

Reformation Bible Church

General Statement of Faith

(Revised February 2015)

Article I: CONCERNING GOD

There is one God.¹ The true God has simultaneously and eternally existed as three co-equal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.² This doctrine is known as the *Trinity*. All three persons (Father,³ Son,⁴ and Holy Spirit⁵) 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.⁶ They share the being of God, yet are individually distinct persons. God is omnipotent,⁷ omniscient,⁸ omnipresent,⁹ and immutable.¹⁰ He is good, just, holy, righteous, loving, sovereign, compassionate, and perfect in all His attributes.¹¹

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.¹² Jesus has two natures: a divine nature and a human nature.¹³ 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.¹⁴ He died on the cross as a propitiation¹⁵ for our sins.¹⁶ On the third day God raised Jesus from the dead.¹⁷ His resurrection was literal and physical in a glorified body, thus Jesus is the "firstborn from the dead."¹⁸ Jesus appeared after His resurrection to the apostles and other witnesses, including over 500 at one time.¹⁹ After forty days Jesus ascended into Heaven to the Father and is now at His right hand.²⁰

¹ Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5

² Matthew 28:19

³ Philippians 4:20

⁴ John 1:1-14

⁵ Acts 5:1-6

⁶ 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.

⁷ Omnipotent – All powerful

⁸ Omniscient – All knowing

⁹ Omnipresent – Ever present

¹⁰ Immutable – Unchanging

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

¹² John 17:5; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-11

¹³ *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.

¹⁴ Hebrews 4:15; 2Corinthians 5:21

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

¹⁶ Romans 3:21-26

¹⁷ Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21

¹⁸ Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5

¹⁹ 1Corinthians 15:1-11

²⁰ 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.²¹ The Holy Spirit has a present day ministry of convicting the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment.²² The Holy Spirit works in the hearts of the lost in the process of conversion, drawing them to Christ.²³ The Holy Spirit indwells the believer when they believe the gospel²⁴ and also gives each believer a gift that can be used for the edification²⁵ of the body of Christ.²⁶

Article II: CONCERNING SCRIPTURE

Scripture – by which we mean the 66 canonical books found in the Protestant Bible²⁷ – 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.²⁸ The Scriptures are *theopneustos*, God-breathed, being revelation from God with the same truth and authority as words from his mouth.²⁹

God moved men by the Holy Spirit to write what He desired while preserving their freedom of style and expression.³⁰ 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.³¹

Article III: CONCERNING CREATION

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.³² Everything that exists contingently³³ came into existence out of nothing by the power and will of the Son of God.³⁴ God made the universe with

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

²² John 16:7-11

²³ John 6:44-45; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14

²⁴ Ephesians 1:13-14

²⁵ Edification – Building up, i.e. to develop, grow, and make stronger

²⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:7

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ 2 Timothy 3:16-17

²⁹ 1 Corinthians 14:37

³⁰ 2 Peter 1:21; Exodus 17:14; Jeremiah 30:2; Revelation 1:11

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

³² Genesis 1:1

remarkable precision and beauty. The creation in its original state was perfectly good and without defect.³⁵ God made all living creatures “according to their kind,” which excludes macro-evolution or common descent.³⁶ God created human beings, male and female, in His image, thereby setting humanity apart from all other living creatures.³⁷ Human beings are more like God in their nature than any other created thing.³⁸

Article IV: CONCERNING SIN

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

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.⁴⁵ Salvation is a free gift provided on the basis of Christ’s atoning death and resurrection.⁴⁶ Jesus is the only Savior and Mediator between God and humanity, and faith in Him is the exclusive means of salvation.⁴⁷ 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.⁴⁸ Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and perfectly obeyed the Law, fulfilling all of its

³³ 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.

³⁴ John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17

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

³⁶ *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.

³⁷ Genesis 1:26-27

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

³⁹ Romans 5:12, 15, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:22

⁴⁰ Romans 3:9-19, 23; 5:18-19

⁴¹ Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 Peter 3:12

⁴² Ephesians 2:1-3

⁴³ Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:20; 4:1-4

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

⁴⁵ Ephesians 2:1-7; 1 Peter 2:21-25

⁴⁶ John 3:16; Romans 3:21-26; 6:23

⁴⁷ John 14:6; Romans 3:28; 1 Timothy 2:3-6

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

expectations and requirements.⁴⁹ The Lord Jesus died on the cross as a sinless, obedient substitute on behalf of sinners and for their sins.⁵⁰ A person's sins are forgiven and the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed⁵¹ to him when he receives and rests in the work of Christ by faith alone.⁵² 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.⁵³

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.⁵⁴ This invisible gathering includes believers everywhere and from every generation who are redeemed by the blood of Christ.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶

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.⁵⁷ 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.⁵⁸ 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.

Article VII: CONCERNING BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

God appointed two sacraments⁵⁹ 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,

⁴⁹ Matthew 5:17-20; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:15

⁵⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Galatians 3:13-14

⁵¹ *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.

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

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

⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Hebrews 12:22-24

⁵⁵ Hebrews 9:15; 11:1-40

⁵⁶ Mark 9:38-41

⁵⁷ Acts 9:31; Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Galatians 1:2

⁵⁸ 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

⁵⁹ *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.

union with Christ, and salvation.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹ 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.⁶²

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.⁶³ Sexual intimacy is confined to the marriage relationship and is provided for human procreation, protection, and pleasure.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵

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.⁶⁶ Husbands are called to servant leadership, loving and guiding their wives and children with the sacrificial love and self-denial of Christ.⁶⁷ 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.⁶⁸

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

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.⁷² 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.⁷³ All of the dead will be raised and judged.⁷⁴

⁶⁰ 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

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

⁶² 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

⁶³ Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:4-6

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

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

⁶⁶ 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

⁶⁷ Ephesians 5:25-31; Colossians 3:19

⁶⁸ Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18

⁶⁹ Psalm 127; 139:13-16

⁷⁰ 2 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21

⁷¹ Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20

⁷² Acts 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10

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

Those who have done good will be rewarded by the Lord.⁷⁵ 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.”⁷⁶ The present heavens and earth will be judged with fire, and the Lord will redeem creation from the curse of sin.⁷⁷ The wicked will be cast into Hell, a place of everlasting punishment, which is the Second Death.⁷⁸ The righteous will be given glorified bodies and will dwell with their Lord in Heaven forever.⁷⁹ Therefore, all who have such hope should purify themselves in anticipation of the Day of the Lord.⁸⁰

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.

⁷⁴ John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15

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

⁷⁶ 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

⁷⁷ Romans 8:19-22; 2 Peter 3:7-10

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

⁷⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Revelation 22:1-5

⁸⁰ 2 Peter 3:11-14; 1 John 3:3