



Foundational Documents

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Distinctives

Defined by the Bible

We are committed to being defined by the Bible Alone

Biblical Theology

We seek to derive our theology strictly from the Bible, and we believe that such a theology is thoroughly God-centered and man humbling. Such a theology is in line with that recovered by the great Reformers of the 16th century, preached by the Puritans, and summarized by the 1689 London Baptist Confession.

Biblical Preaching

We are committed to preaching which is pervasively biblical, unashamedly doctrinal, intensely pastoral, and unmistakably Christ-centered.

Biblical Church Growth

We are committed to developing spiritually mature disciples who know the Word, live the Word, and spread the Word. Such disciples are only developed through strong biblical teaching and loving accountability.

Biblical Worship

We are committed to God-centered worship, which is marked by simplicity and passion, composed of expository and doctrinal preaching, public reading of the Scriptures, prayer, the sacraments, and singing.

Biblical Families

We are committed to developing godly families by intentionally training men to lead their families in the ways of the Lord and by avoiding a multiplicity of church programs that either by structure or time constraints which tend to keep families apart.

Biblical Leadership

We are led by a group of godly men (known biblically as elders) who are chosen by a spiritually mature congregation and are accountable to such.

Biblical Evangelism

We are committed to an evangelistic approach that proclaims the biblical gospel of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which relies on God to regenerate and convert the sinner not shallow salesmanship or psychological manipulation. We realize that such unbiblical (manipulative) approaches may result in numerical success but not necessarily in true Holy Spirit regenerated converts.

What Is a Reformed Baptist Church?

If we were to be asked "What kind of a church are you?" We would not hesitate to reply, "We are a Baptist church!" We hold to those truths which have sometimes been referred to as "Baptist Distinctives". We would also reply that we are a "Reformed Church" inasmuch as we hold to the great doctrines of the Reformation in the areas concerning the salvation of men. In this sense, we are pleased to be referred to as a "Reformed Baptist" church. What, then, are some of the distinctives of a Reformed Baptist church.

The Scriptures

First of all, a Reformed Baptist Church is a local church which acknowledges the supreme authority of Holy Scripture. In all matters of faith, that is in the things we believe, and of practice, that is the things which we do, our sole authority is the Word of God. If something, whether of faith or of practice, is contrary to the Bible then no matter who pleads for it, no matter what clever arguments are produced in favor of it, we cannot endorse it. When the Word of God does not warrant something, we are not going to be brought under bondage to it; but where the Scriptures clearly call for something, no consideration ought to make us do without it. We desire to have our conscience bound to the Word of God, for there we believe is true freedom. We desire in our church life to be patterned after and conformed to the Word of God. We should always seek for God to deepen our understanding of His Word, and we should always be ready to reform any of our practices if it becomes apparent that we are out of line with the Scriptures.

Preaching

Reformed Baptists believe in the pre-eminence of the preaching of the Word of God. We believe that the preaching of the Bible must have the central place in our services. We believe that nothing can or should take the place of the preaching of the Word! Our conviction is that the church of Christ has suffered because she has downgraded the preaching of the Word. We believe that God's people everywhere ought to be encouraged to pray that God would endow men with gifts of preaching, and that he would give to His churches great preachers.

The Doctrines of Grace

Reformed Baptists unashamedly declare their belief in those doctrines which are sometimes called the doctrines of grace. By this expression we mean in particular the doctrines of total depravity, unconditional election, definite atonement, effectual calling, and the perseverance of the saints. We rejoice in these glorious truths which uphold the sovereignty of God in the salvation of men, and which so gloriously affirm the great central reality that salvation is all of grace, and that salvation is of the Lord! We rejoice that the doctrines of grace are clearly set forth in the *Second London Confession of Faith of 1689*, and in many other historic Protestant creeds. It is not just because these doctrines are found in the historic creeds, though we rejoice that that is the case, but it is because the doctrines are so clearly presented in the Holy Scriptures that we believe them.

Evangelism

We would like to affirm that Reformed Baptists believe in the necessity and responsibility of evangelism. We do not believe that there is an inconsistency between God's sovereignty in the salvation of His chosen people and His command to us to preach the gospel to every creature. Now it is true that we do not believe in much that today goes under the name of evangelism. We believe that much that is called evangelism is little more than psychology and salesmanship. We are appalled by the pressures, gimmicks and schemes all calculated to produce "decisions" and impressive statistics but which work such havoc in the souls of men. No! Because we believe in evangelism does not mean that we are going to cooperate with every scheme which bears that name. We believe that in evangelism as in everything else, as we said earlier, we must be governed by the Word of God. The message of evangelism must be according to the Scriptures, and the method of evangelism must be governed by the Word of God! Nevertheless, we repeat that we do believe in evangelism, and our prayer is that God would ever keep us mindful of the need to evangelize.

Worship

A Reformed Baptist Church is a local church with a serious approach to worship. The God we worship is a God of majesty, glory and holiness. We believe that when we come together to worship this great and glorious God of the Bible we ought to do so with reverence and with godly fear. We believe that there ought to be a sense of AWE in our hearts when we gather to worship this God! You say, "But surely our worship must be exciting." Yes indeed, we agree, but equally surely it must be an excitement stemming from the realization that we are obeying God by worshipping Him according to his commands, not an excitement arising from unbiblical worship practices cleverly designed to entertain us and appeal to our fleshly desires. We believe that there is a world of difference between a "dead" service and a serious, spiritual service. The first is not desired; the second is. Frivolity and childishness seem to us to be out of place and incongruous with the worship of God. Oh that when we worship we might feel the awe of God in our souls. Oh that we might see something of the glory seen by Isaiah and by the servants of God of old! This, then is the kind of church we are seeking to build. Other things could be said, but we have sought to touch on some of the basic points. May God raise up many such churches all over the land and all over the world which desire the same things and strive towards them. May God be pleased to visit His people again with showers of blessing that God might be glorified in and through His church!

We Believe in a Big God and a Big Book!

What do we mean by a Big God?

We worship a God who is big enough to know all things past, present and future. We believe that He is the creator and owner of all things - including you and I. This big God has ultimate control over all what happens from great and mighty nations to each individual person on this planet. This big God knows everything - from the number of stars in the universe to our each and every thought. God is not a bystander waiting to see how history will play out. This big God isn't a far away, distant observer of things happening on the earth - God is interested and involved in today's world, including what is happening in our lives right now.

We believe that man is free to act according to his or her desires (inclinations). After the fall of the human race our desires, or wills, are opposed to God. So in this state men and women have a distorted view of what will truly make them happy. More importantly they will not freely choose to honor and obey God. True spiritual conversion shines the light of truth on our desires and delivers us from the spiritual blindness that makes rebellion against God attractive. (Romans 8:5-11) We suddenly understand that true joy comes from obedience to Christ, not in endless frustrating attempts to satisfy our self-centered desires. (Colossians 1:13-23) As God awakens our spiritual eyes we find sin to be truly horrid and righteousness and truth to be our delight.

We believe in a Big God who will deliver His people from the slavery of sin by the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. Once purchased by the blood of Christ, God the Father will not fail to save His people. We believe the Bible emphatically teaches that God is not passive in promoting the salvation and sanctification of His people. But we are not passive either; God gives us a new heart; therefore we must freely put our faith in Christ.

Because we believe in a big God:

1) We believe that God has not left us in the dark about how He wants us to worship Him. The Bible teaches us that God has specified the *how and when* of worship - we are not free to make up our own rules! The Bible tells us that the worship that God honors consists of

- Prayer
- Reading of the Word
- Singing songs of praise
- Preaching
- Celebrating the Lord's Supper
- Celebrating Baptism

Since God created us we trust that worship on His terms will truly glorify Him and by the power of the Holy Spirit this kind of worship will delight believers!

2) Since we believe in a big God we take every hard thing that comes into our lives as from the hand of God who is not punishing us - His wrath has been absorbed by Jesus on the cross. God is giving us these hard things in order to draw us to Himself and make us rely completely on Him. God desires holiness more than He desires our worldly comfort. And in whatever happens we can say, "... we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Romans 8:28

What do we mean by a Big Book?

We believe that the Holy Bible is no small book written with mere historical or moral merit. In fact, for thousands of years God-hating men have tried to demolish the Bible - for thousands of years the Bible has withstood and conquered as a supreme book of authority and truth.

We believe that the Holy Bible is "God-breathed." It is directly inspired by the Holy Spirit, written by the hand of men called by God, written in their common language and preserved by God for the ages. We believe that the Bible ought to be translated into the common language of every nation.

We believe that the Holy Bible is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. We believe that nothing else may be added by 'new revelation' or the traditions of men. We believe going beyond the Bible in an attempt to find 'deeper' spiritual knowledge is a sure route to self-deception and spiritual ruin. We affirm that the only sure rule of biblical interpretation is the scripture itself. When there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture it must be searched by other places in the Bible that speak more clearly.

This example may be helpful:

"A typical Tuesday in the life of Chris College, a university student majoring in engineering. His Bible is insufficient as a textbook for his classes in calculus, biology and French; but it does show him the path of duty throughout such a typical Tuesday. It teaches him to pray and read his Bible in the morning, to be diligent and discerning in his studies, and to avert his eyes when the college temptress walks through the library when he is studying. It does provide him with an infallible record of creation and redemptive history. This record does set certain boundaries or limits which guide him in his study of biology and history. Any theory of history or biology which contradicts the historical statements of the Bible he will properly reject."

Sam Waldron, *Exposition of the 1689 Confession*, p 44

Though we believe that the Bible is not a scientific textbook we do believe it sufficiently provides the ethical and religious perspective basic to life and essential to a proper understanding of science.

In Conclusion

Knowing that we have a big God gives us comforting confidence in a world of uncertainty—God possesses full sovereignty over all things that come to pass. God is able and willing to save and preserve His people.

Knowing that we have a big Book with divine authority gives us comforting confidence in our quest to reform our church and our lives to properly honor and please God. Testing all things according to the Scriptures keep us from going beyond what God has commanded and keeps us from imposing further burdens not commanded by God on ourselves and others. Knowing we have a big Book provides us with a glorious reason to focus on the preached Word as God's primary means of converting sinners and building up believers in the faith.

**THE CONSTITUTION
OF
TRINITY REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH**

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, do ordain and establish the following Articles, to which we voluntarily and solemnly submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this church shall be the Trinity Reformed Baptist Church.

ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures by maintaining and promoting His worship both individually and corporately, by evangelizing sinners, and by edifying His saints. Therefore, we are committed to the proclamation of God's perfect Law and of the glorious Gospel of His grace through all the world, to the defense of that "faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), and to the pure and faithful celebration of the ordinances of the New Covenant.

ARTICLE 3 - AFFILIATION

AUTHORITY. We acknowledge no ecclesiastical authority other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Head of the Church and who directs the affairs of the Church through Elders chosen and ordained according to the precepts of Holy Scripture. The Elders themselves at all times and in all their activities stand under the authority of Holy Scripture.

COOPERATION. The church may and does cooperate with other likeminded churches in matters of mutual interest and concern. We may seek the assistance and counsel of other churches in matters of special concern to us, but the decision of no other church or group of churches shall at any time be acknowledged as binding on this church.

ASSOCIATIONS. One special kind of fellowship and cooperation with other churches is formal membership in an association of churches. Upon recommendation of the Elders (using congregationally approved criteria), such affiliations may be entered into and withdrawn from with the expressed consent and approval of the congregation. The Elders shall review (using approved criteria) annually such affiliations entered into and shall, based on their findings recommend continuation or withdrawal from such affiliations.

**ARTICLE 4 – COVENANT
Please see Appendix A**

ARTICLE 5 - ARTICLES OF FAITH

We adopt as the fullest expression of our faith the *London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*. The ultimate authority in all matters of faith, order, and morals is and must be the Bible alone, which truth is clearly set forth in the opening article of the Confession itself. This historic document is, however, an excellent summary of "the things most surely believed among us," and we find it to be assistance in controversy, a confirmation in faith, and a means of edification in righteousness. Here the members of our church will have a body of Divinity in small compass and by means of Scriptural proofs will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them (I Pet. 3:15). In addition to the *London Confession*, we also accept the *Abstract of Principles*, the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*, and the *Cambridge Declaration* as further and supplemental expressions of our faith and practice.

ARTICLE 6 – GOVERNANCE

The government of this church will be of the elder type with the authority invested by the church in a board of elders. The goal and desire of the Elder Board is to be in one accord on all issues. However, in recognition of the impossibility of always achieving unanimity, the Board of Elders will work with a simple majority (plus one if number of elders is five or more).

OFFICERS. Jesus Christ alone is the Head of His Church and He governs His church by His Word through officers whom He appoints. There are two types of officers in the church: elders and deacons.

Pastor (Preaching Elder). The pastor is an elder who is nominated by the Board of Elders and approved by the church. It is his responsibility to feed the flock from God's Word and give leadership to the other elders. The church will have only one pastor with as many associate and/or assistant pastors as the Elders determine necessary.

Elders. Elders must be men who meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and who solemnly and wholeheartedly subscribe to the *1689 London Baptist Confession*. Elders may be added as the Board of Elders deems necessary. However, there must be at least two and no more than seven. There should always be at least as many lay elders as professional elders (pastors).

Deacons. Deacons must be men who meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, who solemnly and wholeheartedly subscribe to the *1689 London Baptist Confession*, and have a heart of service in assisting the Elders in meeting the material needs of the congregation. The number of deacons shall not be fixed but determined by the Elders based on the current needs of the congregation.

Appointment of Officers. The appointment of Elders and Deacons is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. He has ordained, however, that each local church exercise the responsibility of recognizing those whom He is appointing to be Elders and Deacons in that particular church. Elders and Deacons are ordained, or appointed, to office by the laying on of hands by the Eldership. This is an expression of approval for which the Elders are responsible. Therefore, each officer must have the approval, not only of the church as a whole, but of the Eldership in particular. The Lord's appointment of an individual to either of these offices is recognized by means of that individual's possession of those graces and gifts required by Scripture for the particular office and his own conviction that the Lord is calling him to minister in that office. The recognition of officers is a matter of such importance that it should never be pursued without much prayerful waiting upon God, an honest perusal of the relevant passages of Scripture, and a frank evaluation of those who are being considered. Each member of the church has a spiritual responsibility to be intelligently informed regarding these matters.

Procedure of Appointment. The recognition of those whom the Lord has appointed to bear office in this church is executed in three steps: nomination by Elder Board, approval by church and, ordination by laying on of hands.

1. Nomination. Nominations to the office of elder are made by the Eldership. Nominations to the office of deacon are made by the church membership including the eldership according to the needs of the church. The Board of Elders must first consider a member as a candidate for office and discuss his qualifications for the particular office. Upon agreement that the man under consideration is qualified to serve, the elders are to discuss the matter with the candidate, giving him sufficient time to make a prayerful and thoughtful decision. After gaining his assent and his acknowledgment of the responsibility, the Elders must present his nomination to the church for evaluation for a period of three weeks. This gives the individual members of the congregation time to consider the candidate and provide feedback to the Elders. All valid concerns raised by individual members of the congregation will be discussed and resolved with the candidate before proceeding to formal church approval.

2. Approval. Any church meeting for the approval of officers shall be announced on at least three occasions prior to the meeting. The nominees shall be separately discussed and voted upon. During the discussion the nominee under consideration and members of his immediate family shall leave the presence of the assembly. Concerning the vote, the church should seek unity of mind, but should such unity not be fully realized, no less than three-fourths of those voting shall be required for approval.

3. Ordination. Following the election of an officer there shall be a portion of a regular worship service set aside at which time the officer shall be ordained by the laying on of the hands of the Eldership. The special prayers of the whole church should always accompany this solemn act. The laying on of the Elders' hands shall signify their approval of an officer-elect.

Tenure of Service.

Elders. All elders (except pastors) shall serve three years from date of election to office. After three years of service, an elder must stand down for nomination and approval.

Deacons. All deacons shall serve three years from date of election to office. After three years of service, a deacon must stand down for nomination and approval.

Chairmanship

Chairman of the Elders. The Pastor or Preaching Elder shall serve as the chairman of the elders. Such chairmanship does not imply greater authority but rather recognizes the Pastor as a first among equals.

Chairman of the Deacons. The elders shall choose a chairman for the deacons.

ARTICLE 7 - MEMBERSHIP

PREREQUISITES FOR MEMBERSHIP

General Requirements. To be eligible for membership, a person must demonstrate repentance toward God and the fruits thereof, as well as that faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ which produces godly works. He must be baptized by immersion after exercising faith in Christ; and to the satisfaction of the Elders express substantial agreement with the purpose (as stated in Article 2), Covenant (as stated in Article 4), Confession (as stated in Article 5), and government of this church (as stated in Article 6). Furthermore, he must not be under the biblically warranted corrective discipline of a genuine church.

Specific Requirements

1. Credible testimony of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as one's only hope of salvation
2. Belief in every point (as far as one understands) of the *Abstract of Principles*, which is the minimal statement of belief for membership.
3. A completed reading of the *1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith*, informing the elders of any questions or disagreements.
4. A completed reading of the Constitution and a willingness to submit to it.
5. Evidence of good standing with a previous church in case of transfers.
6. In cases of professions of faith in Christ, submit to baptism by immersion at first opportunity.
7. Agreement to make diligent use of the means of Christian growth (see **Conduct Expected of Members**).

RECEPTION INTO MEMBERSHIP

1. **Petition for Membership.** Any person desiring membership must petition the Elders in writing (using the form supplied).
2. **Interview With Elders.** Having reviewed the petition for membership, the Elders will interview the candidate to answer any questions the candidate may have and to ensure that the candidate has a credible profession of faith and is in agreement with the beliefs and practices of the church.
3. **Approval of Congregation.** If the elders are satisfied that the candidate meets all the membership requirements, they will present the candidate to the church for approval. The members of the congregation will have two weeks to voice any concerns or ask any questions concerning the candidate. Such concerns and questions are to be presented to the Elders for consideration. If questions and/or concerns are raised, the candidate will not be received into the membership of the church until the elders are satisfied that the questions and/or concerns are resolved and the candidate is suitable for membership.

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

1. **Regular Members.** All who are received into the membership of the church according to the procedures set forth in Article 7, who continue in regular attendance at the stated meetings of the church, and who do not come under the corrective discipline of the church as set forth in Article 8, shall be considered regular members in good standing and entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership in the church (Acts 2:37-47).
2. **Temporary Members.** Persons who come to live in our area for a limited period of time (e.g., students, military personnel, persons on special work assignments) may be received into or removed from the membership of the church on the same basis and in the same manner as persons who have permanent

residence in our area. If such a person is already a member of a church in his place of permanent residence, he need not be released from the membership of his home church, but will be regarded as a temporary member while in our midst, enjoying all the rights and privileges and subject to all the responsibilities, liabilities, and disciplines of regular membership. When such a person terminates his period of temporary residence in good standing he will be released to the fellowship of his home church and no longer be regarded as a member of this church.

CONDUCT EXPECTED OF MEMBERS

1. Growing in Grace. Public and private means of true Christian growth such as consistent attendance at the services of the church, daily intake of the Word of God, personal and family prayer, participation in the Lord's Supper, and honoring the Lord's Day are required of all regular and temporary members of this church unless providentially hindered by illness, unusual working conditions that do not violate the Lord's Day, and other such circumstances.

2. Financial Support. Because it is clearly taught in the Scriptures that Christians should financially support the work of the Lord by systematic, sacrificial, cheerful and proportionate giving through the local church, all the members of this church are expected to conform to this rule of Scripture.

3. Christ-like Attitude. Inasmuch as the church is represented in Scripture as a body having many members, each of the members having its own particular function and yet having a concern for the health and protection of the whole, this church expects that each of its members will strive for the good of the entire body. As members of this church we must actively seek to cultivate acquaintance with one another and maintain mutual transparency and honesty so that we may be better able to pray for one another, love, comfort, and encourage one another; and help one another materially as necessity may require. In addition, we must discreetly confess our faults one to another, faithfully admonish and encourage one another, and refrain from all backbiting and gossip. The Elders may determine that some matters of congregational business are so sensitive that the members may be expected to keep such matters confidential.

4. Support of and Submission to the Leadership. Members will be expected to recognize, support, and submit to the Elders of the church. Supporting God's servants requires praying for them, cultivating personal acquaintances with them, loving and standing by them, and not forsaking them, and defending them rather than prejudicing or damaging their good name. Submitting to God's servants requires imitating their Christian graces, faith and godly principles as they also imitate Christ, receiving their teaching with all readiness of mind and teachableness of spirit, yet with ultimate allegiance to the Word of God, humbly heeding their Scriptural rebukes and warnings as from those appointed to watch for the souls entrusted to them and committed to labor to present them complete and mature in Christ, seeking and carefully considering their counsel as being from those counted faithful by the Lord, and lovingly embracing and abiding by their decisions regarding corporate policy in God's house, which is His church, without creating division even when personally differing from their judgment. This submission will include willingly scheduling pastoral visit with an Elder(s) when requested.

5. Family Life. The church expects its members to obey the teachings of Scripture in respect to the life and government of the home. As the God appointed head of the family, the husband must lead his household with gentleness and love, but also with wisdom and firmness. The wife must submit to her husband in all things according to the rule of Scripture. The husband and wife must bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This includes setting a godly example before them, consistently instructing them from the Scriptures, and by wise, firm and loving discipline when necessary.

6. Personal Evangelism. It is the duty of every Christian, as an individual and as a member of a local church, to labor by prayer, word, and deed for the extension of the kingdom of God in ever widening circles, beginning at home and stretching forth to the ends of the earth. Therefore, every member of this church is expected prayerfully to recognize and seize every opportunity to bear witness to his faith in Christ, both by consistent Christian conduct and by the testimony of his lips.

7. Christian Liberty. Each member of the church is required to render in his daily life loyal obedience to all the moral precepts established by the Word of God. If God has not condemned or forbidden a practice in His Word, a Christian is at liberty to participate in it. The exercise of Christian liberty, however, must at all times be governed by an earnest desire to walk in the fear of God and to glorify Him in all things, a loving regard for the consciences of weaker brethren, a compassion for the lost, and a zealous regard for the health of one's own soul.

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Types of Termination

1. By Physical Death. When a member of the church is removed from our midst by death, his name shall be transferred to the file of former members.

2. By Transfer

a. Basis and Procedure for. If a church member in good standing whose conduct does not warrant corrective discipline desires to leave the membership of this church, he is strongly urged to leave in an orderly way by privately indicating that desire to the Elders along with his reasons for leaving. The Elders will provide for a transitional period which will allow the departing member to decide where the letter should be transferred. Such a transitional status will be allowed to continue as long as the departing member maintains regular contact with the Elders, does not unnecessarily prolong the transitional process, and does not engage in conduct requiring the exercise of church discipline.

b. Letter of. When it is so requested, the elders may transfer a departing member of good standing to the fellowship of another church. A letter of transfer will be sent to the appropriate officer(s) of the church to which the member wishes to transfer. No such letter may be given to a member who is at the time under the corrective discipline of this church. The elders may refuse to grant a letter of transfer to any church which is in their judgment disloyal to "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" or which does not exercise godly care over its members.

3. By Exclusion If a member ceases to faithfully attend the stated meetings of the church without showing just cause, or if upon relocation ceases to maintain a vital connection with the church, they may be excluded from the membership at the discretion of the elders. In such cases, the elders shall try to contact the person to rectify and resolve the situation (Heb 13:17). If these efforts are ineffective, the elders shall inform that person (when possible) and the congregation that they are no longer a member. If a person is not guilty of heresy, scandalous immorality, or divisiveness, either renounces his/her commitment to keep any of the requirements of membership listed in "Conduct Expected of Members," or ceases, without just cause, to practice any of them as a pattern of life, and yet wishes to remain in membership, refusing to resign voluntarily, they may be excluded, but only after repeated admonitions from the elders (2 Tim 2:24-26). In such cases the elders shall announce to the congregation at a stated meeting their intention to exclude the person. Time will be allowed for objections or questions to be raised privately with the elders by any member. If no objection is raised which the elders consider valid, the person will be excluded by action of the elders. The congregation and the person shall be informed of this action.

4. By Resignation. Membership in this church is entered into and initiated jointly, by voluntary commitment from the individual applicant and acceptance by the church. Accordingly, members cannot terminate their membership unilaterally under all circumstances. As a general rule, a member may voluntarily resign from membership in this church. A resignation offered to frustrate or thwart the procedures of corrective discipline is not valid, and the church may proceed with public censure, imposition of strictures, or excommunication in accordance with the procedures outlined in Article 8.

5. By Excommunication. (also see Article 8). According to the teaching of the Bible, a congregation must cut off from its fellowship any person(s) who:

- a. Teaches and/or persistently holds false heretical doctrine.
- b. Blatantly and persistently conducts himself in a way inconsistent with his Christian profession.
- c. Persists in disturbing the unity or peace of the church.
- d. Persists in neglecting his membership responsibilities.

RECORDS OF MEMBERSHIP. The Elders shall keep a file of all past and present members. This file shall have three divisions: regular members, temporary members, and former members. The file of former members shall include a date and reason church membership was terminated, as well as any other necessary information.

ARTICLE 8 - CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Also see Appendix B

FORMATIVE DISCIPLINE. Every disciple of Christ is disciplined by Him personally and without intervening mediators, and immediately, through the church (Matt. 18:15-20; I Thess. 5:12-15; Heb. 3:12-13; 10:24-25). Mutual submission to one another and to the elders whom the Lord has set over His church (I Pet. 5:5) will result in the sanctification of each member individually and of the whole body of the church collectively. There are occasions, however, when formative discipline alone is insufficient and corrective discipline becomes necessary.

CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE

General Statement. Corrective discipline becomes necessary when heretical doctrine or disorderly, immoral, or scandalous conduct appears among the members of the church. As a general rule and whenever feasible, an effort must be made to resolve difficulty, correct error, and remove offense through counsel and admonition before more serious steps are taken. The principles given in Matt 18:15-20, Rom. 16:17-20, I Cor. 5:1-13, II Thess. 3:6-15, I Tim. 5:19-22. 6:3-5, and Titus 3:10 must be carefully followed and applied to each case of corrective discipline as appropriate. In some cases, public admonition and/or public repentance may be warranted. In other cases, some of the privileges of membership may need to be suspended and appropriate stricture imposed. In the most extreme cases excommunication from the membership of the church may be necessary. All the members of the church are obliged to submit to and enforce as appropriate the decision of the church in acts of corrective discipline. Since the church is a spiritual and religious institution, the punishments implemented by the church in corrective discipline are also spiritual. They include public verbal reproof, social avoidance and withdrawal of distinctively Christian fellowship and removal from the membership of the church. They are intended to effect repentance through a sense of sorrow and shame. The church has no right however, to confiscate goods, revoke conjugal rights, or inflict corporal punishment of any kind. Nevertheless, a member guilty of criminal actions may be delivered to the civil authorities according to the rule of Scripture (Rom. 12:17b; 13:1-7, Titus 3:1; I Pet. 4:15). The goals of corrective discipline are always the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the church and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender.

ARTICLE 9 - ORDINANCES

GENERAL STATEMENT. There are two ordinances of special significance that our Lord has commanded us to observe, namely, baptism and the Lords Supper. Neither of them has saving merit, nor is any grace imparted to the recipient through the water of baptism or through the bread and the cup of the supper. These ordinances are not means of "special grace," but they are special "means of grace" and powerful aids to the faith of the believers who participate in them.

BAPTISM

1. Its Candidates. Only confessed disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ are proper candidates for baptism, and all such persons should be baptized and joined to the church.

2. Its Necessity for Membership. Believing that baptism in water is the God-ordained sign of one's personal union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, and the door of entrance into the visible community of the people of God, we shall receive into the membership of the church only those who have been baptized as believers "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

3. Its Mode. Immersion in water is the biblical mode of baptism, is necessary for its due administration, and is the only mode to be administered by this church.

THE LORD'S SUPPER Whereas baptism is the initiatory ordinance by which one enters the visible church, and should be observed only once by each believer, the Lord's Supper should be celebrated frequently by the assembled church. While this is a most holy ordinance and should be observed with solemnity and dignity, the bread and the cup of the supper are and remain only symbols of the broken body and the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to maintain the purity of this ordinance, the Elders will faithfully seek to insure that only true believers are admitted to the table.

ARTICLE 10 - ORGANIZATIONS AND TASK GROUPS

Organizations and task groups may be formed to help carry out the work of the ministry of the church as needed. These will be formed and members appointed by the elders and shall be accountable to the elders.

ARTICLE 11 - LEGAL OFFICERS

PURPOSE. In order to comply with Georgia State law governing nonprofit organizations, this church shall have such officers as the law requires to represent the church before the state.

QUALIFICATIONS. Legal officers shall be regular members in good standing.

AUTHORITY. Legal officers operate under the authority of the Elders (or their designates). Since their office is not Biblically mandated, they have no role in governing the affairs of this church.

APPOINTMENT. Appointment of legal officers shall be the responsibility of the Elders. The duration of their term of office shall be for one year, but may be renewed indefinitely.

ARTICLE 12 - CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS

GENERAL STATEMENT. The Elders shall call all congregational meetings. There shall be a business meeting of the church held in on a Sunday in December for the hearing of reports, the adoption of a budget, and the transaction of other business which the Elders bring before the church. A second meeting shall be held on a Sunday in June for the approval of officers, making any necessary adjustments to the budget and other business that the elders bring before the church. Special business meetings may be called at other times at the discretion of the Elders.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS. Notice of all congregational meetings in which business is to be transacted shall be announced on at least three public occasions prior to the meeting. Other business meetings at which there is no business transacted by vote may be called at the discretion of the Elders without such notice.

QUORUM. The regular and temporary members present at any properly convened congregational meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

CHAIRMANSHIP. The Chairman of the Elders, or his appointee, shall preside at all business meetings.

VOTING. All regular and temporary members who have reached the age of eighteen years except those suspended by the church shall constitute the voting membership of the church. All voting members should regard their presence at a duly called church meeting with the same seriousness with which they would regard their attendance at a stated service of worship. The Elders shall determine whether absentee votes will be permitted on a case by case basis as members make known their reason for absence. Unanimity of heart and mind shall at all times be sought and prayed for but when such unanimity is not realized, no less than a two-thirds majority of those voting will make a motion or resolution valid. In other matters wherein the Constitution requires a different proportionate vote, the express statements of the Constitution regarding those categories of business will override this two-thirds figure.

ARTICLE 13 - CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY

EXTENT. The Constitution, as with any other non-inspired document, is not infallible. It does, however, reflect an earnest and sincere attempt to apply the Scriptures in ordering the life of this local church. Furthermore, we as members of this church, including the Elders, have solemnly committed ourselves to follow this Constitution in ordering the life of this church (see the Preamble). Therefore, the demands of the ninth commandment, and the sanctity of truth in general, require that the Elders and all other members of this church abide by our mutual commitment.

LIMITATIONS. Only when we must obey God rather than the provisions of this Constitution may its requirements be disregarded (Acts 5:29). If at any time a member of this church becomes aware that adherence to this Constitution would violate biblical principle he should make it known to the Elders. If the Elders conclude that biblical principle requires disregarding a provision of this Constitution, they are

obligated to communicate this together with the reason(s) for their conclusion to the church within one month at a duly called meeting of the church. Furthermore, relevant amendments to this Constitution must be submitted to the church and acted upon in accordance with the provisions of Article 12 within one year following this informational meeting,

AMENDMENTS. Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by a three-fourths majority of members present and voting at a duly convened church meeting. Proposed amendments shall be distributed to the congregation in written form at least three weeks prior to such a meeting.



APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTION

The following paragraphs are a summary of what we believe to be our covenant responsibilities toward God and toward one another. This summary forms the basis for our giving and receiving instruction for ourselves and for our families.

SUMMARY OF OUR COVENANT RESPONSIBILITIES (THE LAWS WRITTEN IN OUR HEARTS)

1. We agree to worship only the one true and living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We will declare His glory to the nations. We will have no other gods before Him.
2. We agree to worship God in His appointed way and to exclude from our worship anything that He has not appointed.
3. We agree not to use the name of our God emptyly or to take it upon ourselves carelessly, but to walk in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
4. We agree to cease from our own works on the Lord's Day, if they are not works of piety, or necessity, and to positively sanctify the day by special exercises of public and private worship.
5. We agree to honor and obey, within the bounds of Scripture, all our superiors, whether in family, church, state, or business; and, if we be superiors, to deal reasonably and lovingly with our subordinates and thus to teach them by word and example to fear God and keep His commandments.
6. We agree to avoid whatever tends to destroy us or our neighbors and to engage vigorously in all lawful endeavors to preserve our own lives and the lives of others, especially by ready reconciliation and faithful exhortation in the church.
7. We agree to possess our bodies in holiness as vessels joined to Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit and to avoid all uncleanness of thought, speech, or action.
8. We agree to be diligent in our vocations, that we may provide for our own households, avoid theft of time, money, or goods, and that we may have to give to him who has need.
9. We agree to earnestly promote truth among men and to avoid anything that would prejudice the truth or injure our neighbor's good name.
10. We agree to be fully content with our own condition in life, to rejoice in the advancement of our neighbor, and to avoid envying him or coveting anything that is his.

APPENDIX B

Church Discipline Procedures

Public Reproof or Censure. Public reproof consists of a pastoral effort, before the gathered church, to call an impenitent church member to repentance for sin too serious to be covered with a blanket of love; or to deal with serious sin even where there may have been repentance. The Elders may administer public censure whenever, in their judgment either public misconduct, patterns of sin, or serious doctrinal error pose a significant threat to the godliness, unity or testimony of the congregation. Those who humbly receive the word of public reproof, own and confess their sin, and manifest a transformed life shall afterward be publicly commended for their godly repentance. If the reproof is not heeded, further discipline may be imposed.

Suspension of Privileges. Some misconduct on the part of a member is so detrimental to the unity, holiness and testimony of the church that the Lord required public reproof to be accompanied with the suspension of some of the privileges of membership according to the nature and gravity of the offense. In all cases of suspension the offending person is still regarded as a brother in Christ and as a member of the church. Severe reproof is to be expressed and the suspension is to be enforced by the entire church, and not merely by the Elders representing the church. Therefore, when appropriate, the Elders shall, at a duly convened business meeting of the church, inform the church of the member's suspension. The Elders shall specify the grounds of the discipline, the privileges to be revoked, and the stricture to be imposed. In the interest of maintaining a climate of holiness and peace, the Elders shall have the right at their sole discretion, to impose a temporary suspension upon a member during the brief interval between their determination to suspend the member and formal notification of the church. A member under suspension shall be treated by the congregation according to the specific applications of the general principle of social avoidance determined by the Elders. Those who humbly submit to the imposed discipline shall afterwards be forgiven, have their privileges restored, and be publicly received back into the full fellowship of the church. The general categories of sin which require suspension are as follows:

1. A Stubborn Private Offender. When a private offense remains unresolved even after the method prescribed by our Lord in Matt. 18:15-16 has been graciously and prayerfully followed, it is considered an aggravated offense. The brethren involved shall bring the matter to the Elders who, if they judge the matter to be serious and cannot persuade the brother to repent, shall suspend the brother and report the situation to the church. If, even after a period of suspension, the person remains adamant in his sin, he may be excommunicated.

2. Divisive Teachings or Behavior. When a member deliberately persists in the propagation of serious doctrinal error contrary to the Scripture or our Confession, or attempts to sow discord among the membership contrary to the Scripture or this Constitution, he may be suspended as a factious man. Since every member is responsible to help preserve the unity of the Spirit, no one is to conceal such divisive behavior, but rather to prove it, and disclose it to the Elders. Whenever the Elders become aware of such divisive behavior, they are to confront it meekly and patiently according to the Word of God. If, even after receiving repeated admonition from the Elders, a member persists in such behavior, the Elders shall suspend the divisive brother and report the situation to the church. If, even after a period of suspension, the person remains impenitent, he may be excommunicated.

3. Disorderly Behavior. Some kinds of conduct and doctrine are categorized as disorderly. If a member deliberately persists in conduct which displays a flagrant or public disregard for the order appointed by God for all mankind in the creation ordinances, namely: work, Sabbath and marriage, he may be suspended as a disorderly man. Similarly, a member may be suspended as a disorderly man if he deliberately persists in conduct contrary to the order established by Christ for His church in Scripture as recognized by our church in this Constitution. Whenever the Elders become aware that in spite of the admonitions of formative discipline a member is behaving disorderly, they are to confront him meekly and patiently according to the Word of God. Disorderly conduct is to be distinguished from traitorous conduct. A disorderly member is not immediately to be excommunicated. Rather he is to be suspended in accordance with the directions of II Thess. 3:6-15 and not regarded as an enemy but admonished as a brother. However, if even after receiving such admonition from the Elders, a member persists in this behavior, the Elders shall suspend the disorderly brother and report the situation to the church. If, even after the period of suspension, the person remains impenitent, he may be excommunicated.

4. A Scandalous Sin. If a member has sinned scandalously but shows hopeful signs of repentance, including submission to the Elders, excommunication would be unwarranted. However, it may still be prudent to suspend him for a time so that he may realize the gravity of the offense and clearly manifest

repentance so that reproach not be brought upon the Name of Christ and the church, and so that others may not be emboldened to sin. If fruits worthy of repentance are not forthcoming, the Elders may recommend to the church at a later date that this person be excommunicated.

5. Contempt of Church Discipline. If a person is accused or suspected of an offense requiring corrective discipline, yet absents himself from the meetings of the church, or refuses to meet with the Elders so that the matter may be investigated, such a person may be suspended. The Elders may recommend to the church at a later date that this person be excommunicated.

Excommunication

Occasions Requiring. In addition to the excommunication of those who have been previously suspended, some expressions of sin (ethical or doctrinal) are so gross and heinous in nature that preliminary actions like public reproof and suspension are inappropriate. In such cases, the guilty member may be immediately excommunicated by the church. This severe measure is to be employed when both aggravated lawlessness is discovered, and there are no hopeful signs of repentance. This severe measure is designed to purge the lawbreaker of his lethal attachment to his sin, unto a sincere and enduring repentance. The Elders, therefore, having made earnest but unsuccessful efforts to bring the offender to true repentance and reformation, shall report the same to the church and recommend that the offender be excommunicated.

Church Affirmation. To be valid, an act of excommunication must be affirmed by the church at a duly convened business meeting where the elders present the necessary facts of the case and seek church affirmation. The accused member and other members of the congregation will be given the opportunity to publicly state any biblical reasons why the accused member should not be excommunicated. If the elders determine that no biblical reasons have been given, it will be assumed that the church has affirmed the elders' decision and will be expected to uphold its biblical responsibilities in the execution of discipline. If, however, the elders determine that biblical reasons have been given and that these reasons require further investigation, the elders are to reconsider the case, and in one week report back to the congregation with their recommendation.

Restoration. The purposes of church discipline are to restore a fallen brother or sister and to keep the church pure. Therefore, it is the duty of the church to forgive and to restore to full membership a suspended or excommunicated member who gives satisfactory evidence of his repentance. This shall be done in a duly convened business meeting of the church.

The Abstract of Principles

I. The Scriptures.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.

II. God.

There is but one God, the Maker, Preserver and Ruler of all things, having in and of himself, all perfections, and being infinite in them all; and to Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence and obedience.

III. The Trinity.

God is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.

IV. Providence.

God from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not to destroy the free will and responsibility of intelligent creatures.

V. Election.

Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life -- not because of foreseen merit in them, but of his mere mercy in Christ -- in consequence of which choice they are called, justified and glorified.

VI. The Fall of Man.

God originally created man in His own image, and free from sin; but, through the temptation of Satan, he transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original holiness and righteousness; whereby his posterity inherit a nature corrupt and wholly opposed to God and His law, are under condemnation, and as soon as they are capable of moral action, become actual transgressors.

VII. The Mediator.

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the divinely appointed mediator between God and man. Having taken upon Himself human nature, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled the Law, suffered and died upon the cross for the salvation of sinners. He was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended to His Father, at whose hand He ever lives to make intercession for His people. He is the only Mediator, the Prophet, Priest and King of the Church, and Sovereign of the Universe.

VIII. Regeneration.

Regeneration is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, who quickens the dead in trespasses and sins enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness. It is a work of God's free and special grace alone.

IX. Repentance.

Repentance is an evangelical grace, wherein a person being, by the Holy Spirit, made sensible of the manifold evil of his sin, humbles himself for it, with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrence, with a purpose and endeavor to walk before God so as to please Him in all things.

X. Faith.

Saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatsoever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ; accepting and resting upon Him alone for justification and eternal life. It is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and is accompanied by all other saving graces, and leads to a life of holiness.

XI. Justification.

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners, who believe in Christ, from all sin, through the satisfaction that Christ has made; not for anything wrought in them or done by them; but on account of the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith.

XII. Sanctification.

Those who have been regenerated are also sanctified, by God's word and Spirit dwelling in them. This sanctification is progressive through the supply of Divine strength, which all saints seek to obtain, pressing after a heavenly life in cordial obedience to all Christ's commands.

XIII. Perseverance of the Saints.

Those whom God hath accepted in the Beloved, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may fall, through neglect and temptation, into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the Church, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

XIV. The Church.

The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is composed of all his true disciples, and in Him is invested supremely all power for its government. According to his commandment, Christians are to associate themselves into particular societies or churches; and to each of these churches he hath given needful authority for administering that order, discipline and worship which he hath appointed. The regular officers of a Church are Bishops, or Elders, and Deacons.

XV. Baptism.

Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ, of remission of sins, and of his giving himself up to God, to live and walk in newness of life. It is prerequisite to church fellowship, and to participation in the Lord's Supper.

XVI. The Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and wine, and to be observed by his churches till the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate his death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion with him, and of their church fellowship.

XVII. The Lord's Day.

The Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance, and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, resting from worldly employments and amusements, works of necessity and mercy only excepted.

XVIII. Liberty of Conscience.

God alone is Lord of the conscience; and He hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in anything contrary to His word, or not contained in it. Civil magistrates being ordained of God, subjection in all lawful thing commanded by them ought to be yielded by us in the Lord, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

XIX. The Resurrection.

The bodies of men after death return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God -- the righteous to rest with Him; the wicked to be reserved under darkness to the judgment. At the last day, the bodies of all the dead, both just and unjust, will be raised.

XX. The Judgment.

God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world by Jesus Christ, when every one shall receive according to his deeds; the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment; the righteous, into everlasting life.

The Cambridge Declaration of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals

Evangelical churches today are increasingly dominated by the spirit of this age rather than by the Spirit of Christ. As evangelicals, we call ourselves to repent of this sin and to recover the historic Christian faith. In the course of history words change. In our day this has happened to the word "evangelical." In the past it served as a bond of unity between Christians from a wide diversity of church traditions. Historic evangelicalism was confessional. It embraced the essential truths of Christianity as those were defined by the great ecumenical councils of the church. In addition, evangelicals also shared a common heritage in the "solas" of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation. Today the light of the Reformation has been significantly dimmed. The consequence is that the word "evangelical" has become so inclusive as to have lost its meaning. We face the peril of losing the unity it has taken centuries to achieve. Because of this crisis and because of our love of Christ, his gospel and his church, we endeavor to assert anew our commitment to the central truths of the Reformation and of historic evangelicalism. These truths we affirm not because of their role in our traditions, but because we believe that they are central to the Bible.

Sola Scriptura: The Erosion of Authority

Scripture alone is the inerrant rule of the church's life, but the evangelical church today has separated Scripture from its authoritative function. In practice, the church is guided, far too often, by the culture. Therapeutic technique, marketing strategies, and the beat of the entertainment world often have far more to say about what the church wants, how it functions and what it offers, than does the Word of God. Pastors have neglected their rightful oversight of worship, including the doctrinal content of the music. As biblical authority has been abandoned in practice, as its truths have faded from Christian consciousness, and as its doctrines have lost their saliency, the church has been increasingly emptied of its integrity, moral authority and direction. Rather than adapting Christian faith to satisfy the felt needs of consumers, we must proclaim the law as the only measure of true righteousness and the gospel as the only announcement of saving truth. Biblical truth is indispensable to the church's understanding, nurture and discipline. Scripture must take us beyond our perceived needs to our real needs and liberate us from seeing ourselves through the seductive images, cliches, promises and priorities of mass culture. It is only in the light of God's truth that we understand ourselves aright and see God's provision for our need. The Bible, therefore, must be taught and preached in the church. Sermons must be expositions of the Bible and its teachings, not expressions of the preacher's opinions or the ideas of the age. We must settle for nothing less than what God has given. The work of the Holy Spirit in personal experience cannot be disengaged from Scripture. The Spirit does not speak in ways that are independent of Scripture. Apart from Scripture we would never have known of God's grace in Christ. The biblical Word, rather than spiritual experience, is the test of truth.

THESIS ONE: SOLA SCRIPTURA

We reaffirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured.

We deny that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation.

Solus Christus: The Erosion of Christ-Centered Faith

As evangelical faith becomes secularized, its interests have been blurred with those of the culture. The result is a loss of absolute values, permissive individualism, and a substitution of wholeness

for holiness, recovery for repentance, intuition for truth, feeling for belief, chance for providence, and immediate gratification for enduring hope. Christ and his cross have moved from the center of our vision.

THESIS TWO: SOLUS CHRISTUS

We reaffirm that our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father.

We deny that the gospel is preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared and faith in Christ and his work is not solicited.

Sola Gratia: The Erosion of The Gospel

Unwarranted confidence in human ability is a product of fallen human nature. This false confidence now fills the evangelical world; from the self-esteem gospel, to the health and wealth gospel, from those who have transformed the gospel into a product to be sold and sinners into consumers who want to buy, to others who treat Christian faith as being true simply because it works. This silences the doctrine of justification regardless of the official commitments of our churches. God's grace in Christ is not merely necessary but is the sole efficient cause of salvation. We confess that human beings are born spiritually dead and are incapable even of cooperating with regenerating grace.

THESIS THREE: SOLA GRATIA

We reaffirm that in salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by his grace alone. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

We deny that salvation is in any sense a human work. Human methods, techniques or strategies by themselves cannot accomplish this transformation. Faith is not produced by our unregenerated human nature.

Sola Fide: The Erosion of The Chief Article

Justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. This is the article by which the church stands or falls. Today this article is often ignored, distorted or sometimes even denied by leaders, scholars and pastors who claim to be evangelical. Although fallen human nature has always recoiled from recognizing its need for Christ's imputed righteousness, modernity greatly fuels the fires of this discontent with the biblical Gospel. We have allowed this discontent to dictate the nature of our ministry and what it is we are preaching. Many in the church growth movement believe that sociological understanding of those in the pew is as important to the success of the gospel as is the biblical truth which is proclaimed. As a result, theological convictions are frequently divorced from the work of the ministry. The marketing orientation in many churches takes this even further, erasing the distinction between the biblical Word and the world, robbing Christ's cross of its offense, and reducing Christian faith to the principles and methods which bring success to secular corporations. While the theology of the cross may be believed, these movements are actually emptying it of its meaning. There is no gospel except that of Christ's substitution in our place whereby God imputed to him our sin and imputed to us his righteousness. Because he bore our judgment, we now walk in his grace as those who are forever pardoned, accepted and adopted as God's children. There is no basis for our acceptance before God except in Christ's saving work, not in our patriotism, churchly devotion or moral decency. The gospel declares what God has done for us in Christ. It is not about what we can do to reach him.

THESIS FOUR: SOLA FIDE

We reaffirm that justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. In justification Christ's righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice.

We deny that justification rests on any merit to be found in us, or upon the grounds of an infusion of Christ's righteousness in us, or that an institution claiming to be a church that denies or condemns sola fide can be recognized as a legitimate church.

Soli Deo Gloria: The Erosion of God-Centered Worship

Wherever in the church biblical authority has been lost, Christ has been displaced, the gospel has been distorted, or faith has been perverted, it has always been for one reason: our interests have displaced God's and we are doing his work in our way. The loss of God's centrality in the life of today's church is common and lamentable. It is this loss that allows us to transform worship into entertainment, gospel preaching into marketing, believing into technique, being good into feeling good about ourselves, and faithfulness into being successful. As a result, God, Christ and the Bible have come to mean too little to us and rest too inconsequentially upon us. God does not exist to satisfy human ambitions, cravings, the appetite for consumption, or our own private spiritual interests. We must focus on God in our worship, rather than the satisfaction of our personal needs. God is sovereign in worship; we are not. Our concern must be for God's kingdom, not our own empires, popularity or success.

THESIS FIVE: SOLI DEO GLORIA

We reaffirm that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and that we must glorify him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for his glory alone.

We deny that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem or self-fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel.

A Call To Repentance & Reformation

The faithfulness of the evangelical church in the past contrasts sharply with its unfaithfulness in the present. Earlier in this century, evangelical churches sustained a remarkable missionary endeavor, and built many religious institutions to serve the cause of biblical truth and Christ's kingdom. That was a time when Christian behavior and expectations were markedly different from those in the culture. Today they often are not. The evangelical world today is losing its biblical fidelity, moral compass and missionary zeal. We repent of our worldliness. We have been influenced by the "gospels" of our secular culture, which are no gospels. We have weakened the church by our own lack of serious repentance, our blindness to the sins in ourselves which we see so clearly in others, and our inexcusable failure to adequately tell others about God's saving work in Jesus Christ. We also earnestly call back erring professing evangelicals who have deviated from God's Word in the matters discussed in this Declaration. This includes those who declare that there is hope of eternal life apart from explicit faith in Jesus Christ, who claim that those who reject Christ in this life will be annihilated rather than endure the just judgment of God through eternal suffering, or who claim that evangelicals and Roman Catholics are one in Jesus Christ even where the biblical doctrine of justification is not believed. The Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals asks all Christians to give consideration to implementing this Declaration in the church's worship, ministry, policies, life and evangelism.

For Christ's sake. Amen. §

THE CHICAGO STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY

I. SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: It is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.

3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.

4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

II. ARTICLES OF AFFIRMATION AND DENIAL

Article I.

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

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

Article II.

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

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

Article III.

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

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

Article IV.

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

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

Article V.

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

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

Article VI.

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

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

Article VII.

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

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

Article VIII.

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

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

Article IX.

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

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

Article X.

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

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

Article XI.

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

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

Article XII.

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

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

Article XIII.

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

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

Article XIV.

We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.

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

Article XV.

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

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

Article XVI.

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

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

Article XVII.

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

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

Article XVIII.

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

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

Article XIX.

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

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

III. EXPOSITION

Our understanding of the doctrine of inerrancy must be set in the context of the broader teachings of Scripture concerning itself. This exposition gives an account of the outline of doctrine from which our Summary Statement and Articles are drawn.

A. Creation, Revelation and Inspiration

The God, who formed all things by his creative utterances and governs all things by His Word of decree, made mankind in His own image for a life of communion with Himself, on the model of the eternal fellowship of loving communication within the Godhead. As God's image-bearer, man was to hear God's Word addressed to him and to respond in the joy of adoring obedience. Over and above God's self-disclosure in the created order and the sequence of events within it, human beings from Adam on have received verbal messages from Him, either directly, as stated in Scripture, or indirectly in the form of part or all of Scripture itself.

When Adam fell, the Creator did not abandon mankind to final judgment, but promised salvation and began to reveal Himself as Redeemer in a sequence of historical events centering on Abraham's family and culminating in the life, death, resurrection, present heavenly ministry and promised return of Jesus Christ. Within this frame, God has from time to time spoken specific words of judgment and mercy, promise and command, to sinful human beings, so drawing them into a covenant relation of mutual commitment between Him and them in which He blesses them with gifts of grace and they bless Him in responsive adoration. Moses, whom God used as mediator to carry his words to His people at the time of the exodus, stands at the head of a long line of prophets in whose mouths and writings God put His words for delivery to Israel. God's purpose in this succession of messages was to maintain His covenant by causing His people to know His name--that is, His nature--and His will both of precept and purpose in the present and for the future. This line of prophetic spokesmen from God came to completion in Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Word, who was Himself a prophet—more than a prophet, but not less--and in the apostles and prophets of the first Christian generation. When God's final and climactic message, His word to the world concerning Jesus Christ, had been spoken and elucidated by

those in the apostolic circle, the sequence of revealed messages ceased. Henceforth the Church was to live and know God by what He had already said, and said for all time.

At Sinai God wrote the terms of His covenant on tablets of stone as His enduring witness and for lasting accessibility, and throughout the period of prophetic and apostolic revelation He prompted men to write the messages given to and through them, along with celebratory records of His dealings with His people, plus moral reflections on covenant life and forms of praise and prayer for covenant mercy. The theological reality of inspiration in the producing of Biblical documents corresponds to that of spoken prophecies: Although the human writers' personalities were expressed in what they wrote, the words were divinely constituted. Thus what Scripture says, God says; its authority is His authority, for He is its ultimate Author, having given it through the minds and words of chosen and prepared men who in freedom and faithfulness "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (I Pet 1:21). Holy Scripture must be acknowledged as the Word of God by virtue of its divine origin.

B. Authority: Christ and the Bible

Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is the Word made flesh, our Prophet, Priest and King, is the ultimate Mediator of God's communication to man, as He is of all God's gifts of grace. The revelation He gave was more than verbal; He revealed the Father by His presence and His deeds as well. Yet His words were crucially important; for He was God, He spoke from the Father, and His words will judge all men at the last day.

As the prophesied Messiah, Jesus Christ is the central theme of Scripture. The Old Testament looked ahead to Him; the New Testament looks back to His first coming and on to His second. Canonical Scripture is the divinely inspired and therefore normative witness to Christ. No hermeneutic, therefore, of which the historical Christ is not the focal point is acceptable. Holy Scripture must be treated as what it essentially is--the witness of the Father to the incarnate Son.

It appears that the Old Testament canon had been fixed by the time of Jesus. The New Testament canon is likewise now closed, inasmuch as no new apostolic witness to the historical Christ can now be borne. No new revelation (as distinct from Spirit-given understanding of existing revelation) will be given until Christ comes again. The canon was created in principle by divine inspiration. The Church's part was to discern the canon that God had created, not to devise one of its own.

The word 'canon', signifying a rule of standard, is a pointer to authority, which means the right to rule and control. Authority in Christianity belongs to God in His revelation, which means, on the one hand, Jesus Christ, the living Word, and, on the other hand, Holy Scripture, the written Word. But the authority of Christ and that of Scripture are one. As our Prophet, Christ testified that Scripture cannot be broken. As our Priest and King, He devoted His earthly life to fulfilling the law and the prophets, even dying in obedience to the words of messianic prophecy. Thus as He saw Scripture attesting Him and His authority, so by His own submission to Scripture He attested its authority. As He bowed to His Father's instruction given in His Bible (our Old Testament), so He requires His disciples to do--not, however, in isolation but in conjunction with the apostolic witness to Himself that He undertook to inspire by his gift of the Holy Spirit. So Christians show themselves faithful servants of their Lord by bowing to the divine instruction given in the prophetic and apostolic writings that together make up our Bible.

By authenticating each other's authority, Christ and Scripture coalesce into a single fount of authority. The Biblically-interpreted Christ and the Christ-centered, Christ-proclaiming Bible are from this standpoint one. As from the fact of inspiration we infer that what Scripture says, God says, so from the revealed relation between Jesus Christ and Scripture we may equally declare that what Scripture says, Christ says.

C. Infallibility, Inerrancy, Interpretation

Holy Scripture, as the inspired Word of God witnessing authoritatively to Jesus Christ, may properly be called 'infallible' and 'inerrant'. These negative terms have a special value, for they explicitly safeguard crucial positive truths. 'Infallible' signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe and reliable rule and guide in all matters. Similarly, 'inerrant' signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.

We affirm that canonical Scripture should always be interpreted on the basis that it is infallible and inerrant. However, in determining what the God-taught writer is asserting in each passage, we must pay the most careful attention to its claims and character as a human production. In inspiration, God utilized the culture and conventions of his penman's milieu, a milieu that God controls in His sovereign providence; it is misinterpretation to imagine otherwise. So history must be treated as history, poetry as poetry, hyperbole and metaphor as hyperbole and metaphor, generalization and approximation as what they are, and so forth. Differences between literary conventions in Bible times and in ours must also be observed: Since, for instance, nonchronological narration and imprecise citation were conventional and acceptable and violated no expectations in those days, we must not regard these things as faults when we find them in Bible writers. When total precision of a particular kind was not expected nor aimed at, it is no error not to have achieved it. Scripture is inerrant, not in the sense of being absolutely precise by modern standards, but in the sense of making good its claims and achieving that measure of focused truth at which its authors aimed.

The truthfulness of Scripture is not negated by the appearance in it of irregularities of grammar or spelling, phenomenal descriptions of nature, reports of false statements (for example, the lies of Satan), or seeming discrepancies between one passage and another. It is not right to set the so-called "phenomena" of Scripture against the teaching of Scripture about itself. Apparent inconsistencies should not be ignored. Solution of them, where this can be convincingly achieved, will encourage our faith, and where for the present no convincing solution is at hand we shall significantly honor God by trusting His assurance that His Word is true, despite these appearances, and by maintaining our confidence that one day they will be seen to have been illusions.

Inasmuch as all Scripture is the product of a single divine mind, interpretation must stay within the bounds of the analogy of Scripture and eschew hypotheses that would correct one Biblical passage by another, whether in the name of progressive revelation or of the imperfect enlightenment of the inspired writer's mind.

Although Holy Scripture is nowhere culture-bound in the sense that its teaching lacks universal validity, it is sometimes culturally conditioned by the customs and conventional views of a particular period, so that the application of its principles today calls for a different sort of action.

D. Skepticism and Criticism

Since the Renaissance, and more particularly since the Enlightenment, world views have been developed that involve skepticism about basic Christian tenets. Such are the agnosticism that denies that God is knowable, the rationalism that denies that He is incomprehensible, the idealism that denies that He is transcendent, and the existentialism that denies rationality in His relationships with us. When these un- and anti-Biblical principles seep into men's theologies at presuppositional level, as today they frequently do, faithful interpretation of Holy Scripture becomes impossible.

E. Transmission and Translation

Since God has nowhere promised an inerrant transmission of Scripture, it is necessary to affirm that only the autographic text of the original documents was inspired and to maintain the need of textual criticism as a means of detecting any slips that may have crept into the text in the course of its transmission. The verdict of this science, however, is that the Hebrew and Greek text appears to be amazingly well preserved, so that we are amply justified in affirming, with the Westminster Confession, a singular providence of God in this matter and in declaring that the authority of Scripture is in no way jeopardized by the fact that the copies we possess are not entirely error-free.

Similarly, no translation is or can be perfect, and all translations are an additional step away from the autograph. Yet the verdict of linguistic science is that English-speaking Christians, at least, are exceedingly well served in these days with a host of excellent translations and have no cause for hesitating to conclude that the true Word of God is within their reach. Indeed, in view of the frequent repetition in Scripture of the main matters with which it deals and also of the Holy Spirit's constant witness to and through the Word, no serious translation of Holy Scripture will so destroy its meaning as to render it unable to make its reader "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15)

F. Inerrancy and Authority

In our affirmation of the authority of Scripture as involving its total truth, we are consciously standing with Christ and His apostles, indeed with the whole Bible and with the main stream of Church history from the first days until very recently. We are concerned at that casual, inadvertent and seemingly thoughtless way in which a belief of such far-reaching importance has been given up by so many in our day.

We are conscious too that great and grave confusion results from ceasing to maintain the total truth of the Bible whose authority one professes to acknowledge. The result of taking this step is that the Bible that God gave loses its authority, and what has authority instead is a Bible reduced in content according to the demands of one's critical reasoning and in principle reducible still further once one has started. This means that at bottom independent reason now has authority, as opposed to Scriptural teaching. If this is not seen and if for the time being basic evangelical doctrines are still held, persons denying the full truth of Scripture may claim an evangelical identity while methodologically they have moved away from the evangelical principle of knowledge to an unstable subjectivism, and will find it hard not to move further.

We affirm that what Scripture says, God says. May He be glorified. Amen and Amen.

NOTE: This was the statement that launched the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, an interdenominational joint effort by hundreds of evangelical scholars and leaders to defend biblical inerrancy against the trend toward liberal and neo-orthodox conceptions of Scripture.

The Statement was produced at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago in the fall of 1978, during an international summit conference of concerned evangelical leaders. It was signed by nearly 300 noted evangelical scholars, including Boice, Norman L. Geisler, John Gerstner, Carl F. H. Henry, Kenneth Kantzer, Harold Lindsell, John Warwick Montgomery, Roger Nicole, J.I. Packer, Robert Preus, Earl Radmacher, Francis Schaeffer, R.C. Sproul, and John Wenham.

The ICBI disbanded in 1988, its work complete. The congress ultimately produced three major statements: this one on biblical inerrancy in 1978, one on biblical hermeneutics in 1982, and one on biblical application in 1986. A published copy of the statement may be found in Carl F. H. Henry in *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 4 (Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1979), on pp. 211-219.

Trinity Reformed Baptist Church

- Jackson, Georgia -

Petition for Membership

General Information

- Please print your first and last name with middle initial.
- By what name do you prefer to be called?
- Address
- Home Phone & e-mail
- Employment
- Business Address
- Business Phone
- Date of Application for Membership
- Birth Date
- Church and Address to which you last belonged.
- What was the denomination of this church?
- Who is this church's present pastor?
- When did you last regularly attend this church?
- Approximately how long were you a member of this church?
- Were you in good standing with this church? (If an explanation is needed, please use the other side.)
- Telephone number of the church or its pastor.

Spiritual Background

- Please write out a brief description of your conversion to Christ (if you are unsure, please talk with one of the elders. If you need more space, please use the other side of this sheet.)

- What evidence do you see which would give you assurance that you are truly His child?

- Have you been scripturally immersed *following* your conversion?
- If so, what was the date or approximate date of your baptism?
- What was the name of the church in which you were baptized and the pastor's name that performed the baptism?
- If you have not been scripturally immersed following your conversion, do you now wish to be baptized in obedience to Christ's instructions?
- How would you describe your present spiritual condition? Please be specific but brief.

- What, if any, is your pattern for personal intake of the Word of God and prayer?

- Do you have regular family worship in your home? If so, how is it done?

- Are there habits or issues related to your walk with God that you would like to talk about privately?

Church Commitment

- Are you willing to faithfully attend the regular gatherings of the church the leaders deem necessary for the health of the body unless hindered by providence?
- Are you willing to gladly submit to the spiritual leaders of the church unless conscience demands otherwise?
- Will you always speak positively about our leaders and the other church members?
- If difficulties arise in your relationship with others in the church, are you willing to deal biblically with that person rather than gossiping or retaliating in an ungodly way?
- Are you willing to use talents and gifts God has given you for the edifying of the body and the promotion of the gospel as God might lead?
- Please list any special abilities, gifts or talents, which might be used in this way in the future if God leads?
- Are you willing to regularly support the Lord's church with your financial gifts? (Note: this question is for believing children, as well)
- Have you read the Abstract of Principles, the 1689 London Baptist Confession, and the Trinity Constitution? Although not required for membership, have you read the Cambridge Declaration and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy?
- While we do not require for membership the level of commitment to our confession that we require of leadership, we are interested to know if you have any concerns. Are you aware of any disagreement between your beliefs and those in our confession of faith?
- Do you have any questions related to this petition which you would like for us to talk about?

Thanks for filling this out – when complete, please give your membership petition to one of the elders. We will discuss this and other issues privately before the membership procedure is concluded.

Administrative Use:	_____
Date Accepted _____	_____
By _____	_____
_____	_____