

Baptists on Mission Statement of Our Beliefs- We are a Christian missions organization that is an auxiliary to the Baptist State Convention of NC. The purpose of Baptists on Mission is to Glorify God by involving churches and Christians in meeting human needs in Jesus' name. At times, non-Christians/non-church members may also participate with us in certain ministries and projects. We welcome others to come and see that God gives new life to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We expect all volunteers (Christian and non-Christians) to act in a manner that supports and does not contradict, our stated beliefs outlines below.

At Baptists on Mission, all are welcome to attend, explore, and participate in taking steps of faith toward Christ. We recognize that doubts and questions about faith are a normal part of spiritual growth, and we do not claim to have all the answers. We do claim, however, that all the answers can be found in the person of Jesus.

Therefore we affirm the historic Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Our own statements of belief herein are not intended to be comprehensive of all aspects of faith and practice, but are a summary of and guide to our convictions. Our own statements of faith are always subject to the higher authority of Scripture.

I. Summary of What We Believe

As followers of Jesus Christ:

We believe God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that He is a being of unimaginably wonderful power, goodness, and love. (Psalm 118:1; Psalm 145:1-9; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

We believe the world exists because God created it, that it belongs to Him and therefore we should cherish and care for it. (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 24:1-2; Isaiah 40:25-26; 1 Corinthians 10:26)

We believe all human beings have dignity because they were created by God in His own image, and great worth because they are valued by God beyond our ability to measure. (Genesis 1:27, 31; Psalm 8:3-6; John 3:16; Romans 5:8)

We believe this world also has pain and suffering because human beings have fallen and sinned, and are estranged from God, from each other, from ourselves, and from creation. (Genesis 3:17; Romans 3:23; Colossians 1:21; Titus 3:3)

We believe God does not intend for sin and suffering to get the last word, but is at work to redeem and reconcile what He has made. (Isaiah 11:6-9; Colossians 1:21-23; Revelation 21:1-5)

We believe God has revealed the truth about Himself in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which are our unique and authoritative guides in faith and action. (Matthew 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

We believe God has expressed Himself uniquely in His Son Jesus, who lived, taught, died, and rose again for our sake. Jesus is our master and teacher and savior and friend, and now reigns forever with the Father and the Holy Spirit. (John 14:6-7; Acts 2:32; 1 Corinthians. 15:3-4; Ephesians 2:13; Colossians1:15-20; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 2:5-6)

We believe the Spirit of God is now available so we can be closer to God than the air we breathe. (John 14:26; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:26; Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 1:13-14)

We believe the Church is the community through which God wants to bring love, healing, and growth to the human race, to which He invites everyone who is willing to follow Jesus to join. (Matthew 18:18-20; John 1:12-13; Acts 1:8; Galatians 3:28; 1 Peter 2:9)

We live in hope because one day Jesus will return, love and justice will prevail, and God will set the world right. (Matthew 24:30-31; Luke 12:40; Romans 8:37-39; Revelation 21:1-5)

II. Essential Tenets of our Faith

a. The Triune God

We worship the one only living and true God who is revealed in the Bible and who is the source of all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness.

We confess the mystery of the Holy Trinity—that there is one God alone, infinite and eternal, Creator of all things, the greatest good, who is one in nature, yet who exists in a plurality of three distinct persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is the sovereign ruler of creation, working all things according to the counsel of his omnipotent and righteous will.

In sovereignty God has seen fit to accommodate free will among human beings whom God created as moral creatures. The exercise of free will by human beings has resulted in great social, cultural and cosmic good and terrible evil, disorder, and disobedience.

Nevertheless, God is in no way the author of evil or sin, but continues to govern creation in such a way as to cause all things to work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. God opposes all evil and will bring creation to a glorious consummation.

God—and God alone—is worthy of worship. We respond to God by consciously and intentionally seeking to declare, explore, celebrate, and submit to God's righteous and gracious kingship over all of creation and over every aspect of our individual and corporate life, and thereby "to glorify him and enjoy him forever." (Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.01)

(Genesis 1:1-2; Exodus 20:3-4; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 47:2; Isaiah 45:5; Matthew 28:19; Luke 1:35; John 14:26; Romans 1:22-23; 8:28; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:7-11; Jude 1:25; Revelation 4:11)

b. Jesus Christ and his Atoning Work

In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the eternal Son of God who was born of a virgin and became a real human being, fully God and fully human. He is truly the Word of God — that is, the perfect and culminating expression of God's mind and heart, of God's will and character — present in the intimate fellowship of the Holy Trinity from eternity and fully engaged with the Father in the work of creation and redemption.

Jesus Christ is God's only mediator between God and humankind and God's unique agent for the salvation of the world, accomplished through the death of Jesus on the cross. In his death Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for sins — "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). Jesus Christ alone is Lord of all and the only way of salvation.

Scripture also describes the death of Jesus as a ransom or redemption from slavery; payment of a debt; a shepherd's life given for his sheep; vicarious satisfaction of a legal penalty; victory over the powers of

evil; a sacrificial substitution (Christ's death for our death); an actual event through which a way is opened for human beings to be reconciled with a holy God; a way in which sins are covered, forgiven, and removed. The death of Jesus is the historic event through which God has given us "the forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation out of sheer grace solely for the sake of Christ's saving work". In contrast, those who persist in unbelief face an eternity apart from God in hell.

On the sole basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross, sinners who confess Jesus as Lord are reconciled to a holy God and are participants in the resurrection of Christ, set free to live for God in holiness and joy. Jesus is the perfect expression of what humanity was designed to be. Jesus is the supreme authority over every human authority, over the church, and over our individual moral choices. As Jesus said and we confirm: "I am the Way, The Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6).

The risen Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted to the place of honor beside God the Father. Jesus Christ the eternal Son, is now Lord of heaven and earth, advocating and interceding on behalf of the church.

As we eagerly and prayerfully anticipate that "he will come again to judge the living and the dead," and to establish God's righteous kingdom in fullness and perfection, we say, "Come Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20)

(Matthew 1:21-23; Mark 10:45; Luke 1:31-35, 13:22-30; John 1:1-3, 14-18; Romans 3:25, 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 1:23-25; 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Ephesians 1:18-23; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3, 7:25, 9:11-12; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2, 4:2-4)

c. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is the power of God that makes faith real in our lives. By the Spirit, people of faith cry "Abba" as God's adopted children. The Spirit awakens from spiritual death those whom God has chosen, convicts them of sin, comforts them with the hope of the Gospel, seals their faith, unites them with Christ and with the church, the Body of Christ. The Spirit teaches and leads believers in God's right ways and empowers them to love and serve God.

We believe that God the Holy Spirit fulfilled the prophecy of Joel by coming upon the believers at Pentecost, and that from then on the Holy Spirit is given to Christians upon conversion. God the Holy Spirit baptizes every Christian into the Body of Christ, empowers and gifts us all for ministry, and also produces the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Christians are born of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and sanctified by the Spirit. God the Holy Spirit teaches Christians, guiding us into all truth through the Bible which the Holy Spirit inspired. God the Holy Spirit testifies about and glorifies Jesus.

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the individual and collective life of believers in Jesus effects real transformation—a life of increasing holiness, righteousness, power, and love, as they are changed more and more into the image of Christ. The Spirit connects Christians to the life of Christ and releases in them the supernatural and saving power of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and glory.

(Psalm 139:7-10; John 14:26, 15:26; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 6:11; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 1:4-6, 13-14; 2:10; Philipians 2:12-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13)

d. The Authority of Scripture

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are God's uniquely revealed and written Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and are the church's first and final authority in all areas of faith and life for all people in every age.

The Bible speaks to us with the authority of God himself. We seek to understand, love, follow, obey, surrender, and submit to God's Word—both Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, and the Scriptures, the written Word of God, which bear true and faithful witness to Jesus Christ. Holy Scripture is the triune God's revealed Word, the church's only infallible rule of faith and life.

We believe the ongoing illuminating work of the Holy Spirit will always be consistent with Scripture. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

(Matthew 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12)

e. The Human Condition

God created human beings good and in God's own image. Humans were created to know, love, and obey God, and to be righteous stewards of creation. However, instead of acknowledging, worshiping, and obeying God, we rebel and bring sin and death upon ourselves and all creation. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

No human remedy can repair the radical brokenness and corruption sin has wrought upon humanity. Human beings are in bondage to sin and subject to God's holy judgment, which results in eternal separation from God. Without God's intervening grace and salvation, we are lost and condemned. Just as Satan tempted Jesus in the desert; Satan still schemes today to tempt people to live this life and eternity without God.

But, thanks be to God: "In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3)

(Genesis 1:26-27; Psalms 51:5, 143:2; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 4:1; 15:19-20, 25:41-46; Romans 3:10-23, 6:23, 7:18-23, 8:7; Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; 1 Peter 1:3; 5:8-9)

f. Salvation by Grace Through Faith

Salvation is God's gracious work through Jesus Christ to reclaim humankind and all creation from sin and its consequences. Salvation is a gift of God's grace received by faith. The righteousness of Christ is accredited to those who believe in him, resulting in their right standing before God.

Salvation does not merely mean an escape from an eternity in hell. As followers of Jesus Christ, he now lives in us, and his Spirit leads us into the truth and brings forth fruit in our lives.

Faith is the fruit and effect of the inner work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of human beings. Faith is (1) accepting the message of salvation as true and (2) trusting God to apply this salvation to us. Faith is certain knowledge and wholehearted trust that is created in us by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Integral to this faith is repentance, beginning with the recognition that life apart from God is futile. In repentance we turn away from sin and turn toward God, relying upon Christ alone for our reconciliation. Even once we have believed in Christ, repentance is an ongoing part of the process of sanctification—

God's act of grace whereby we live more and more to righteousness and less and less to sin. Growing in such Christ-likeness is not merely an ideal; it is truly possible as God's Spirit lives and works within us.

Our salvation and sanctification are based entirely on God's initiative and God's grace.

(Mark 10:45; John 3:16; 14:21-23; 16:13; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:22-26; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; 5:22-23; Ephesians 2:8-10; Colossians 1:27)

g. Life in the Covenant

God's covenants had different forms and details at different times in salvation history, but they reflected a single sovereign and gracious purpose to redeem, sanctify, and preserve a people who belonged to God.

The divine covenant was always initiated by God; it was sustained by God's faithfulness in spite of humankind's history of unfaithfulness; it was an expression of God's steadfast love; and it reached a culmination and fullness in the new covenant established and perfected by Jesus Christ.

Those who confess their sins and turn from them in repentance, putting their faith in Christ, are spiritually united with Christ and participate in the new covenant where there is salvation and redemption.

Jesus Christ is Lord of every area of a believer's life—our spiritual life and our physical life; our social life including marriage, politics, justice, and culture; our intellectual life; our work life and our recreational life; the use of our bodies, our possessions, our resources, and our money. We are to be stewards of all of these things to manifest and extend the kingdom of God in the world, and to bring glory to the name of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. We also affirm that Jesus, out of love for us and for our own good, calls us to holiness in all facets of life. This call is comprehensive in scope touching all aspects of the ways we love God, ourselves, and others. It also includes honoring the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman, the only appropriate sexual relationship. While our obedience in these things does not save us, when we turn to God in faith he transforms us, changes our hearts and sets us apart for his purposes.

As God's people, we are therefore called to turn from any practice which Scripture describes as sin, including gossip, slander, idolization of wealth, arrogance, sexual immorality, conceit, and mistreatment of others; and to live in ways that honor God. We uphold the responsibility of church officers and leaders in particular to "lead a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Ephesians 4:1), including fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness.

Believers become members of the covenant community called the church, and enjoy the covenant promises of eternal life and blessing. We have long embraced the fact that the Holy Spirit gives Spiritual gifts to all believers and every Christian is called to be a missionary.

In our covenant life together, our church celebrates two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The sacraments point to and remind us of the holy sacrifice of Christ for us. The Holy Spirit uses these

sacraments—the common signs of water and of bread and wine, combined with the promises in the gospel of eternal life and forgiveness through Christ—to convey grace, salvation, and the real presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, which are received in faith by the believing community in their worship together.

(Genesis 2:24; 6:18; 9:8-17; 17:1-8; Exodus 19:3-6; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Luke 22:20; Romans 8:29-30; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:12-13; Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 1 Timothy 3:2,12; Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 2:9-10)

h. The Church and its Mission

Jesus Christ, as the Lord of the church, calls the church into being, declares its mission, and equips it for its work. Worldwide, the church's mission is:

- To proclaim to all the world, in word and in action, the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- To demonstrate, tangibly yet imperfectly, the new reality God intends for humanity through its love for one another and the quality of its common life together—sharing in worship, community, nurture, compassion, redemptive justice, and practicing a deepened life of prayer and service under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- To participate in God's activity in the world. The church, which includes every disciple of Jesus Christ, is to commit itself fully to this mission, even at the risk of its own life, waiting for and hastening the Lord's return.

(Micah 6:8; Matthew 9:36-38, 28:18-20; Mark 12:30; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15; Colossians 1:28; 2 Peter 3:10-13)