

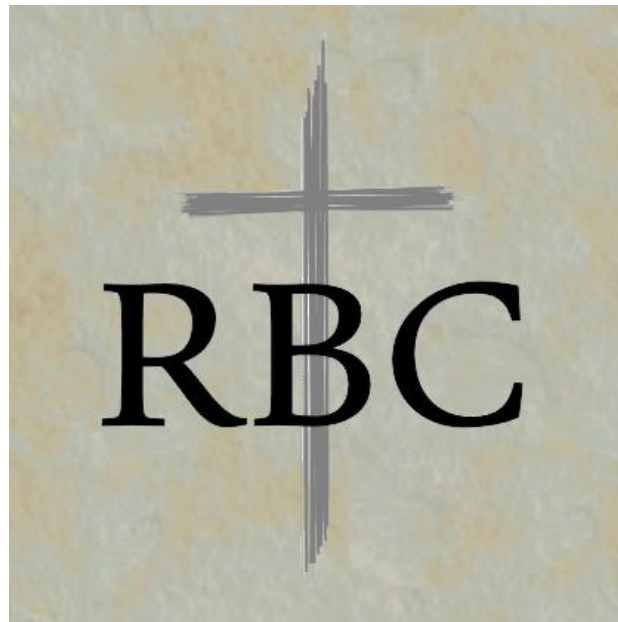
# Reformation Bible Church

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**Foundations 101**

**Study Guide**

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# Reformation Bible Church: Foundations 101 Checklist

The Foundations 101 video curriculum contains 24 videos available online at our website and YouTube or on DVD. Please watch each of the videos, following along with your Bible and the handouts provided. Write down any questions you have about the material to discuss with the elders. Record the date as you complete each video. When you have finished the entire series, please sign and date the bottom of this form. If you wish to be received into membership at RBC, please give this form and your written testimony to the office staff and schedule a pre-membership interview. We will look forward to reading your testimony and discussing any questions you may have.

Date Completed

\_\_\_\_\_ Introduction

\_\_\_\_\_ Pastor Joel Ellis – Testimony

\_\_\_\_\_ Pastor Jacob Allee – Testimony

\_\_\_\_\_ What is the Gospel?

\_\_\_\_\_ What the Gospel is Not

\_\_\_\_\_ Gospel Response

\_\_\_\_\_ Where Does Baptism Fit?

\_\_\_\_\_ Gospel Ministry at RBC

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\_\_\_\_\_ General Statement of Faith Article IA

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\_\_\_\_\_ Discipleship and the Local Church

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Signature Print Name Date

# **Reformation Bible Church: Foundations 101**

## **Getting to Know Each Other and Affirming the Gospel**

### **I. INTRODUCTION TO THE *FOUNDATIONS 101* CLASS**

#### A. Purposes of the class

The purpose of the Foundations curriculum is to introduce and explain who we are as Reformation Bible Church, what we do and teach, and why, in order to (1) introduce our church to interested visitors, (2) integrate prospective members, and (3) to strengthen and encourage current members of our congregation as we work and worship together for the glory of God and the good of others.

#### B. Benefits of the class

The Foundations classes will help us: (1) Get to know our church family better, (2) More clearly articulate the gospel of Christ, (3) Better understand and affirm the doctrinal truths that are central to RBC's life and ministry, (4) Become more aware of how following Jesus relates to participation at RBC.

#### C. For Those Seeking Membership

Anyone is welcome to study the Foundations 101 curriculum, but for those seeking to be formally received into membership at RBC, there is a three-step process:

- (1) Complete the Foundations 101 curriculum in person or via video
- (2) Meet with some of the elders from RBC to get better acquainted, share your testimony, and discuss any questions you or they may have
- (3) Affirm the Membership Covenant and be formally received by public announcement to the congregation

### **II. GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH EACH OTHER**

This is a time for participants in our lives classes to share with one another in order to get better acquainted. We will take a few minutes and go around the room taking turns answering the following questions.

- A. Who am I?
- B. Where am I from?
- C. How long have I known Christ?
- D. How long have I been at CCC?
- E. What is most valuable to me at CCC?

### III. CLARIFYING THE GOSPEL

#### A. What is the Gospel?

The gospel is the good news of salvation on the basis of the atoning, redemptive work of Jesus Christ. It includes man's depravity, sin, and need for salvation, the substitutionary atonement provided by Christ in his death on the cross, and man's responsibility to believe in Christ, repent, and trust the Lord for salvation.

Concise summary of the historical facts of the gospel: **1 Corinthians 15:1-11**

Concise presentation of the gospel: **Romans 3:9-4:8** and **Ephesians 2:1-10**

#### B. How does one respond to the gospel?

Man responds to the good news of salvation in Jesus by faith, repentance, and baptism (Acts 2:38-39; 8:26-40; 16:30-34; Rom. 10:9-13). Salvation is received by faith in Christ, not works (Eph. 2:8-9), but genuine faith will be accompanied by a sincere desire to turn away from sin and self and turn toward the Savior and Lord (Mark 1:15; 2Cor. 7:10). This faith and repentance is demonstrated by identifying with Christ in baptism as a symbol of death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:11-12).

#### C. What is NOT the gospel?

The gospel is not the news about how I can have my "best life now."  
(John 16:33)

The gospel is not a prescription for working my way into God's favor.  
(Romans 4:4-8)

The gospel is not a reason for pride in the life of the believer.  
(Romans 3:27-28)

### IV. THE GOSPEL AND RBC

#### A. How does the gospel guide CCC's ministry?

The gospel is central to RBC's life, mission, and ministry. Everything flows from our conviction that the gospel is true and is the only hope for a world lost and dead in sin. Everything in our church's ministry returns to the gospel, because we believe the church is strengthened by hearing the gospel clearly, repeatedly, and unapologetically affirmed (Rom. 16:25). We do not take the gospel for granted, because what Jesus has done gives meaning to who we are and everything we do as the people of God.

B. Does RBC use an altar call/invitation?

CCC uses a modified form of altar call or invitation at many of our services. We do our best to present the offer of the gospel in a biblically responsible way. The tradition of extending the invitation or using an altar call did not even begin until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and often it has been used in an effort to emotionally sway people into "making a decision for Christ." We believe strongly in urging people to put their trust in Christ and turn to Him for salvation (2Cor. 5:18-21). But we do not want people to profess faith merely in response to emotional pressure. We recognize that salvation is a sovereign work of the holy God who draws men to Himself by means of the Holy Spirit (John 6:44-45). When people respond to the invitation at RBC they may immediately receive prayer with a pastor-elder, they may be baptized after their confession of Jesus as Lord, or they may be invited to counsel privately with a pastor-elder or biblical counselor who can share and help apply the gospel in their life and circumstances.

C. Where does baptism fit?

Baptism is very important both in the New Testament and at CCC. The Bible associates baptism in the name of Christ with conversion (Acts 2:40-41; 8:12; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27), and it is strongly symbolic of the salvation we receive by grace through faith (Acts 2:38-39; Acts 22:16; 1Pet. 3:21-22). It is important to recognize we are saved by faith alone, not by works of obedience that we do, including baptism (Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8-9). As important as baptism is, it is a demonstration of the promises of God received through faith and repentance. It is a symbol of regeneration and salvation, not an act that actually produces the new birth or forgiveness of sins. Like a wedding ring, baptism is a visible sign of the New Covenant and a reminder of the promises of God to all who believe and of our corresponding responsibility to be faithful to the covenant God has made.

Questions?

Feel free to provide feedback to help us improve this curriculum and experience as a class.

# Reformation Bible Church

## General Statement of Faith

(Revised February 2015)

### Article I: CONCERNING GOD

There is one God.<sup>1</sup> The true God has simultaneously and eternally existed as three co-equal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> This doctrine is known as the *Trinity*. All three persons (Father,<sup>3</sup> Son,<sup>4</sup> and Holy Spirit<sup>5</sup>) are God, but the Father is not the Son or the Holy Spirit, and the Son is not the Father or the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son.<sup>6</sup> They share the being of God, yet are individually distinct persons. God is omnipotent,<sup>7</sup> omniscient,<sup>8</sup> omnipresent,<sup>9</sup> and immutable.<sup>10</sup> He is good, just, holy, righteous, loving, sovereign, compassionate, and perfect in all His attributes.<sup>11</sup>

Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is one and the same God as the Father and the Holy Spirit. He existed in eternity past but at a point in time entered into His creation, born of a virgin named Mary.<sup>12</sup> Jesus has two natures: a divine nature and a human nature.<sup>13</sup> Consequently He is both truly God and truly man at the same time. He lived a life of sinless perfection and perfect obedience to God's law.<sup>14</sup> He died on the cross as a propitiation<sup>15</sup> for our sins.<sup>16</sup> On the third day God raised Jesus from the dead.<sup>17</sup> His resurrection was literal and physical in a glorified body, thus Jesus is the "firstborn from the dead."<sup>18</sup> Jesus appeared after His resurrection to the apostles and other witnesses, including over 500 at one time.<sup>19</sup> After forty days Jesus ascended into Heaven to the Father and is now at His right hand.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>3</sup> Philippians 4:20

<sup>4</sup> John 1:1-14

<sup>5</sup> Acts 5:1-6

<sup>6</sup> E.g., all three persons of the Godhead are identified and distinct at Christ's baptism (Matthew 3:16-17) as well as in other texts.

<sup>7</sup> Omnipotent – All powerful

<sup>8</sup> Omniscient – All knowing

<sup>9</sup> Omnipresent – Ever present

<sup>10</sup> Immutable – Unchanging

<sup>11</sup> Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 139; 145; Isaiah 40-46; 1 John 1:5; 4:8

<sup>12</sup> John 17:5; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-11

<sup>13</sup> *Nature* should not be confused with *personality* or *being*. Jesus was fully God and fully Man. *Nature* refers to those qualities of both deity and humanity that Jesus possesses as the God-Man.

<sup>14</sup> Hebrews 4:15; 2Corinthians 5:21

<sup>15</sup> Propitiation – sacrifice of appeasement or a sacrifice that turns away wrath and makes atonement for sin

<sup>16</sup> Romans 3:21-26

<sup>17</sup> Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21

<sup>18</sup> Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5

<sup>19</sup> 1Corinthians 15:1-11

<sup>20</sup> Acts 1:3-9; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 10:12-14



The Holy Spirit has also existed eternally as God along with the Father and the Son. He is a person, not merely a power that emanates from God.<sup>21</sup> The Holy Spirit has a present day ministry of convicting the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment.<sup>22</sup> The Holy Spirit works in the hearts of the lost in the process of conversion, drawing them to Christ.<sup>23</sup> The Holy Spirit indwells the believer when they believe the gospel<sup>24</sup> and also gives each believer a gift that can be used for the edification<sup>25</sup> of the body of Christ.<sup>26</sup>

## Article II: CONCERNING SCRIPTURE

Scripture – by which we mean the 66 canonical books found in the Protestant Bible<sup>27</sup> – is the inerrant and authoritative word of God, being without any error in the original manuscripts and faithfully preserved for us today. It is profitable for teaching, correcting, rebuking and training in righteousness so the man of God may be competent for every good work.<sup>28</sup> The Scriptures are *theopneustos*, God-breathed, being revelation from God with the same truth and authority as words from his mouth.<sup>29</sup>

God moved men by the Holy Spirit to write what He desired while preserving their freedom of style and expression.<sup>30</sup> So while the content of Scripture is from God, the style and personality of the human authors remains evident. The divine unity of Scripture is displayed in the harmony of doctrine throughout the 66 books of the Bible, which were written over more than 1,500 years by as many as 40 different authors. No other holy book exhibits the consistency of thought, credible transmission of the text, and transforming influence through the centuries like the Bible.

Scripture, as God's word, is the ultimate and only infallible source of authority for Christians concerning faith and practice.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Note the personal pronouns used of the Holy Spirit in John 16:7-15

<sup>22</sup> John 16:7-11

<sup>23</sup> John 6:44-45; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14

<sup>24</sup> Ephesians 1:13-14

<sup>25</sup> Edification – Building up, i.e. to develop, grow, and make stronger

<sup>26</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:7

<sup>27</sup> In the Old Testament: The Books of Moses – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; The Books of History – Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther; The Books of Wisdom – Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs (or Solomon); and The Books of Prophecy – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. In the New Testament: The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; The History of the Early Church – Acts; The Epistles – Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude; and The Final Prophecy – The Revelation.

<sup>28</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16-17

<sup>29</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:37

<sup>30</sup> 2 Peter 1:21; Exodus 17:14; Jeremiah 30:2; Revelation 1:11

<sup>31</sup> Deuteronomy 4:2; 29:29; Proverbs 30:5-6; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:18-19

### **Article III: CONCERNING CREATION**

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.<sup>32</sup> Everything that exists contingently<sup>33</sup> came into existence out of nothing by the power and will of the Son of God.<sup>34</sup> God made the universe with remarkable precision and beauty. The creation in its original state was perfectly good and without defect.<sup>35</sup> God made all living creatures “according to their kind,” which excludes macro-evolution or common descent.<sup>36</sup> God created human beings, male and female, in His image, thereby setting humanity apart from all other living creatures.<sup>37</sup> Human beings are more like God in their nature than any other created thing.<sup>38</sup>

### **Article IV: CONCERNING SIN**

The entire human race died spiritually in Adam and experience physical death because of his rebellion.<sup>39</sup> Every person is affected by the curse of sin and also personally sins against God, just as Adam did.<sup>40</sup> Sin separates humanity from the relationship with God we were created to enjoy.<sup>41</sup> Every person is, by nature, in sinful rebellion against God and in need of redemption and forgiveness of sin.<sup>42</sup> A person cannot be put back into right standing with God by obedience to the law, sincere intention, or any exercise of moral decency.<sup>43</sup> The human condition requires atonement by means of a perfect, sinless substitute, which no one, apart from Christ, is able to offer or accomplish.<sup>44</sup>

### **Article V: CONCERNING SALVATION**

Since human beings are unable to save themselves or alter their condemned state before God’s holy and righteous wrath, our only hope is in God graciously taking the initiative to redeem and rescue us in Christ.<sup>45</sup> Salvation is a free gift provided on the basis of Christ’s atoning death and resurrection.<sup>46</sup> Jesus is the only Savior and Mediator between God and humanity, and faith in

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<sup>32</sup> Genesis 1:1

<sup>33</sup> Contingent entities are those that depend on someone or something else for their existence. Necessary entities are self-existent; their existence does not depend on anyone or anything else. The Triune God is the only necessary entity. Everything else, including the universe, is a contingent entity.

<sup>34</sup> John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17

<sup>35</sup> Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; Ecclesiastes 7:29

<sup>36</sup> *Macro-evolution* refers to the Darwinian theory of evolution, by which advanced life-forms evolve from more primitive life-forms. This is distinct from micro-evolution which refers to observable changes within the same species. *Common Descent* refers to Darwin’s theory that all living creatures originated from a common ancestor.

<sup>37</sup> Genesis 1:26-27

<sup>38</sup> Genesis 1:28; Leviticus 11:45; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18

<sup>39</sup> Romans 5:12, 15, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:22

<sup>40</sup> Romans 3:9-19, 23; 5:18-19

<sup>41</sup> Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 Peter 3:12

<sup>42</sup> Ephesians 2:1-3

<sup>43</sup> Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:20; 4:1-4

<sup>44</sup> Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:21-25

<sup>45</sup> Ephesians 2:1-7; 1 Peter 2:21-25

<sup>46</sup> John 3:16; Romans 3:21-26; 6:23

Him is the exclusive means of salvation.<sup>47</sup> The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, who has always shared the existence and essence of God, at a point in time took on a human nature and became incarnate according to God's eternal plan.<sup>48</sup> Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and perfectly obeyed the Law, fulfilling all of its expectations and requirements.<sup>49</sup> The Lord Jesus died on the cross as a sinless, obedient substitute on behalf of sinners and for their sins.<sup>50</sup> A person's sins are forgiven and the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed<sup>51</sup> to him when he receives and rests in the work of Christ by faith alone.<sup>52</sup> Good works, moral decency, and religious piety are unable to accomplish or contribute to justification before God. Believers are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Good works of obedience to God and the pursuit of holiness are, however, the evidence of justification and the necessary and inevitable result of God's grace in believers' lives.<sup>53</sup>

## **Article VI: CONCERNING THE CHURCH**

The New Testament speaks of the Church in primarily two different ways. The first is as the church universal, the Body of Christ consisting of all the saved of all the earth of all time.<sup>54</sup> This invisible gathering includes believers everywhere and from every generation who are redeemed by the blood of Christ.<sup>55</sup> The universal church is not to be confused with denominations or sectarian creeds but transcends such divisions insofar as those who are a part have placed their trust in Christ alone for salvation and not in religious systems or idols.<sup>56</sup>

The New Testament also speaks of local churches, groups of Christians in different geographic areas who gather weekly for fellowship in the work and worship of God.<sup>57</sup> These Christians have a recognizable membership, are led by elders, practice corporate worship and discipleship, and are accountable to one another and to their leaders.<sup>58</sup> The division of local churches due to differences in doctrine and practice is regrettable, and Christians should pray that such divisions may be healed by repentance and reconciliation. But ultimately those who have a right view of God and a right view of the gospel are brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of their differences on secondary or tertiary issues.

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<sup>47</sup> John 14:6; Romans 3:28; 1 Timothy 2:3-6

<sup>48</sup> John 1:1-3, 14; Ephesians 3:11; Philippians 2:5-11; see Article I

<sup>49</sup> Matthew 5:17-20; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15

<sup>50</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Galatians 3:13-14

<sup>51</sup> *Imputed* as opposed to *infused*. Righteousness is credited to the believer through faith, but faith does not make the believer personally righteous. Our righteousness is in Christ and belongs to Him.

<sup>52</sup> John 5:24; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:3-7

<sup>53</sup> Romans 6:1-23; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-14; 3:8

<sup>54</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Hebrews 12:22-24

<sup>55</sup> Hebrews 9:15; 11:1-40

<sup>56</sup> Mark 9:38-41

<sup>57</sup> Acts 9:31; Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Galatians 1:2

<sup>58</sup> Acts 2:42; 14:21-23; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-16; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4

## Article VII: CONCERNING BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

God appointed two sacraments<sup>59</sup> or ordinances to be observed by the Church until the Lord’s return. Baptism is the administration of water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as a means of signifying entrance to the covenant community, the Church, and as a sign of forgiveness, purification, union with Christ, and salvation.<sup>60</sup> The Lord’s Supper is the breaking of bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine after it has been consecrated by prayer in remembrance of Christ.<sup>61</sup> Since baptism signifies identification with and entrance to Christ, it should be received prior to observance of the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper is to be observed with seriousness, prayer, and self-examination, in remembrance of Christ, until He comes again.<sup>62</sup>

## Article VIII: CONCERNING THE FAMILY

The family is a divine institution foundational to human society and is defined and regulated by God’s revelation in Scripture. Marriage consists of one man and one woman joined as husband and wife in covenant relationship by and with God.<sup>63</sup> Sexual intimacy is confined to the marriage relationship and is provided for human procreation, protection, and pleasure.<sup>64</sup> Though divorce may be unavoidable due to the persistent sin of one or both partners, God’s original intention is for one man and one woman to remain joined in marriage for life.<sup>65</sup>

The Bible assigns different but complementary roles to men and women in the home and church, though both men and women bear the image of God, are of equal worth, and are co-equal heirs in Christ.<sup>66</sup> Husbands are called to servant leadership, loving and guiding their wives and children with the sacrificial love and self-denial of Christ.<sup>67</sup> Wives are to graciously submit to their husband’s leadership, honoring his efforts to lead her in the same way the Church respectfully submits to Christ.<sup>68</sup>

Children are a blessing from God from the moment of conception.<sup>69</sup> Parents are responsible to provide for, protect, and lovingly nurture their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.<sup>70</sup> Children are to obey their parents in the Lord and to honor them throughout their lives.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *Sacrament* is not to be confused with the Roman Catholic rites that are believed to function *ex opera operato* (from the work worked). Sacraments are merely a “visible word” (Augustine) or signs and seals of the promises made by God in the gospel. They do not have any saving power in themselves.

<sup>60</sup> Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-41; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:11-12; 1 Peter 3:21

<sup>61</sup> Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

<sup>62</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

<sup>63</sup> Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:4-6

<sup>64</sup> Genesis 1:28; Proverbs 5:15-20; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Hebrews 13:4

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 19:3-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-17, 39

<sup>66</sup> Genesis 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 14:34-36; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:33; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 1 Peter 3:1-7

<sup>67</sup> Ephesians 5:25-31; Colossians 3:19

<sup>68</sup> Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18

<sup>69</sup> Psalm 127; 139:13-16

<sup>70</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21

## **Article IX: CONCERNING THE LAST THINGS**

Though the opinions and convictions of Christians regarding the end times widely vary, the Lord will bring about the consummation of all things in His own time and in His own way.<sup>72</sup> The Lord Jesus will return, according to His promise, and the saints, both those living at the time of His return and those who have already died, will be with Christ for eternity.<sup>73</sup> All of the dead will be raised and judged.<sup>74</sup> Those who have done good will be rewarded by the Lord.<sup>75</sup> Those who have done evil will be punished by Him. The Lord Jesus will come “in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel.”<sup>76</sup> The present heavens and earth will be judged with fire, and the Lord will redeem creation from the curse of sin.<sup>77</sup> The wicked will be cast into Hell, a place of everlasting punishment, which is the Second Death.<sup>78</sup> The righteous will be given glorified bodies and will dwell with their Lord in Heaven forever.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, all who have such hope should purify themselves in anticipation of the Day of the Lord.<sup>80</sup>

## **Article X: THE ANCIENT CREEDS**

Recognizing the ancient church’s commitment to articulating and defending the historic, orthodox Christian faith against false teaching, we also affirm the four ancient creeds: the Apostles’, Nicene, Athanasian, and Chalcedonian Creeds. These are faithful and biblical confessions, particularly in clarifying the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation of Christ.

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<sup>71</sup> Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20

<sup>72</sup> Acts 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10

<sup>73</sup> John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 16:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

<sup>74</sup> John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15

<sup>75</sup> Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-13

<sup>76</sup> 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

<sup>77</sup> Romans 8:19-22; 2 Peter 3:7-10

<sup>78</sup> Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:42-48; Revelation 14:9-12; 20:14-15

<sup>79</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Revelation 22:1-5

<sup>80</sup> 2 Peter 3:11-14; 1 John 3:3

# Reformation Bible Church: Foundations 101

## Discipleship and the Local Church

### ATTENTION

- 1) Many believers need to have a paradigm shift in how we think of *discipleship* and *church*.
- 2) What is a disciple? What is discipleship? How does it relate to “being a Christian?”
- 3) The Bible uses different terms to describe Christians. What should we learn from this descriptor?

### 1. DISCIPLESHIP IS A SYNONYM FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING, NOT A SUB-CATEGORY

- a. The Great Commission is a call to *make disciples* of the nations. (**Matt. 28:18-20**)
- b. Jesus is both Savior *and* Lord. There is no salvation without corresponding submission. (**Matt. 7:21-27; Luke 6:46; Acts 2:36, 37-42; Rom. 6:16-18**)
- c. Discipleship is the outworking of repentance, faith, and salvation. (**Matt. 3:8; Eph. 2:8-10**)

### THOUGHT QUESTION:

Have I accepted a diminished definition of Christianity to excuse my failure to fully commit to Jesus?

### 2. DISCIPLESHIP IS A MANIFESTATION OF GOD’S WORK IN OUR LIVES

- a. Following Jesus is what redeemed and delivered people do. (**Mark 10:46-52; Php. 1:21**)
- b. Salvation is not belief and a decision; it is a transformative union with the risen Lord. (**2Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 2:20; Php. 3:7-14; cf. Acts 9:1-22**)
- c. God’s presence will be evident in my life, or He is not present. (**Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:22-23**)
- d. Even though Christians sin, are weak, and may even backslide, the presence of Christ in the regenerate heart (born again) will make a real difference in my life. (**1John 3:4-10**)

### THOUGHT QUESTION:

Am I yielding to God and allowing His word and power to change me, or am I resisting His will?

### 3. DISCIPLESHIP INCLUDES BUT IS MORE THAN JUST SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

- a. Discipline is closely related to the concept of discipleship. (**1Cor. 9:24-27; 1Tim. 4:7-8**)
- b. Spiritual disciplines are tools we use to gain spiritual strength; they are relationship-builders.
- c. These include prayer, worship, scripture reading and memorization, fasting, simplicity, etc.
- d. But ritual is not relationship; a spouse wants more than routine attention. (cf. **1Cor. 7:32-34**)
- e. God will not accept ritual as a substitute for relationship; He does not need what we have or do. (**Hos. 6:6; Ps. 50:7-15; Isa. 1:11-20**)

**THOUGHT QUESTION:**

What have I put in place of a real relationship with God?  
How do I view what I do as a Christian?

**4. THE (LOCAL) CHURCH INCLUDES CHRIST-FOLLOWERS AND THOSE WHO ARE NOT**

- a. Jesus dealt with three audiences in the Gospels: the Leaders (Hostile), the Crowd (Curious), and the Disciples (Seeking). (cf. Mark 4:1-34; 7:1-23; 8:1-21)
- b. The same three types of hearers are also in local churches. (cf. Ac. 5:1-11; 8:18-24; 3Jn. 9-10)
  - i. Everyone who enters or engages us from without will be in one of these three categories.
  - ii. It is a mistake to assume every church-goer is a disciple. (cf. Mt. 7:21-23; 13:47-50)

**THOUGHT QUESTION:**

Which type of hearer am I: Curious, Seeking, or Hostile?

**5. THE CHURCH IS A RELATIONSHIP FOR PROMOTING AND PRACTICING DISCIPLESHIP**

- a. The first to be evangelized (discipled) are those who think they have been. (1Co. 3:1-3)
  - i. The gospel defines our identity and mission; we must keep hearing and applying it.
  - ii. We must be continually reminded who we are, what Christ did, and what it means.
- b. The church should be seen as a relationship to promote and practice discipleship. (Ac. 2:42)
  - i. Corporate gatherings become vehicles for learning and sharing prayer and Scripture.
  - ii. These gatherings facilitate and are fueled by individual practice of the disciplines.
- c. We gather to encourage and help each other grow: Intentional Interaction. (Heb. 10:23-25)
  - i. Discipleship as a church family must include and transcend ritual and disciplines. (1Co. 9:24-27; Hos 6:6)
  - ii. Singing is not worship. Neither is prayer, reading, communion, or fasting. They are expressions.
  - iii. Worship happens when *I* worship with the heart, engaging God in reverence, thanks, and praise.

**THOUGHT QUESTION:**

How would this concept of the church change my view of and involvement in it?

**Am I a Christ-Follower or Just a Church-goer?**

# Reformation Bible Church

## Covenant Agreements

### RBC Eldership Covenant

*To be affirmed verbally and in writing by each elder when ordained to the office and annually in the presence of the entire congregation*

As a disciple of Christ, overseer of this congregation,  
and under-shepherd of Christ:

1. Do you promise to live with moral integrity in obedience to Christ to the best of your ability, in humble reliance on the Holy Spirit, with a continual attitude of repentance, and to seek accountability, counsel, and restoration from your fellow-elders as necessary and appropriate in your Christian life?
2. Do you promise to be involved in the teaching and discipleship ministries of this congregation according to your ability, opportunity, and giftedness, recognizing the solemn responsibility of teaching God's word and the greater accountability you have in the exercise of it?
3. Do you promise to be involved in visiting and ministering to the members of this congregation according to your ability and opportunity, being especially attentive to those with urgent spiritual and physical needs?
4. Do you promise to support, participate in, and abide by the discipline of this congregation when and where necessary, in consultation, prayer, and agreement with the rest of the elders, including counseling, rebuking, correcting, and even excommunicating the impenitent and disobedient?
5. Do you agree to the Church's General Statement of Faith and to disclose exceptions to it to the rest of the elders if and when your personal convictions change?



## RBC Membership Covenant

*To be verbally affirmed by the head of the household, husband and wife, or entire family when received into membership and annually with the entire congregation*

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope except for the sovereign mercy of God bestowed upon all who believe in Christ?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and only Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ, pursuing holiness with a continual attitude of repentance, and to seek accountability, counsel, and restoration from the elders as necessary and appropriate in your Christian life?
4. Do you promise to support the church in its worship and work to the best of your ability, by the sharing of your time, talents, and financial offerings, by your regular presence in the corporate gatherings, and by continual prayer?
5. Do you submit yourselves to the leadership and discipline of this church, agree to its General Statement of Faith, and promise to work for its purity and peace?

## RBC Trustee Covenant

*To be affirmed verbally and in writing by each trustee when appointed to the office and annually in the presence of the entire congregation*

As a disciple of Christ and trustee of this Church:

1. Do you promise to live with moral integrity in obedience to Christ to the best of your ability, in humble reliance on the Holy Spirit, with a continual attitude of repentance, and to seek accountability, counsel, and restoration from the elders as necessary and appropriate in your Christian life?
2. Do you promise to execute your responsibilities under the elders' oversight and at their direction, with integrity and seriousness, as a servant of God, and to faithfully perform your legal and delegated responsibilities on behalf of this congregation for its general welfare and continued operation?
3. Do you agree to the Church's General Statement of Faith and to disclose exceptions to it to the rest of the elders if and when your personal convictions change?

## RBC Diaconate Covenant

*To be affirmed verbally and in writing by each deacon when appointed to the office and annually in the presence of the entire congregation*

As a disciple of Christ and deacon in this Church:

1. Do you promise to live with moral integrity in obedience to Christ to the best of your ability, in humble reliance on the Holy Spirit, with a continual attitude of repentance, and to seek accountability, counsel, and restoration from the elders as necessary and appropriate in your Christian life?
2. Do you promise to execute your responsibilities under the elders' oversight and at their direction, with integrity and seriousness, as a servant of God, and to faithfully perform your assigned responsibilities on behalf of this congregation for its general welfare and continued growth in grace?
3. Do you agree to the Church's General Statement of Faith and to disclose exceptions to it to the rest of the elders if and when your personal convictions change?

## **Personal Testimony**

Please describe how you came to know Christ and the ways you have grown in your walk with the Lord. This does not have to be a lengthy or eloquent essay. A simple, single paragraph description of your spiritual history will suffice. This form and the video checklist must be turned in to the Church Office prior to your pre-membership interview.