

CONGREGATIONAL AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The purpose of the CONGREGATIONAL AFFIRMATION OF FAITH is to express what we believe a person must not deny (or, preferably, would affirm) so as not to call the genuineness of his faith into question. It is not meant to represent all that a Christian should believe, but the essential truths that a Christian must not deny.

A. WE BELIEVE GOD WROTE THE BIBLE WITHOUT ERROR THROUGH MEN. The Old and New Testaments, in their entirety, constitute the written Word of God and are without error in the original manuscripts. They were written by men, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are therefore fully authoritative in all matters for the follower of Christ.

B. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD EXISTS ETERNALLY IN TRINITY: FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT. There is one God, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, love, justice, goodness, and truth, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who desires that we should know Him intimately and live a life of fulfillment through the pursuit of His glory.

C. WE BELIEVE THAT THE ALL-GLORIOUS AND INFINITELY HAPPY TRIUNE GOD CREATED ALL THAT EXISTS: the heavenly places, the angelic hosts, the universe, the earth, every living thing, and crowned His creation with Adam and Eve, who were given authority to steward God's creation. God spoke everything into creation by the word of His power and declared all that He had made as good.

D. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS CREATED ALL HUMANS IN HIS IMAGE. HE HAS CREATED THEM UNIQUELY FEMALE AND MALE. All humans are created in God's image; therefore all human life is sacred. In creating humans as male and female, God communicated His image in harmonious interpersonal relationships, equality of personhood and importance and a distinction in role and authority.

E. WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SECOND PERSON OF THE TRINITY WHO BECAME A MAN, LIVED A SINLESS LIFE, DIED ON A CROSS, WAS BURIED, AND ROSE BODILY FROM THE GRAVE TO REDEEM SINFUL HUMANITY. He is True God of True God, begotten, not made. He became human, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and made His dwelling among us, living a full life without sin. His perfect life and death on the cross provide the only atonement that satisfies the righteous requirements of God for the sinner. The death of Jesus Christ fully and finally paid for sin, and was redemptive, substitutionary, and efficacious. The historic fact of Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead testifies powerfully to His deity, and is itself humanity's ultimate hope. Jesus Christ will make a personal and imminent return to the earth; this return is a sanctifying "hope" having vital bearing on the life of every Christian.

F. WE BELIEVE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SUPERNATURAL AGENT IN SALVATION, BAPTIZING ALL CHRISTIANS INTO THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH AT CONVERSION, INDWELLING AND SEALING THEM UNTIL THE DAY OF CHRIST'S RETURN. The Holy Spirit bears persuasive testimony to the realities of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the personal, divine third member of the Godhead. He convicts the world of sin and its consequences; He brings repentance and faith to the believer; He indwells the believer with the radical life of Jesus Christ; He gives gifts to every believer for mutual service within the body of Christ; He unites each believer in the Body of Christ and seals them in that relationship; He bears the fruit of Christian character in the lives of every believer; He guides, instructs, and empowers the believer for godly living and service. He is worshipped with the Father and the Son.

G. WE BELIEVE ALL HUMANS ARE SINFUL AND IN NEED OF SALVATION. SALVATION IS THE GIFT OF GOD BROUGHT TO HUMANS BY GRACE ALONE, AND RECEIVED BY PERSONAL FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. A TRUE CHRISTIAN WILL BE KEPT BY GOD'S POWER FOREVER. God has created every person in the image of God, but we have fallen into sin, and are therefore lost; only through the regeneration by the Holy Spirit can we obtain salvation and spiritual life. All humans are sinners and face the judgment of God. The shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and only those who place faith in Jesus Christ and enjoy a relationship with God on the basis of the work of Christ are delivered from the wrath of God, whose holy character justly requires that sin be punished. Those who receive Jesus Christ by faith are said by Holy Scripture to be justified, regenerated, redeemed, and adopted into the divine family as co-heirs with Christ of all the blessings of the Godhead. We proclaim that all persons must consciously repent of their sins and confess that Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord.

H. WE BELIEVE THAT THE CHURCH IS A SPIRITUAL ORGANISM MADE UP OF ALL BELIEVERS EVERYWHERE FOR ALL TIME. All Christians in all times and in all places have been united into a single body by an operation of God. This resultant union is called the Body of Christ, the Universal Church.

I. WE BELIEVE IN THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND RECOGNIZE BELIEVER'S BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER. Christ commanded that all Christians band together in assembly for instruction, worship, service, and fellowship. These assemblies are called local churches. Only those who are members of the Universal Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church. Baptism of believers by immersion and the Lord's Supper are the only two ordinances to be observed by the local church in the present age. These ordinances are not to be regarded as means of salvation.

J. WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS WILL RETURN TO EARTH TO JUDGE ALL PEOPLE AND TO RULE AND REIGN WITH HIS SAINTS FOREVER. All people will be resurrected to give account of their lives before God. The believer in Christ will be resurrected to everlasting blessedness and joy in the presence of God. The unbeliever will be resurrected to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

K. We hold these truths in humble conviction.