



1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe that though men have written the 66 books of the Bible, the Spirit of God inspired them, so that every word in them is also God's Word. As a result, the Scriptures are fully authoritative and without error on the matters they treat. They are the only rule and standard by which we must determine and test all doctrines. The centre of the Scriptures is Jesus Christ, our Saviour. He is the key to the right understanding of the Scriptures, for no interpretation of the Scriptures dare contradict the central doctrine of justification by God's grace, through faith, without our keeping of God's Law, for Christ's sake.

We reject any suggestion that the writers of the Bible included limited views of the world and other errors, even in slight matters. We reject higher critical theories about the authorship of the books of Moses, three Isaiahs, an unhistorical Jonah, a late and fictitious writer of Daniel, and so on. We reject the so-called quest for the historical Jesus, which disregards much of what the Gospels say about Jesus.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES - GENESIS

We believe that Genesis is foundational to the understanding of the rest of Scripture. It tells us that God Himself created heaven and earth by His almighty Word, out of nothing, in six days of normal duration, of one evening and one morning each. It is foundational to marriage which is between one man and one woman. It tells us of Adam's sin and the consequences of it. Because of sin there is suffering in the world. Because of sin we need the only Saviour that there is, namely, the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. Genesis also tells us of the first promise of a Saviour, which is the first Gospel message in the Scriptures.

We believe that the Flood recorded at the time of Noah was a world-wide flood. It explains many of the geological formations in the world as it is today. God's judgement on those people who built the Tower of Babel resulted in different languages.

We reject concessions to the theory of evolution, which disregard the Biblical account of creation and the account of the flood at the time of Noah.

2. GOD

We believe that the three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are God and Lord; and that there are not three Gods or Lords, but one God and Lord. In this God we hope to have eternal life.

3. ORIGINAL SIN

We believe that, since the fall of Adam and Eve into sin, human beings have inherited sinful natures. As a result, sin has enslaved their minds, wills, words, and deeds, and they are unable of themselves to apply themselves to the grace of God. We reject the lessening of original sin that is apparent when people speak of faith as a decision to accept God's grace, and when people say that children do not need baptism.

called us through this message of the Gospel, and to become God's children and heirs. None of this was our own doing. It is in gratitude for this precious good news that we have done what we have done, even though it means some pain, and some abuse. We want to preserve this precious Gospel for ourselves and for our children. We are eager to tell others why we are what we are.

If someone is a wool grazier, there isn't much point in his feeding his sheep well if he neglects the dingo fences and blowfly strike and all sorts of diseases that sheep get. Rather, because he cares for his sheep and the income they bring, he looks after them. Similarly with us.

Because we treasure the precious Gospel and the dear fellow members of our congregations, we want to keep the Gospel pure and avoid the ways in which Satan attacks people with false doctrine and false practice. We want to be a missionary group of people, who make this Gospel known in all its clarity and sweetness, in our dear Saviour's name.

This is a summary statement of our faith.

We also have a larger edition with many Scripture references.

It is not the task of the church to direct the state to particular social, political, and economic measures. When the church does speak in a prophetic way to state officials, it ought to do so where God's commandments are being flouted. It should do so against legalised abortion and euthanasia, for example. When the church uses the Law of God as a restraint in this way, it warns state officials that they will incur the anger of God if they persist.

20. THE NEW LIFE, AND THE CHARISMATIC GIFTS

Jesus Christ Himself is our sanctification, as well as being our justification and redemption. The new life, which begins in Baptism, is not the chief goal of the Gospel. That is receiving God's gift of eternal life. However, Christians live the new life in Christ (sanctification in the narrow sense) by the power of the Gospel, and as response to it.

The three persons of the God-head give every Christian different charismatic gifts, in varying proportions, for the benefit of others. It is a mistake to concentrate on only some of these, like prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues. People should not refer to proclaiming the Gospel as modern prophecy, as it regularly included the prediction of future events.

Paul said that when people spoke in tongues that should occur in Christian assemblies only when someone could interpret, and that no more than two or three should do so. It is heretical to equate speaking in tongues with being baptised with the Holy Spirit, for, except in exceptional circumstances for His own purposes, God regularly baptises with the Holy Spirit in the water of Christian Baptism.

The real motive in our formation of the our congregations is that we are Christians because God, in grace and mercy, chose us sinful people, in eternity, to hear the good news, and to come to faith as the Holy Spirit

4. THE LAW OF GOD

All sections of the Bible that tell people what they should do and should not do, and that speak of God's anger and threats of punishment against human sin, are Law. Many laws in the Old Testament about observing days, feasts, and sacrifices no longer apply. Many of them pointed forward to the Gospel, and have been fulfilled by Jesus Christ. The chief purpose of the moral law is to show people that they are sinful, and to make them understand their sinfulness more. Because all people are sinful, the Law of God always condemns them (Christians too), but the Law does other things besides condemn. It has the positive value of restraining to some extent coarse outbursts of sin, and has a third function, of a rule or signpost, when it shows believers what things they should do to please God in thankful response to His grace.

5. SIN

Sin is the transgression of God's Law, in thoughts, words, and deeds. Though love to God and to other human beings is the summary of what the Law requires, we reject the suggestion that there is a law of love that can excuse the breaking of any of God's commandments. Since all sins deserve God's punishment in hell, there is little point in talking about small sins and great sins, mortal sins and venial sins.

6. THE GRACE OF GOD

God's grace, which brings us salvation, is His undeserved favour to sinful people. In grace, before He made the world, He chose particular people in Christ, and in time He called, and saved them. Though this is particular grace, the Scriptures also teach that God's grace is universal, for God sincerely wants to save all people, and does not want any to be lost. Conversion and preservation are due to God's grace in Christ alone. When people refuse to believe or fall away from the faith and God finally damns them, the fault is entirely theirs.

7. THE GOSPEL

By 'Gospel' in the strict sense we mean all portions of the Scriptures that speak of God's mercy, love, and grace to fallen sinners, and that show us what God has done for us in Jesus Christ to forgive and save them. We believe that it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the Law and the Gospel. The chief purpose of the Gospel is our forgiveness and salvation. The Holy Spirit works and motivates new lives and good works in believers through the Gospel and the Sacraments.

8. FAITH

Saving faith is reception of God's gift of forgiveness and life. All people, being sinful, are unable to believe in Jesus the Saviour; the Holy Spirit works this faith through the Gospel.

9. JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, who is of one substance with the Father, also became a complete human being. He is also of one substance with us in every respect, except for sin. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, becoming incarnate to save us. During His humble life on earth He did not, as man, always or fully use the qualities that He possessed as God the Son. We reject the view that during His life on earth God the Son never left heaven, and every other attempt to divide the person of Jesus Christ into two entities. He took the place of all sinners under the Law and fulfilled it perfectly as their Substitute. He also took the responsibility for the sin and guilt of the whole world upon Himself, and suffered the punishment that they deserved, so that now all people are redeemed and there is salvation for all. God has given the human nature of the one person Jesus Christ qualities that human nature does not otherwise have. His blood cleanses from sin; His body gives life; He has received the authority to raise the dead and execute judgment. God has put all things under His feet. He is present to His church on earth both as God and as man.

18. WOMEN AND THE PUBLIC MINISTRY

Though the Scriptures refer to prophetesses and to teaching by women, such functions were in private situations. The Scriptures forbid the teaching of men by women. They make a distinction between what may happen in the home and in Christian churches. They forbid individual speaking by women in Christian churches. Such speaking indicates a lack of submission to the men, and is shameful. This kind of silence is not a custom, as was the head-covering in New Testament times, but a command of the Lord. Therefore women should not read lessons in churches, assist in distributing the Lord's Supper in speaking roles, read sermons in Christian assemblies, or preach. Where women function as pastors, we refuse to hear them, or receive the Sacraments from them, so that we may not countenance their disobedience.

19. THE PROPER DISTINCTION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE

We acknowledge that Christians are members of two realms, the church and the state. Though people who govern state are sinful, it is God's ordinance that we should obey those in authority for conscience' sake, except when they command us to sin. The state's jurisdiction is over our bodies and material things, and reason and common sense determine the state laws. It is the function of state and other civic authorities to maintain law and order, to endeavour to provide and improve peace and security. Christians may with a good conscience serve in such positions of responsibility, and as magistrates, soldiers and police.

Christians are aware that often God's commands extend further than the laws of the state, to our thoughts and feelings. The church must preach God's Law, and its essential task is to apply God's remedy to diseased souls through the Gospel and the Sacraments.

Here we proclaim Christ's death, we look for His second coming, and we have especial oneness with each other as members of His one body, the church. Those who commune with us must not only confess their sin and believe in Jesus Christ, but also confess the Gospel in all its truth and purity.

15. THE AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS

Christ our High Priest has made all Christians royal priests. They have direct access to the throne of grace in prayer, and offer contrite hearts, thanks, praise, sanctified lives, and the sharing of their goods with those in need, as spiritual sacrifices. He has given all Christians the authority to announce and apply in His name the forgiveness that He has won. Those who hear this absolution should know that it is as valid and certain as if Christ spoke it Himself. All members of the spiritual priesthood have the right and duty to spread the Gospel, judge the teaching of their pastors, encourage one another, and teach children.

16. WORSHIP

In worship everything should be done in a proper and orderly way. Reverence for God and confidence in our dear Father for Jesus' sake should govern everything that we do in worship. In worship we should aim at whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, appealing, excellent, and deserving of praise. Emphasis on entertainment easily distracts people from God's meeting of their essential needs through the precious Gospel and the Sacraments.

17. THE PUBLIC MINISTRY

It is the Lord's will that Christians should gather in local congregations around the Gospel and the Sacraments. Christians have the right and duty to call men, to serve them publicly in the Gospel and the Sacraments, who are able to teach the sound doctrine of the Gospel, and able to correct those who oppose it.

10. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

We believe that, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God, in grace, has made people who were enemies His friends; has forgiven them their sins, and declared them righteous. Those whom God has justified still continue to sin daily, because of their evil nature, but God does not count their sins against them because of Christ's atonement, and they are personally justified when they believe and trust in Christ as their Saviour. They receive reconciliation, forgiveness, justification, and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ the Saviour, without their works or merits.

11. THE CHURCH

The one church of Jesus Christ is the whole number of the people of God of all times and places. In love we accept that those who say they believe do believe and are not hypocrites; yet only God, who sees into peoples' hearts, knows who truly believe. In this sense the church, the body of Christ, is the church invisible. However, the church invisible has visible marks, the pure teaching of the Gospel, and the right administration of the Sacraments. Wherever people preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, we assert that, according to God's promise, true believers are there.

Though the church of Jesus Christ has always been one, this unity is a matter of faith, not of sight. We should seek the unity of the church in the pure teaching of the Gospel and the right administration of the Sacraments. Changes to the Gospel rob it of its character as good news, and the Scriptures command us to anathematise those who teach another Gospel (which is not another). They tell us to avoid those who cause the divisions and the offences that are contrary to the doctrine that we have learned. We should retain and seek true unity with other Christians through full agreement in the teaching of the Gospel. Fellowship in

preaching, the Lord's Supper, worship, and prayer should rest on agreement in the one doctrine of the Gospel.

Such church fellowship is the essential thing, and should not be confused with organisational oneness. Public doctrine does not simply depend on written statements, but it is what pastors and people regularly preach, teach, and practise. We should not regard casual intrusions of error as affecting public doctrine when people err through weakness, and then withdraw what is wrong. We refuse to deny the truth of the Gospel by worshipping, communing, or doing church work with those who persistently depart from the truth of the Gospel.

We do not permit our pastors to take part in ecumenical services when the ministers of the other churches are not in doctrinal agreement with ours. We reject participation in the modern 'Ecumenical Movement'. We refuse involvement in such ecumenical bodies as the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches of Australia, the Council of Christian Churches of Aotearoa-New Zealand, Queensland Churches Together, and the Lutheran World Federation. In them people see themselves as achieving visible unity through compromise and failure to confess the full truth in words and in actions.

12. LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND SYNODS

Though the New Testament speaks both of local congregations, and the church in whole areas and provinces, the primary unit is the group of Christians that regularly gathers with Christ in His real presence in the Gospel and the Sacraments. Local congregations have the duty to teach those who receive baptism in their midst all that Christ has commanded, and a local congregation should be the one to apply the spiritual sanction of excommunication when one of its members does not repent of manifest sin. Synodical organisations are neither commanded nor forbidden. We assert that these local congregations should be fully autonomous in the

conduct of their affairs, and resist hierarchical control in the name of the freedom of the Gospel.

13. BAPTISM

We believe that Holy Baptism offers and conveys the same benefits as the Gospel. The Word of the Gospel added to the water makes Baptism what it is. In it all newcomers to the faith, children included, receive the forgiveness of sins, new spiritual life, eternal life, and incorporation into Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Though people receive the benefits of Baptism through faith, we believe that God in Baptism works faith. Except in several exceptional circumstances, God has regularly imparted the Holy Spirit with Baptism. The Holy Spirit is both the agent and the gift in Baptism. We therefore reject all attempts to speak of a Baptism of the Holy Spirit without water that people allege they normally receive at a time subsequent to their baptism with water.

14. THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that when we receive the bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper we receive Jesus' true body, which He gave for us, and His true blood, which He shed for us. The four writers who record His institution of this supper do not tell a dream or parable, or use other symbolic language, but record in plain words what happened. They record that Jesus said as He gave them the bread, "This is My body," and as He gave them the cup, "This is My blood of the New Testament. In addition, Paul says that the cup is the communion of Christ's blood, and the bread is the communion of Christ's body, and that those who receive this bread and this cup unworthily are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

We believe that in this Sacrament Christ's body and blood are present, not only in heaven, but with us here on earth, that we receive them not only with our hearts, but also with our mouths. The real presence of His body and blood remind us of His sacrificial death. Through them we receive forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.