believers, we affirm that in Jesus Christ all people are equal. Each one is free to be in relationship with God and to express a faith that is not coerced.

Faith cannot be predetermined by someone else, but is the right of and responsibility of each individual as they seek a relationship with God based on their own personal commitments.

A further extension of the principle of the Lordship of Christ and the priesthood of believers is to be found in the Baptist conviction that there must exist a separation between the church and civil governments. There is the easy recognition that God has given legitimate roles to both church and state, but also the deep conviction that neither is to encroach upon the rights or obligations of the other. They are, however, under obligation to recognize and reinforce each other as each seeks to fulfill its divine function. The function of individual believers and the church is to become part of the conscience of the community and nation.

## **OUR FUTURE TOGETHER**

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

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

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









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