



JÖNKÖPINGS
BAPTISTFÖRSAMLING
BEREÅ

**Berea Baptist Church of Jönköping
Statement of faith**

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Introduction

In addition to the three ecumenical creeds – the *Apostles' Creed*, the *Nicene Creed*, and the *Athanasian Creed* – which we confess together with the worldwide Church, as well as the *Chalcedonian Definition*, Jönköping Baptist Church Berea has summarized its faith in a confession* that stands in continuity with the Baptist tradition. Our confession is in continuity with historical Baptist confessions such as the *First London Baptist Confession* (1644/1646), the *Second London Baptist Confession* (1689), the *Borekulla Confession* (1848), the *Confession of Swedish Baptists* (1861), and *The Baptist Faith and Message* (1925/2000). The congregation's confession of faith contains both sections and formulations taken directly from these confessional documents (with modernized and/or modified language), as well as sections whose essence aligns with them. The confession as a whole reflects a faith rooted in historic and evangelical Christianity, Reformed theology, the Baptist tradition, a congregational and elder-led form of church governance, a complementarian view of the two sexes, and an openness to the gifts of the Spirit today.

We believe that the unity of the congregation is best fostered not by seeking the lowest common doctrinal denominator around which we may gather, but by elevating the value of biblical truth. This also enables us to show the world how Christians can love one another across boundaries, rather than moving or erasing those boundaries. All who wish to become members of the congregation must submit themselves to the congregation's confession of faith.^a

^a 2 Cor 9:13; 1 Tim 6:14; Heb 4:14; 10:23–24

**This confession was written and revised by Nima Motallebzadeh and Peter Jarlsheim and was subsequently adopted by Jönköping Baptist Church Berea at the congregation's constituting church meeting on September 21, 2024. The congregation adopted a slightly revised version on April 19, 2026.*

Statement of Faith

1. ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

A) Canon of Scripture

We believe that the triune God has revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures.^a These Scriptures, rightly called the Word of God, consist of all the books of the Old and New Testaments, namely: the Five Books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; and in the New Testament: the four Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Acts of the Apostles, the Letter to the Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, the Letter of James, First and Second Peter, First, Second, and Third John, Jude, and the Book of Revelation. The books commonly called the Apocrypha do not belong to the canon of Scripture and therefore possess no higher authority for the Church of Christ than other human writings.^b

^a 1 Sam 3:21; Rom 16:25–26

^b Luke 24:44; Acts 1:6; Rom 1:2; Eph 2:20; Heb 1:1; 2 Pet 3:1–2, 15–16; Jude 3

B) Nature of Scripture

We believe that all these books, in their entirety, are breathed out by God and written by men who were led by the Holy Spirit.^a The Word of God is inerrant and infallible in all that it affirms,^b sufficient without needing to be supplemented,^c clear in its central message concerning salvation and the Christian life,^d and necessary for men to come to know God unto salvation,^e since God's self-revelation in creation is sufficient only to leave them without excuse for their sin and thus under condemnation.^f Furthermore, Scripture is self-authenticating, meaning that it demonstrates itself to be the Word of God when the Holy Spirit, through the written Word, bears witness to its truth in the regenerated heart.^g

^a Matt 22:31; Acts 1:1,16; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15–16; 2 Pet 1:20–21; 3:15–16

^b 2 Sam 22:31; Ps 19:8; Ps 119:160; Prov 30:5; Acts 24:14

^c Prov 30:6; 2 Thess 2:15; 2 Tim 3:17; 2 Pet 1:3; Rev 22:18–19

^d Deut 6:6–7; Ps 19:8–9; Ps 119:130

^e Deut 32:47; Prov 22:19–21; Matt 4:4

^f Ps 8:1; Ps 19:1; Ps 97:6; Eccl 3:11; Acts 14:15–17; Rom 1:19–20

^g John 10:27; 16:13–14; 1 Cor 2:10–12; 2 Cor 3:14–18

C) Authority of Scripture

We believe that Scripture, as the Word of God, constitutes the supreme authority for the doctrine and life of the Church.^a Neither human decrees, ecclesiastical traditions, personal experiences, nor reasonings grounded in worldly wisdom can overturn the authority of Scripture.^b All traditions, particular revelations, spiritual experiences, and philosophical reflections must be tested against Scripture before they may be embraced as true.^c As the Word of God, the Scriptures lay claim to our complete obedience in every area of life.^d Furthermore, we believe that the best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself and that all of Scripture bears witness to Christ.^e

^a Isa 8:19–20; Isa 40:8; Acts 17:11

^b Mark 7:8–13; 1 Cor 2:13; Col 2:8,22; 2 Thess 2:2; 1 Tim 6:20–21; 1 John 5:9

^c Ezek 13:1–10; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess 5:19–22

^d 1 Sam 15:22; Matt 24:35; 28:20; John 10:35; 12:48; Acts 5:29; 2 Thess 3:14; James 1:22–25
^e Luke 24:27,44–45; John 1:45; 5:39,46–47; Rom 16:25–26; Gal 3:15–25; 4:21–31

2. ON THE TRINITY

We believe that there is only one living and true God,^a eternally existing^b in three coequal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.^c The triune God is altogether glorious,^d thrice holy,^e sovereign over all events,^f unchanging,^g all-good,^h almighty,ⁱ all-wise and all-knowing^j and present everywhere.^k He alone is the source of all truth^l and of all true beauty.^m God's ultimate purpose in creation and history is to reveal and display His eternal and manifold glory, to the delight and praise of the people who are called by His name.ⁿ God has no needs outside Himself and is wholly independent of His creation, while everything and everyone outside of Him is wholly dependent on Him.^o

^a Deut 6:4; Isa 43:10; 44:6; Jer 10:10; 1 Cor 8:4–6; 1 Tim 1:17

^b Gen 21:33; Exod 3:14; Ps 90:2; Dan 4:34; 12:7; 6:26; Hab 1:12; John 17:5

^c Matt 12:28; 28:19; Luke 3:22; John 14:26; 15:26; Acts 2:33; 7:55; 10:38; 2 Cor 13:13; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:17; 2:18; Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:2; Jude 20–21

^d Job 37:22; Ps 29:3; Ps 104:1; Ps 113:4; Ezek 1:26–28; 43:2; Hab 3:3–4; Acts 7:2; Rev 21:23

^e Isa 6:3; Hab 1:13; 1 Pet 1:16; 1 John 1:5; Rev 4:8

^f Gen 41:25–32; 1 Chr 29:11–12; Prov 16:4; Dan 4:34–35; 7:12; Hab 3:6; Mark 13:20; Acts 1:7; 17:26

^g Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8; James 1:17

^h Exod 34:6–7; Deut 32:4; Ps 25:8; Ps 31:19; Matt 5:45; 1 John 4:8,16

ⁱ Job 42:2; Ps 115:3; Ps 135:6; Ps 145:3; Isa 46:10–11; Jer 32:17,27; Dan 4:35; Acts 5:39

^j 1 Chr 28:9; Job 37:16; Ps 33:15; Ps 139:1–4; Ps 147:5; Isa 55:9; Rom 16:27; 1 John 3:20

^k Gen 16:13; Job 34:21–22; Ps 139:7–8; Prov 15:3; Jer 23:24; Acts 17:24; Heb 4:13

^l Isa 65:16; John 14:6; Rom 3:4; 1 John 3:19

^m Gen 2:9; Ps 16:11; Ps 19:1; Ps 27:4; Eccl 3:11; James 1:17

ⁿ Gen 1; Ps 115:1; Isa 43:7; Rom 11:36; Eph 1:6, 12, 14; Rev 5:12–13

^o Gen 1:1; Exod 3:14; Ps 50:9–12; John 5:26; Acts 17:24–25; Eph 1:11

A) God the Father

We believe that the first person of the Godhead is God the Father, who is from no one, neither born nor proceeding.^a The Father is the cause and origin of all things created, both visible and invisible,^b and has established appointed times and boundaries within which all people are to dwell. In Him all creatures live, move, and exist, and to them all He gives life, spirit, and all things.^c The Father does good, gives rain and harvest seasons from heaven, and fills people with food and joy in their hearts.^d As the Father of the whole creation, He causes His sun to rise over both the evil and the good and sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous.^e At the same time, He is in a special and personal way the Father of all those whom He has given to His only-begotten Son and in whom He has adopted. We deny that this latter fatherhood extends to all mankind.^f

^a John 5:26; 1 Cor 8:6

^b Neh 9:6; Acts 14:15; 17:24; Rom 1:20; 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:2; 2:10; Rev 4:11; 10:6

^c Isa 42:5; Dan 5:23; Acts 1:7; 17:25–26,28; 1 Tim 6:13

^d Ps 65:10–14; Ps 136:26; Ps 145:9; Zech 10:1; Acts 14:17; 1 Tim 6:17

^e Job 36:31; 39:1–3; Ps 104:27; Ps 145:9,15–16; Ps 147:8–9; Prov 29:13; Matt 5:45

^f Ps 103:13; John 1:12; Eph 4:6; 1 Thess 3:11; 2 Thess 2:16; 1 Pet 1:17; 1 John 2:14; 3:1, 10

B) God the Son, Jesus Christ

We believe that the second person of the Godhead is God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ,^a who is eternally begotten and beloved by the Father.^b Through Him all things visible and invisible were made, and He is appointed heir of all things.^c When the time was fulfilled, the Son was sent by the Father into the world to redeem His people from their sins,^d in accordance with the prophetic Scriptures that foretold the coming Savior. He is the seed of the woman, the offspring of Abraham, the Lion of Judah, the Prophet, the Son of David, the Son of Man, and the suffering Servant of the Lord.^e He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.^f The

incarnate Son unites in His person true divinity with true humanity – without confusion, without change, without division and without separation – forever.^g As God’s sinless Lamb, He fully kept the divine law,ⁱ bore in His body God’s curse on sin,^j died, was buried, and then rose from the dead on the third day.^k Having commanded His disciples to proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all nations in His name,^l He has ascended to the Father’s right hand^m and there performs His high-priestly intercession for His people.ⁿ At the end of time He will return to earth to execute judgment.^o Apart from the God-man Christ, there is no mediator between God and men, and no other name by which people can be saved.^p

^a Isa 9:6; Mic 5:2; John 1:1–3, 18; 8:58; 10:30; 18:5–6; 20:28; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:3–10; 2 Pet 1:1; Rev 1:17; 22:13

^b John 3:16, 35; 5:20; 10:17; 17:24; Rom 8:32; Col 1:13, 15

^c John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2; Rev 3:14

^d Matt 1:21; John 3:16; Rom 8:3; Gal 4:3–5; 1 Tim 1:15; Heb 2:14–15; 9:26

^e Gen 3:15; 22:18; 49:8–10; Num 24:17; Deut 18:15, 18; 2 Sam 7:12–15; Ps 110:1–2; Isa 52:13–53:12; Dan 7:13–14; Matt 1:1; Luke 1:32–33; Acts 3:22; 7:37; 8:32–35; Rom 1:1–3; Gal 3:16; 4:4; 2 Tim 2:8; 1 John 3:8; Rev 5:5; 14:14; 22:16

^f Isa 7:14; Matt 1:18, 20; Luke 1:27, 35; Gal 4:4

^g Luke 24:39; John 1:14; Acts 7:55; Rom 1:3–4; Col 2:9; 1 Tim 2:5; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7

^h Isa 53:7–9; John 1:29, 36; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5

ⁱ Matt 5:17; Rom 5:19; 10:4; Gal 4:4

^j Isa 53:10; Rom 3:25; 8:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 3:18

^k Matt 27:50, 58–60; Luke 24:6–7; John 19:30; Acts 13:28–31; 1 Cor 15:3–4; 1 Thess 4:14

^l Matt 24:14; 28:18–20; Mark 13:10; 14:9; Luke 24:46–47; Acts 1:8

^m Luke 24:51; John 14:28; Acts 1:9–10; 2:33–34; 1 Pet 3:22

ⁿ Rom 8:34; Heb 4:14–16; 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1

^o Matt 25:31–46; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Cor 5:10

^p John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 11:14; Rom 10:13–15; 1 Tim 2:5

C) God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the third person of the Godhead is God the Holy Spirit,^a who proceeds from the Father and the Son.^b The Spirit regenerates God’s elect,^c reveals Christ to them, convicts them of sin, and guides them into the truth.^d Furthermore, He fulfills,^e sanctifies,^f seals,^g and leads^h them. He takes His dwelling in every Christian,ⁱ and equips the Church with power to bear witness to Christ in the world.^j Furthermore, He provides the Church with a variety of gifts of grace to be used in accordance with biblical instructions so that the body may be built up to the glory of the triune God.^k We deny that the Holy Spirit, unlike the Father and the Son, is an impersonal force, since this would be inconsistent with Scripture’s testimony concerning Him.^l

^a Acts 5:3–4; 1 Cor 2:10–11; 2 Cor 3:17; Heb 9:14

^b John 14:26; 15:26, 16:7; Acts 2:33; Gal 4:6

^c Ezek 36:25–27; 37:4–6; John 3:3–8; 6:63; 2 Cor 3:6; Titus 3:5

^d John 1:32–34; 15:26; 16:8, 13–14; 1 John 5:6

^e Luke 11:13; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; Eph 5:18

^f Rom 15:16; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 3:17–18; Eph 1:17–18; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2

^g Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13; 4:30; 1 John 3:24

^h Ps 143:10; Matt 4:1; Acts 8:29; 10:19–20; Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18

ⁱ Acts 5:32; Rom 8:9–11; 1 Cor 2:12; 6:19; 12:13; Gal 3:14; 2 Tim 1:14

^j Joel 2:28–32; Luke 24:47–49; Acts 1:8; 2:1–41

^k Rom 1:11; 12:4–8; 1 Cor 12:4, 7–11, 31; 14:12, 19–33; 1 Pet 4:10–11

^l Matt 28:19; John 14:26; Acts 5:3, 9; 8:29; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6–7; Rom 8:26–27; Eph 4:30; Heb 10:29

3. ON GOD’S DECREE AND PROVIDENCE

We believe that God does uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things,^a from the least^b to the greatest,^c through His providence and for the purposes for which they were created.^d He does this in accordance with the counsel of His free and unchanging will, to the praise and glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.^e Ordinarily, God uses means, that is, secondary causes, in His providence,^f but He is free to act independently of them whenever He pleases, so that He – from the human perspective – acts miraculously.^g Nothing, whether good or evil, happens outside of God’s sovereign providence, so it should never be

said that God had nothing to do with a particular event.^g This does not make God the author of sin, which would be impossible, for the holy and righteous God can neither create nor approve of sin.ⁱ Nor does God's predestination and providence violate the will of creatures or deprive secondary causes of their freedom or capacity, but rather these are established.^j This doctrine of God's all-encompassing providence constitutes a special comfort for God's children who have received the promise that God works all circumstances together for their good.^k

^a 1 Chr 29:11–12; Job 34:13–15; Ps 66:7; Ps 103:19; Ps 119:90–91; Prov 16:9; Heb 1:3

^b Prov 16:33; Jonah 1:7; 4:6–7; Matt 10:29

^c Job 38; Prov 21:1; Isa 40:12; Amos 4:7; Jonah 1:4, 15; 2:1, 11; 4:8

^d Est 4:14; Job 37:3–13; 42:2; Ps 33:11; Prov 16:4; 19:21; Acts 13:36

^e Ps 104:24; Ps 115:3; Ps 135:6, 13; Eccl 3:14; Isa 46:9–11; Acts 2:23; 15:17–18; Rom 9:22–24; Eph 1:5–6, 11–14

^f Judg 14:3–4; 2 Sam 24:1; 1 Chr 21:1; Isa 48:14–15; Acts 13:27–29; 27:22–26, 31, 44

^g Exod 14:24–25; 1 Kgs 18:30–39; Hos 1:7; Matt 1:18, 20; John 2:7–9

^h Exod 21:13; Lev 14:34; Ruth 1:20; 4:14–17; Job 1:21; 2:10; 42:11; Ps 90:15; Eccl 7:14; Isa 45:5–7; Lam 3:37–38; Amos 3:6; 1 Pet 4:19; Rev 17:16–17

ⁱ Job 1:22; 34:12; Ps 92:16; Prov 19:3; Eccl 7:29; Jer 32:35; James 1:13, 17; 1 John 1:5; 2:16

^j Gen 45:5, 7–8; 50:20; Isa 10:5–15; John 19:11; Acts 4:27–28

^k Isa 38:17; Lam 3:28–33; Matt 10:29–31; Rom 8:28–29; Heb 12:7–11

4. ON MANKIND

A) Man as the Image of God

We believe that the first humans in history, Adam and Eve, were created in the image of God,^a innocent,^b rational,^c and with immortal souls,^d to enjoy fellowship with God, to steward His creation, and to fill it with the knowledge of Him.^e They had God's law written in their hearts and the ability to fulfill it, but also the ability to transgress it since their will was free.^f The man and the woman were created as equals in worth^g with distinct callings.^h Even after the Fall, every human remains in God's image with inviolable worth,ⁱ which is why children, from the moment of conception, are a gift from the Lord to be received with gratitude and joy.^j Furthermore, we believe that God has endowed mankind with creative capacity so that in all things she may honor her Creator.^k

^a Gen 1:26–27; 2:7; 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor 15:45; 1 Tim 2:13

^b Gen 1:31; 2:25; Eccl 7:29

^c Job 32:8; 35:11; Mark 12:33; Acts 26:25

^d Eccl 3:11; 12:7; Dan 12:2; Rev 14:11

^e Gen 1:28; 2:15, 19–20; 3:8–9; Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14

^f Gen 2:17; 3:6; Rom 2:14–15

^g Gen 1:26–27; 2:21–23; Gal 3:28; 1 Pet 3:7

^h Gen 2:18–20; 3:17; 1 Cor 11:3

ⁱ Gen 9:6; Acts 17:28–29; 1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9

^j Gen 1:28; 1 Sam 1:11, 27–28; Job 31:15; Ps 127:3–5; Ps 139:13–16; Isa 13:18

^k Gen 4:20–22; 11:6; Exod 35:30–35; Ps 139:14; Acts 17:29

B) Man as Fallen Sinner

We believe that mankind, through Satan's cunning, sinned and fell from God,^a whereby the image of God in them was corrupted.^b Through their transgression, death, both spiritual^c and physical,^d entered the world. Since all humans now descend from Adam – their representative before God – they have likewise become participants in the same fallen and depraved nature,^e so that they, conceived and born in sin,^f are children of wrath.^g They are entirely unable and unwilling to please God,^h yet able and inclined toward all kinds of ungodliness.ⁱ Neither reason, desires, will, nor any other part of man has been spared from the deadly poison of sin.^j Since this is the state of all mankind, the whole world stands guilty before God^k and is on its way to eternal condemnation.^l

^a Gen 3:1–7, 13–14; 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14

^b Rom 1:21–22; Eph 4:18; Col 3:9–10

^c Gen 2:17; 3:23–24; Eph 2:1, 5; Rom 6:13

^d Gen 3:19; 5:5; Rom 5:12, 14, 17; 1 Cor 15:21–22; Heb 9:27

^e Job 14:4; 15:14; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:10–18; 7:21; Eph 4:22; 5:8; 2 Pet 2:12

^f Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; Ps 58:3; Eph 2:2; Rom 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:21–22

^g Rom 2:8; Eph 2:3; 5:6; 1 Thess 2:16

^h Isa 64:6; Matt 12:34; Rom 7:18; 8:5–8; 1 Cor 2:14; Heb 11:6

ⁱ Job 15:16; Eccl 9:3; Rom 1:29–32; 1 Cor 12:2; Gal 5:19–21; Titus 3:3; 2 Pet 2:14

^j Gen 6:5; 8:21; Prov 2:14; Jer 17:9; Matt 15:19; Rom 3:13–18; 6:17, 19; Eph 4:17–19; Col 1:21; 1 Thess 4:5; 2 Thess 2:12;

1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 2:25–26; Titus 1:15; James 1:14; 2 Pet 2:10–15, 18–19

^k Ps 14:1–3; Ps 130:3; Prov 20:9; Eccl 7:20; Rom 3:19, 23; 5:12

^l Matt 7:13–14; John 3:36; Rom 2:5, 8; 5:16, 18; 1 Cor 11:32

5. ON THE GOSPEL

A) The Content of the Gospel

We believe that God, who is holy and righteous,^a could in no other way redeem mankind from the dreadful consequences of their fall than through a full and perfect satisfaction of His demands for righteousness.^b Therefore, the triune God, from eternity, determined that God the Son would take on human form to give His life as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of His people.^c The Son proved Himself in deed, partly in His obedience when He fulfilled the entire divine law for His people,^d and partly in His suffering, especially when He surrendered Himself to be offered for them.^e On the cross, Christ became a curse in the place of His people as He bore God's wrath, the punishment for their sins.^f In His death, the wrath of God was propitiated,^g the guilt of their sins was expiated,^h and the gracious love of God was demonstrated.ⁱ When Christ had completed this work, He rose bodily and victoriously on the third day, for it was impossible for death to hold Him.^j He was seen by many eyewitnesses,^k and ascended into heaven,^l from where He sent His Church the Holy Spirit.^m We believe that Christ's completed work is the sole basis for the justification of the saintsⁿ – it is Christ's own righteousness that is credited to them^o – and their deliverance from the power of sin,^p Satan,^q and death,^r all to the eternal glory of God.^s

^a 1 Sam 2:2; 6:20; Ps 99:3–5; Isa 5:16; Dan 9:14; Zeph 3:5; Acts 3:14; Rom 3:5; Rev 15:4; 16:5

^b Exod 34:7; Ps 49:7–9; Prov 17:15; Matt 26:39; Rom 3:26

^c Dan 9:24; Acts 2:23; 4:27–28; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:7–10; 3:8–11; Gal 4:4–5; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 9:26; 1 Pet 1:18–20; Rev 13:8

^d Isa 53:11; Matt 3:15; 5:17; Rom 5:18–19; 10:4; Gal 4:4; Heb 2:17

^e Isa 53:7, 12; John 10:15, 17–18; Gal 1:3–4; Eph 5:25; Phil 2:8; Titus 2:14; Heb 7:27; 10:3–12

^f Isa 53:4–6, 8, 12; Mark 10:45; Rom 8:1, 3; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 3:18

^g Isa 53:10; Luke 18:13; John 3:36; Matt 26:38–44; Rom 3:25; 1 John 2:1–2

^h Ps 65:3; Dan 9:24; Acts 3:19; Col 2:13–14; Heb 1:3; 2:17; 9:11–14, 22, 26; 1 Pet 1:2

ⁱ John 3:16; Rom 5:6–8; 8:31–32, 37–39; Eph 5:2; Gal 2:20; 1 John 4:9–10; Rev 1:5

^j Matt 28:7; Mark 16:6; Acts 2:24, 31–32; 5:30; 13:30–37; Rom 6:9; 1 Cor 15:4, 20; Heb 13:20

^k Matt 28:9; Luke 24:34; John 21:12–14; Acts 1:3; 3:15; 5:32; 10:40–41; 13:31; 1 Cor 15:5–8

^l Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9–11; 2:33; Eph 4:10; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:14; 10:12; 1 Pet 3:22

^m John 1:33; 7:39; 15:26; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1–4, 16–18, 33; Titus 3:5–6; 1 Pet 1:12

ⁿ John 19:30; Acts 13:39; Rom 3:21–26; 4:25; 5:9–10; Gal 2:21; 3:11; Heb 1:3; Rev 12:11

^o Rom 4:22–25; 5:18–19, 21; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21

^p Matt 1:21; Rom 6; Eph 5:25–27; Gal 1:4; Titus 2:14; 3:3–5

^q Gen 3:15; Acts 26:18; Col 2:15; 2 Tim 2:25–26; Heb 2:14–15; 1 John 3:8; Rev 12:10–11

^r Ps 68:20; Isa 25:8; Hos 13:14; John 8:51; 11:25–26; 1 Cor 15:53–57; 2 Tim 1:10; Rev 1:18; 20:6, 14; 21:4

^s Ps 25:11; Ps 79:9; Isa 48:9–11; Dan 9:18–19; Rom 3:7; 11:36; 16:27; 2 Cor 1:20; Gal 1:3–5; Eph

B) The Proclamation of the Gospel

We believe that the Lord Jesus has commanded His Church to proclaim this gospel to all nations.^a In accordance with His gracious will, God fulfills the promises of the gospel concerning the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in connection with sinners hearing and receiving the message of the gospel, as the Spirit produces life, faith, and repentance in their hearts.^b Therefore, we believe that it is the duty of every church and disciple, according to their abilities and resources, to spread the gospel of Christ^c and to live in such a way that the gospel is embodied through them.^d

^a Matt 24:14; 28:19–20; Mark 13:10; Luke 24:46–47; Rom 1:5; 16:26; Rev 14:6

^b John 6:44; 16:8; 17:20; Acts 2:36–37; 4:4; 11:14; 13:48; 15:7; 16:14; 18:8; Rom 1:16–17; 10:13–17; 1 Cor 1:21; 2:1–5; 12:3; 2 Cor 5:20; Eph 1:13; Col 1:5–6; Heb 4:2; 1 Pet 1:12

^c Matt 9:37–38; Acts 8:4; Rom 15:24; 1 Cor 9:19–23; 1 Pet 3:15; 3 John 5–8

^d Matt 5:16; John 13:35; Phil 1:27–28; 1 Thess 2:11–12; 1 Tim 2:1–4; 1 Pet 2:12

6. ON GOD’S COVENANTS AND LAW

A) God’s Covenant

We believe that God has related to mankind throughout history through various covenants.^a After Adam broke the covenant of works that the Lord had made with him, thereby incurring the curse of the law upon himself and all his descendants,^b it pleased the Lord to establish a new covenant in which He offers sinners life and salvation through faith in the last Adam, Jesus Christ.^c This covenant is not the same as the one the Lord made with earthly Israel at Sinai – called the old covenant in the New Testament.^d The gospel of the new covenant was revealed through promises, types, and shadows, first to Adam and then progressively until its formal establishment and full disclosure in the New Testament.^e The new covenant constitutes the sole basis for all saving grace that has at all times been granted to the descendants of fallen Adam, and its members include all – and only – regenerated and forgiven people from every nation.^f In Christ, they together constitute Abraham’s spiritual children, namely, God’s Israel.^g

^a Gen 2:15–17; 9:8–17; 15; 17; Exod 24; 2 Sam 7; Eph 2:12; Heb 8:6–13

^b Gen 3:22–24; 5:29; Isa 24:5–6; Hos 6:7; Rom 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:21–22; Gal 3:10

^c Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 36:22–38; Zech 9:9–12; Luke 22:20; John 3:16; 6:40, 47; 24:26; Heb 2:6–10; 5:9

^d Gal 4:24–26; 2 Cor 3:6–11, 14; Heb 9:1, 15, 18; 12:18–22

^e Gen 3:15; Matt 13:17; Acts 2:30–31; Gal 3:8; Col 2:16–17; Heb 1:1–2; 4:2; 8:5; 9:6–17; 10:1–10; 11:13, 26; 1 Pet 1:10

^f Jer 31:34; Matt 8:11; 26:28; John 8:56; 10:43; Rom 3:25; 4:1–8; 1 Cor 11:25; Gal 3:9; Heb 7:20–28; 9:15, 26; 10:12; 11:13, 39–40; Rev 5:9; 22:14

^g Matt 1:1; Luke 1:32–33, 54–55; John 10:16; Rom 2:28–29; 4:11–12; 9:6–8; 11:1–2, 16–18; Gal 3:7, 14, 16, 28–29; 4:26–31; 6:15–16; Eph 2:11–22; Phil 3:3; Titus 2:14; Heb 12:22–24; 1 Pet 2:9–10; Rev 5:10

B) God’s law

We believe that the purpose of the divine law is to serve: 1) as a bridle to restrain the ungodly from carrying out all the evil intentions of their hearts,^a 2) as a tutor to lead sinners to Christ by showing them God’s righteous demands and His wrath against sin, their own inability to fulfill these demands, and thereby their need for grace and the forgiveness of sins,^b and 3) as a light for the regenerated to follow according to the principles of the new covenant.^c

^a Rom 2:14–15; 13:3–4; Gal 3:19; 1 Tim 1:8–11; 1 John 4:18

^b Luke 16:16; Rom 3:19–20; 5:13; 7:7; Gal 3:21–25; 1 Tim 1:8–11; James 2:10–11

^c Ezek 36:27; Matt 5:17–48; Mark 12:28–34; Rom 6:14; 7:6; 10:4; 13:8–10; 15:4; 1 Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2; Eph 6:1–3; James 2:8, 12

7. ON SALVATION

We believe that the entire divine work of salvation is a work of God’s sovereign grace. From the act of election before the foundation of the world to the bodily glorification at Christ’s return, the whole of salvation is God’s own work and not something that mankind deserves by its own merits.^a

^a Ps 68:19–20; Luke 17:10; Acts 2:47; Rom 9:16; 1 Cor 1:29–31; Eph 2:4–10; Titus 3:4–5; Heb 13:21; Rev 7:9–10

A) Election

We believe that the Father, before the foundation of the world, in Christ has chosen to salvation and sonship all those who are saved by His grace.^a This does not depend on His having foreseen

anything commendable in them, but on His own will and loving mercy.^b This election constitutes the basis for the calling, regeneration, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and final glorification of the saints.^c

^a Luke 18:7; John 6:37; Acts 13:48; Eph 1:4–6; 1 Thess 5:9; 2 Tim 1:9; Rev 13:8; 17:8

^b Deut 10:14–15; Matt 11:25–26; Rom 9:10–23; 11:5–6; 1 Tim 1:15–16; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5

^c John 17:6; Acts 13:48; Rom 8:29–30, 33; Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; James 2:5

B) Effectual Calling and Regeneration

We believe that God, in the time He has appointed from eternity, calls those He has chosen to eternal life through His Word and Spirit. This call does not consist merely of an invitation to Christ but entails a real transition from the dominion of darkness to the kingdom of the Son, from the power of Satan to God. The call is thus effectual: it accomplishes what it calls to, namely the sinner's awakening and conversion.^a The new birth is a supernatural work in which the spiritually dead person is awakened to spiritual life^b and receives a holy disposition in understanding, desires, and will, indeed, in their whole being, and becomes a new creation in Christ.^c The Holy Spirit works through the gospel when He regenerates sinners.^d The result of this regeneration is our voluntary obedience to the gospel, and it necessarily leads to progressive sanctification, namely the cultivation of the fruit of the Spirit, perseverance, and good works.^e

^a John 6:44; 10:3; Acts 2:39; 13:48; 26:18; Rom 1:6; 8:30; 1 Cor 1:9; Gal 1:6; Col 1:13; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 Pet 2:9

^b Ezek 16:6; Luke 15:32; John 1:13; 3:3–8; Eph 2:1, 5; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:3

^c Ps 40:8; Ezek 36:25–27; Rom 6:4; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15

^d Acts 2:37; 11:14; 16:14; Rom 2:29; 10:17; Gal 4:29; 2 Thess 2:14; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23

^e Gal 5:22–25; Col 1:10–11; Titus 3:8; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:18

C) Faith and Repentance

We believe that God commands all people to repent from their idolatry and to believe in Christ as their only Lord and Savior.^a Saving faith consists of a fundamental knowledge of the gospel, a holding fast to it, and reliance upon it.^b Repentance consists of a change of mind and a practical turning away from the former life characterized by sin.^c Both faith and repentance are gifts that God sovereignly gives,^d but this in no way excludes human responsibility to repent and believe.^e We deny that faith and repentance can be separated from one another so that it would be possible to have Christ as Savior but not as Lord. Where saving faith is exercised, true repentance will also occur, and where true repentance occurs, saving faith will be exercised.^f

^a Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; Acts 17:30; 20:20–21; Rom 10:9–10

^b Ps 84:12; Rom 4:19–22; 10:14, 17; 2 Cor 4:13–14; Gal 2:20; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 1:12; Heb 11:1, 3, 6, 13; James 2:19

^c Isa 1:16–17; 55:7; Ezek 36:31–32; Luke 3:8; 19:8; Acts 26:18, 20; 2 Cor 7:10–11; 1 Thess 1:9

^d Jer 31:18; Matt 16:17; John 6:44, 65; Acts 3:26; 5:31; 11:18; 13:48; Rom 2:4; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 2:25; 2 Pet 1:1

^e Jer 3:22; Matt 7:23; 11:28; Luke 13:3, 5; John 3:16; 7:37; Acts 2:38; 16:31; Rev 22:17

^f Matt 7:13–23; Mark 1:15; Acts 11:21; 19:18–19; 20:21; Heb 6:1; James 2:14, 17–18, 20, 24, 26

D) Justification

We believe that God, by His free grace, justifies all whom He calls, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by forgiving their sins^a and counting them as righteous.^b He does this not because of any merit in them,^c but for Christ's sake. God credits to them Christ's obedience to the entire divine law and His substitutionary penal suffering as their complete and only righteousness, which is received through faith.^d Christ's substitutionary work on the cross and His resurrection are thus the sole basis for sinners in all ages to be acquitted, forgiven, and justified by and before God.^e Faith that receives and rests upon Christ and His righteousness is the only instrument through which these gifts are received.^f

^a Ps 103:3, 12; Mic 7:19; Luke 7:47–50; Acts 10:43; Rom 4:7–8; 8:30; 1 John 2:12

^b Rom 3:24; 4:5–6, 24; Gal 3:6; Phil 3:9

^c Rom 3:20, 28; 9:11–12; Gal 2:16; 3:11; Titus 3:5

^d Rom 3:22; 5:17–19; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 2:21

^e Isa 6:6–7; Zech 3:3–5; Matt 26:28; Luke 18:13–14; Rom 3:25–26; 4:3, 23–25; 5:9–10; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:15; Gal 2:21; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:22; 1 Pet 3:18

^f John 6:28–29; Acts 13:39; 15:9–11; Rom 1:17; 3:21–22, 28; 4:4–5, 9–12; 5:1; Gal 2:16; 3:24; 5:4–6

E) Adoption

We believe that all who, by God's grace, receive Christ unto righteousness also receive the right to become God's children and co-heirs with Christ.^a They now belong to God's family and therefore enjoy such freedoms and privileges as being called by His name,^b having received the Spirit of adoption,^c having access to the throne of grace with confidence,^d being able to cry, "Abba! Father!",^e having the Father's compassion,^f protection,^g provision,^h and paternal instruction.ⁱ They are never rejected, however, since they have been sealed for the day of redemption,^j and have inherited the promises of eternal salvation.^k

^a Matt 23:9; John 1:12; Rom 8:17; Eph 1:5; 5:1; Gal 4:5, 7; 1 John 3:1–2

^b Isa 43:1, 6–7; 2 Cor 6:18; Rev 3:12

^c Rom 8:14–16, 23; Gal 4:6

^d Eph 2:18; 3:12; Heb 4:16

^e Matt 6:9; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; 1 Pet 1:17

^f Ps 103:13; 2 Cor 1:3–5

^g Ps 12:7; Ps 18:2; Ps 32:7; Ps 46:1–3; 2 Thess 3:3

^h Matt 6:8, 25–32; Luke 12:32; 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19–20; 1 Pet 5:7

ⁱ Prov 3:11–12; Lam 3:31–33; Heb 12:5–11

^j John 6:37; Rom 8:1, 23; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13–14; 4:30

^k Col 3:24; 1 Thess 5:9; Heb 1:14; 6:12; 9:15; 1 Pet 1:3–5; 1 John 5:13

F) Progressive Sanctification

We believe that no one can see the Lord apart from the sanctification that is the guaranteed result of the new birth.^a When the dominion of sin in the regenerated heart has been broken,^b the Christian, through the Spirit's continual influence, works out their salvation with fear and trembling, uses their diligence to mortify sin^c that still continually accompanies them,^d and presents their soul and body as a living and acceptable sacrifice, through which God is glorified.^e Thus the Spirit continually transforms those who belong to Christ into His likeness, from glory to glory.^f This lifelong process encompasses the Christian's understanding, desires, will, affections, conscience, and entire person.^g God's chief means for the sanctification of His children are His active Word,^h prayer,ⁱ the fellowship of the saints,^j and the trials and sufferings that, in His wise and good providence, befall them.^k This ongoing experience of sanctification should not be confused with the holy status and position that God grants His children when they first come to Christ – their positional sanctification.^l

^a Matt 7:18, 20; Rom 6:22; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:15–16; 1 John 3:6, 8–10

^b John 8:36; Rom 6:6–7, 11–12, 18; 7:4–6; 1 Cor 6:11; Col 3:3

^c Rom 8:13; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 4:22; Phil 2:12; Col 3:5, 8; 2 Tim 2:21; 1 John 3:3

^d Ps 40:12; Phil 3:12–13; 1 Tim 1:15; James 3:2; 1 John 1:6–10

^e Rom 6:4, 13–14, 19; 12:1; Eph 4:23–24; Col 3:9–10, 12; 1 Thess 4:3; 1 Pet 1:15

^f Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:17–18; 4:16; Gal 5:16, 22–23; Eph 3:16–17; 2 Thess 2:13

^g Rom 12:1–2; Phil 2:13; 1 Thess 5:23

^h Deut 17:18–20; Isa 55:11; Ps 119:9, 11; John 17:17; Acts 20:20, 32; Eph 6:17; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15–17; 1 Pet 2:2

ⁱ Matt 6:13; Mark 14:38; Eph 1:17–19; 6:18; Phil 4:8; Col 3:1–2; Jude 20

^j 1 Cor 12:17–22; 15:33; 2 Tim 2:22; Heb 10:24; 1 Pet 1:22

^k Job 36:15; Ps 119:67, 71; Rom 5:3–5; 2 Cor 4:17; Heb 12:4–11; James 1:2–4; 1 Pet 4:12, 19

^l Acts 9:13; 26:18; Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2, 30; 6:11; Eph 2:19; Col 3:12; Heb 3:1; 10:10

G) Perseverance and Preservation

We believe that those whom God the Father has given to His Son, sanctified by His Spirit, and endowed with the precious faith of the elect, can neither wholly nor finally fall from the state of grace, but will most certainly persevere to the end and be eternally saved.^a Through His

gracious providence, God preserves His children and gives them all the faith, repentance, love, and holiness they need until they have attained Christ's glory and immortality.^b Even though their assurance of God's light and love may be obscured for a time by unbelief and Satan's temptations,^c God is nevertheless the same, and they will be preserved to this salvation by God's power.^d We deny that those who have finally fallen away from the faith ever possessed the true faith that is the fruit of the new birth.^e

^a John 6:37; 10:28–29; Rom 5:9; 8:30, 38–39; Heb 3:14; 7:25; 10:39

^b Jer 32:40; 1 Cor 1:8; Eph 1:14; Phil 1:6; 1 Thess 5:23–24; 2 Thess 2:16–17; 2 Tim 4:18; 1 Pet 1:5; 2 Pet 1:1, 3–4; 1 John 5:18

^c Ps 32:3–4; Ps 38:1–11, 14–19; Ps 77:1–11; Ps 88; Luke 22:31–32, 61–62; John 21:15–17; 1 Cor 11:32

^d John 6:39–40; 10:29; 1 Cor 1:8–9; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Tim 1:12; Heb 10:23; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 1, 24

^e Matt 7:21–23; Luke 8:13–15; John 8:30–31, 44, 59; 1 John 2:19; 3:9

H) Glorification

We believe that the ultimate goal of God's work of salvation is the glorification that all of God's children will experience. This glorification is twofold and consists of the perfection of the soul and of the body. The Christian's soul is perfected at death, when it returns to God to be received into heaven and to be with Christ, awaiting reunion with the body.^a The body will be raised by Christ in glory – like His own resurrection body – at His return, and the saints who are living then will be glorified at the same time.^b God's children will then be completely holy and free from sin, and – unlike their state in Eden – will no longer be able to sin.^c In this state, the glorified will dwell with God on the new earth forever.^d

^a Ps 73:24; Eccl 12:7; Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 5:6, 8; Phil 1:23; Heb 12:1, 23

^b Luke 24:39; Rom 5:2; 8:17–23, 30; 1 Cor 15:22–23, 35–57; Phil 3:20–21; Col 3:4; 2 Thess 1:10; 1 John 3:2

^c Isa 33:24; Luke 20:36; Eph 1:4; 5:27; Col 1:22; Heb 10:14; Jude 24; Rev 14:5; 21:4; 22:1–4

^d Dan 12:3; Matt 13:43; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1, 24–27

8. ON THE CHURCH

We believe that the invisible or universal Church is a living and spiritual body composed of the full number of the elect, with Christ as its head.^a We believe that each local congregation should be an independent community, autonomous with respect to all other Christian congregations, and recognize Christ alone as its supreme head.^b

^a Gen 22:17–18; Matt 16:18; John 10:16; Acts 26:18; Gal 6:10; Eph 1:22–23; Heb 11:40; 12:22–23; Rev 7:9–17

^b Acts 14:21–23; 20:28; 2 Cor 8:1, 8, 10; Eph 4:15; 5:23–24; 1 Pet 5:2–3

A) Membership

We believe that the members of a local congregation are confessing and baptized Christians who have bound themselves together to seek to keep all that the Lord has commanded them. As in the invisible Church, all members of the visible congregation should be regenerated.^a They demonstrate their regeneration by making the good confession and walking in obedience. In accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, they willingly walk together in self-denial and mutual submission.^b Membership in the congregation involves regular participation in its gatherings and contributing to its life and work.^c Furthermore, we believe that Christ has authorized and equipped every true congregation to exercise the keys of the kingdom in accordance with New Testament instructions in the admission and, when necessary, the exclusion of members.^d The members of the congregation thus constitute – under the Lord Jesus – the highest governing body of the congregation.^e

^a Matt 16:13–18; 28:18–20; Acts 2:40–42; 8:12; 11:26; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:1–6; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:5–6; 1 Pet 2:5

^b 2 Cor 13:5; Eph 4:2–3; 5:21; 1 Tim 6:12; Heb 3:12–13; 4:14; 10:23–25; 1 Pet 2:5; 1 John 3:17–18; 4:20–21; 5:18; 3 John 1:11; Rev 2:13

^c Acts 2:46; 13:1–2; 1 Cor 12; 14:23; 16:1–2; Heb 10:25

^d Matt 16:19; 18:15–18; 1 Cor 5; 2 Cor 2:6; 2 Thess 3:6, 14–15

^e Matt 18:17–20; Acts 6:5; 15:22, 25; 2 Cor 2:6; Gal 1:6–9

B) Elders and Deacons

We believe that men^a who are suitable,^b gifted,^c and called by the Lord^d should be chosen and set apart for the office of pastor or elder in accordance with New Testament principles.^e In the same way, suitable and gifted men and women are called and set apart as deacons,^f whose task is to assist the elders in practical matters relating to the life and service of the congregation.^g We believe that Scripture commands the congregation to submit to the shepherds or elders they have chosen and to show them all due respect,^h because of their unceasing work in the service of the congregation through prayer, teaching, and spiritual care for the real good of the souls of the flock.ⁱ Therefore, it is the responsibility of the congregation, according to their ability, to provide one or more elders with a decent maintenance so that he may devote himself wholeheartedly to his spiritual task, support his family, and set an example in Christian generosity and hospitality, without having to worry about his earthly livelihood. Thus the Lord has also commanded that the one who preaches the gospel should live from the gospel.^j

^a Acts 14:23; 15:4, 6, 22; 20:17; 21:18; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 2:11–14; 3:2; Tit 1:6; 1 Pet 5:1

^b Dan 6:4–5; Matt 20:25–28; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:2–7; Tit 1:6–8; Heb 13:7; Jas 3:1; 1 Pet 5:1–3

^c Acts 20:20; Eph 4:11–13; 1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:9; Jas 3:1

^d Jer 1:5; Acts 20:28; 26:16; 1 Tim 3:1; 2 Pet 1:13

^e Acts 6:5–6; 13:1–4; 14:23; 1 Tim 3:10

^f Acts 6:3, 5–6; Rom 16:1; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8–13

^g Acts 6:1–3; Rom 16:2; 1 Tim 3:8

^h Gal 6:6; 1 Thess 5:12–13; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:5

ⁱ Acts 6:2, 4; 20:27–28, 31; Rom 12:8; Gal 6:6; 2 Tim 4:1–2; Tit 1:9; Heb 13:17; Jas 5:14; 1 Pet 5:2

^j Luke 10:7; 1 Cor 9:6–14; Gal 6:6; Phil 4:15–16; 1 Thess 5:12–13; 2 Thess 3:9; 1 Tim 5:17–18; 3 John 5–8

C) The Lord's Day

We believe that the first day of the week, Sunday, is the Lord's Day on which the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to the apostles.^a The Lord's Day is thus a Christian institution when the congregation regularly gathers^b to worship the triune God together through singing praise, prayer, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and the proclamation of His Word for the sanctification and encouragement of the whole body.^c Therefore, the New Testament enjoins the believer not to neglect the corporate gatherings, but to prioritize them.^d

^a Matt 28:1, 6; John 20:1, 19, 26; Rev 1:10

^b Acts 2:1; 20:7, 16; 1 Cor 16:2

^c John 4:23–24; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 11:20–26; 14:26; Col 3:16; 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:1–2; Heb 3:13; Jude 20

^d Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 14:23; Heb 10:24–25

D) Cooperation

We believe that Christ's congregations, when God provides opportunity, should meet in such associations and networks as promote the kingdom of God. These networks have no authority over the local congregation, but serve an advisory and supportive function.^a Cooperation with like-minded congregations is desirable to promote the unity of the Spirit and advance the Church's mission in the world.^b Such cooperation, however, is not an end in itself, but should take place according to biblical criteria and without compromise of the truth of the gospel or obedience to God's Word.^c

^a Acts 15:2–4, 6–7; Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:1–3; 2 Cor 8

^b John 13:35; 17:22–23; Rom 16:1–2; Gal 2:9; Phil 1:4–5; 3 John 5–8

^c Jer 7:8–11; Rom 16:17–19; 2 Cor 2:17; 11:4; 2 Pet 2:1; Jude 4; 2 John 10–11; 3 John 9–11; Rev 2:2

9. ON THE ORDINANCES OF THE LORD

A) Baptism

We believe that Christian baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, which He has given to His Church to administer until the end of time. The Lord has commanded His Church to immerse every person bodily in water who, in repentance and saving faith, has embraced Christ, the true Gospel's Lord and Savior, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.^a Only in this way is the divine command fulfilled and the original meaning of this ordinance preserved.^b Our consciences, bound to Scripture, forbid us to recognize any other water baptism as valid.^c We therefore believe that it is the duty of every Christian to willingly be baptized in accordance with the Lord's command.^d Baptism signifies the Christian's union with Christ, His death and resurrection, unto the burial of the old man and unto the living of the new life. Furthermore, baptism symbolizes cleansing from sin and is a public profession of the risen Christ and His Church.^e Therefore, this baptism constitutes an initiation into the visible Church, the fellowship of the reborn, and precedes admission into membership and partaking of the Lord's Table.^f

^a Matt 28:18–19; Acts 8:12–13, 35–39; 10:47; 16:14–15, 30–33; 18:8; 19:4–5; 22:16; Col 2:12

^b Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50; Rom 6:3–5; Col 2:12

^c 1 Sam 15:22; Isa 33:22; Acts 4:19; 5:29; 19:2–5; 24:16; 1 Cor 7:19; Eph 4:5; Col 2:5

^d Acts 2:41; 8:36; 9:18; 10:47–48; 22:16

^e Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom 6:3–5; Gal 3:27–29; Col 2:12; 1 Tim 6:12; Heb 6:2; 1 Pet 3:21

^f Matt 28:19–20; Acts 2:41–42; 1 Cor 1:13; 10:1–4; 11:27; 14:40

B) The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord Jesus instituted His Supper on the night He was betrayed, with the purpose that it should be observed in His congregations in remembrance of His completed atoning work until He comes again.^a Furthermore, to signify and proclaim Christ's sacrificial death,^b to confirm His redeemed ones' participation in Him and one another,^c and to grant them spiritual growth.^d We deny that the elements of the Supper, the bread and the fruit of the vine, are transformed into the Lord's flesh and blood in connection with the Supper – which is not only foreign to Scripture, but also contrary to sound reason. We do affirm, however, that it is proper to call them so, because that is what they represent.^e This observance of the Lord's Supper should be preceded by spiritual self-examination.^f

^a Matt 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:14–21; Acts 2:42, 20:7; 1 Cor 11:23–25; 2 Tim 2:8; Heb 9:28

^b Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:26

^c Luke 22:17; 1 Cor 10:16–17; 11:29

^d 1 Cor 10:16; 11:24–26

^e Luke 22:19–20; John 6:53–56; 10:7, 9; 15:5; 1 Cor 11:27

^f Ps 19:12; 1 Cor 11:27–32; 1 John 1:6–9

10. ON MARRIAGE

A) The Nature and Purpose of Marriage

We believe that marriage is a God-instituted union between one man and one woman, in which they commit themselves to a lifelong covenant relationship with one another.^a Marriage is God's unique gift to mankind, which reveals the union between Christ and His Church,^b provides the man and woman with a framework for intimate companionship,^c creates space for sexual intimacy blessed by God and in accordance with the norms of Scripture,^d and serves as a means for human procreation and the well-being of society.^e

^a Gen 2:24; Prov 2:17; Eccl 9:9; Mal 2:14, 16; Matt 19:4–6; Mark 10:6–12; Rom 7:2–3; 1 Cor 7:10–14, 39; 1 Tim 4:3–4

^b Eph 5:22–33; Rev 19:7–9

^c Gen 2:18; Deut 24:5; Prov 18:22; Eccl 4:9–12; 1 Cor 9:5

^d Gen 2:25; Prov 5:15–20; 1 Cor 7:2–5, 9; Heb 13:4

^e Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7; Ps 127:3–5; Prov 31:10–31

B) The Marital Relationship

We believe that the man and the woman have equal value before God because they were both created in His image^a and that God has assigned them complementary callings within marriage. The man is appointed to lead his family^b and the woman to support and help her husband.^c The model for the man's self-sacrificial love and the woman's willing submission is the relationship between Christ and His bride, the Church.^d We believe that this order, with the man as the head of his wife, has a divine origin and thus brings true blessing, edification, and joy to both.^e

^a Gen 1:27; 2:18; 1 Cor 11:11–12; Gal 3:28; 1 Pet 3:7

^b Gen 2:15–17; 3:17; 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:23; 6:4; 1 Tim 3:4–5

^c Gen 2:18, 20; Prov 14:1; 31:10–11, 28–29; Tit 2:4–5

^d Isa 62:4–5; Song 8:6–7; John 3:29; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:22–25, 29–32; Rev 19:7–9; 22:17

^e 1 Cor 11:3, 7–9; 14:35; Eph 5:22–24, 29; Col 3:18–19; 1 Tim 2:13; Tit 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1, 5–6

C) Marriage and Discipleship

We believe that Scripture permits a Christian to enter into marriage only in the Lord, that is, with another Christian.^a Under particular circumstances, Scripture allows divorce and remarriage. Such cases are regulated by the New Testament's instructions.^b We believe that God, in His grace, calls certain individuals to constitute an exception to the norm of marriage and instead to live in blessed celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of God.^c We deny that alternative views on sexuality and the nature of marriage, apart from what is found in Scripture – and as the Christian Church has proclaimed in all ages – are compatible with Christian discipleship. A lifestyle characterized by fornication, polyamory, homosexuality, transsexualism, and other sexual deviations is sinful before God and incompatible with the obedience that Jesus Christ and His Word demand.^d

^a Neh 13:25–27; 1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14–15

^b Matt 5:32; 19:9; 1 Cor 7:15

^c Matt 19:12; 1 Cor 7:1, 7

^d Lev 18:1–18, 22–23; Deut 22:5; Prov 2:16–19; 6:24–29; 7:5–27; Matt 5:27–30; Acts 15:29; Rom 1:21–28; 1 Cor 5:1–2; 6:9–20; Gal 5:19, 21, 24; Eph 4:17–24; 5:3, 5–7, 12; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:1–8; 1 Tim 1:10; Heb 13:4; Jude 7

11. ON THE STATE AND CONSCIENCE

A) Religious Freedom and Civil Obedience

We believe that the Church and the state should be kept separate. The Church should not use civil power to carry out its work but rely solely on spiritual means to achieve its goals. The state owes every congregation protection and freedom in its endeavor to attain its spiritual objectives through peaceful means.^a No denomination should be favored over others, and no individual should be prevented from worshiping their God according to the conviction of their heart.^b Furthermore, we believe that the civil authorities are instituted by God for the well-being of society and that their task is to maintain law and order, including punishing evil.^c Therefore, it is the duty of every Christian to obey the state loyally in all things, so long as this obedience does not conflict with God's Word.^d

^a Matt 13:27–30; 22:21; 26:52; Joh 18:36; Acts 17:6–7; 2 Cor 10:3–4; Eph 6:12; Phil 3:20; 1 Tim 2:1–4; Tit 3:1–3; 1 Petr 1:17; 4:17–19; 3 John 7

^b Josh 24:15; 1 Kgs 18:21; Matt 6:7–8; 15:7–9; 23:37; Joh 6:63

^c Gen 9:5–6; Dan 2:21; Rom 13:1–7; 1 Petr 2:14

^d Matt 22:21; Acts 4:19–20; 5:29; Tit 3:1; 1 Petr 2:12–13, 15–17

B) Christian Liberty of Conscience

We believe that God alone is Lord over man's conscience, and that He has freed it from human doctrines and regulations that in any way contradict His Word or are not found therein.^a Trust in or obedience to such doctrines and regulations is therefore a betrayal of the Christian's true liberty, and to demand implicit faith in or obedience to them is to violate the Christian's

conscience.^b We affirm that, in accordance with evangelical brotherly love, it is right to refrain from the liberties of conscience when their exercise causes a weaker brother to stumble.^c We deny that Christian liberty of conscience is an acceptable excuse for sinful actions and patterns of life.^d

^a Matt 23:8–10; Rom 14:1–12; 2 Cor 1:24; Jas 4:12

^b Mark 7:19; Acts 10:15; 1 Cor 4:6; Gal 2:4; 5:10–12; Col 2:16–23; 1 Tim 4:1–4; Tit 1:13–15; Heb 13:9

^c Mark 7:9; Acts 15:8–11, 28; Rom 14:23; Gal 5:1; Hebr 9:10

^d Rom 12:10; 14:13–23; 1 Cor 8:7–13; 9:12, 15, 18–23; 10:23–33; Hebr 13:1

^e Rom 3:8; 6:1–2, 15; Gal 5:13; 1 Petr 2:16; Jud 4

12. ON THE LAST THINGS

A) The Return of Jesus and the Resurrection of the Saints

We believe that the Lord Jesus will return to the earth in great power and glory.^a On that day, the whole world will see His truth and acknowledge Him as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.^b At Christ's return, all who have fallen asleep in Him will rise to imperishable glory, and all His people will then be with Him forever.^c

^a Matt 24:30; 25:31; 2 Thess 1:7, 10; 2:8; 1 Tim 6:14–15; Tit 2:13; 1 Petr 4:13; Rev 19:11–16

^b Isa 40:5; 45:22–24; Phil 2:9–11; Rev 1:7

^c Isa 26:19; Matt 24:31; Luke 14:14; John 6:39–40, 44, 54; 1 Cor 15:23, 52; Phil 3:20–21; 1 Thess 4:16–17; 2 Thess 2:1; Rev 20:5–6; 21:3; 22:4–5

B) The final judgement

We believe that God has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness through Jesus Christ, to whom the Father has given all authority and all judgment.^a On that day, the Devil and the fallen angels will be judged.^b Likewise, all people – then risen from the dead^c – will be held accountable before Christ's tribunal to be judged according to their thoughts, words, and deeds, both evil and good.^d The ultimate purpose of this judgment is that God's mercy may be manifested in the eternal salvation of the elect and His justice in the eternal condemnation of the lost, to the glory of His holy name.^e The righteous will then inherit eternal life and receive the fullness of glory and joy with God,^f but the wicked who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ will be cast into the lake of fire, where they will be tormented forever in conscious punishment, separated from the Lord's presence and the glory of His power.^g

^a Ps 9:8; Ps 96:10, 13; Matt 25:31–33; John 5:22, 27, 30; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Tim 4:1; 1 Petr 4:5

^b Matt 8:29; 25:41; 1 Cor 6:3; 2 Petr 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 20:10

^c Dan 12:2; John 5:28; Acts 24:15; Heb 6:2; Rev 20:13

^d Eccl 12:14; Matt 12:36–37; 25:31–45; Rom 2:6, 16; 14:10, 12; 1 Cor 4:4–5; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 9:27; 1 Petr 1:17; Jude 15; Rev 20:11–12

^e John 5:22–23; Rom 3:7; 9:22–23; Eph 1:5–6, 12, 14

^f Ps 16:11; Dan 12:2; Luke 20:36; Rom 2:7, 10; 6:23; 2 Tim 4:8; Jude 1:21, 24

^g Isa 66:24; Matt 24:51; 25:41; 26:24; Mark 9:43, 48; Luke 3:17; 19:27; Rom 2:8–9; 2 Thess 1:9; 2:12; 2 Petr 3:7; Rev 14:9–11; 20:14–15; 22:15

C) Concluding prayer

Finally, we remind ourselves of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “Behold, I am coming soon.” And with the Spirit and with the bride – to whom we count ourselves – we say: Amen, come, Lord Jesus.^a

^a 1 Cor 16:22; Rev 22:17, 20