

INSTRUMENT III

ARTICLES OF FAITH

SECTION 1 – STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed, and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to man and shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. The King James Version of the Bible shall be the official and only translation used by the Church (II Tim.3:16; II Pet.1:20-21)

B. Dispensationalism

We believe the Scriptures, when interpreted in their natural, literal sense, reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather, are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations...the age of Law, the Church, and the Kingdom...are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture (Gen. 1:28, I Cor. 9:17; II Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25, 27; Rev. 20:2-6).

C. The Godhead

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each co-eternal in Being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory and having the same attributes and perfections (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; II Cor 13:14; John 14:10, 26).

D. The Person and Work of Christ

1. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that he might reveal God and redeem sinful men (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; II Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8).
2. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a vicarious, representative, substitutionary sacrifice; and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:18-36; Rom.3:24-25; I Pet. 2:24; Eph. 1:7; I Pet. 1:3-5).
3. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Advocate, Representative, and Intercessor (Acts 1:9-10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; I Jn. 2:1-2).

E. The Person and Word of the Holy Spirit

1. We believe the Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in the regeneration of man, filling, indwelling and sealing the believer unto the day of redemption (Jn.16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12:12,14; II Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14).
2. We believe He is the divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (Ph. 1:17-18; 5:18; I John 2:20, 27).
3. We believe God is Sovereign and is the bestower of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, Pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry (Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12).
4. We believe the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. We believe speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the filling of the Holy Spirit and ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing (I Cor. 1:22; 13:8;14. Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins once and for all (Jn. 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; I Pet. 1:18-19).

H. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

1. We believe all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (Jn.6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38-39; I Cor. 1:4-8; I Pet. 1:4-5).
2. We believe it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

I. The Church

1. We believe the model of the New Testament Church is an independent, fundamental, indigenous, autonomous, local, visible congregation of regenerated, water-baptized believers, exhibiting historic Scriptural, Baptist distinctives, who are Divinely called out of the world and organized to assemble together in worship, fellowship, burden-sharing, world-wide evangelism and Church-planting. We believe the local Church to be the figurative Body and espoused Bride of Christ (I Cor.12:12-14; II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27).
2. We believe the planting, establishment and continuance of local Churches is a mandate clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11).
3. We believe in the autonomy of the local Church free of any external authority or control. The Scriptures are the sole authority for all faith and practice, and delegate

executive authority only to the local Church, its Pastor and deacons. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom 16:1, 4; I Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; I Pet. 5:1-4).

4. We recognize baptism in water by immersion only, following conversion, and the Lord's Supper as the only two Scriptural ordinances of the local Church, and that they are in no way sacramental (grace-giving, saving) in nature or practice (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:18; I Cor. 11:23-26).
 - a. Baptism by immersion is the only Scriptural requirement to membership in the local Church following conversion. Baptism is a willful act of obedience on the part of a professing believer.
 - b. The Lord's Supper is a recurring memorial observance for church members only, of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ with an emphasis on one's personal fellowship with Christ in view of and in anticipation of His promised return. The bread and cup are only symbolic of the flesh and blood of Christ.

J. Separation

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God. (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; II Cor. 6:14-7:1; II Tim. 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; II John 9:11)

K. The Second Advent of Christ

We believe in that 'blessed hope', the personal, imminent return of Christ, Who will rapture His Church out prior to the seven-year Tribulation Period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return, with His Saints to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the nation of Israel (Ps. 89:3-4; Daniel 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; I Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6).

L. The Eternal State

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6; 12-13).
2. We believe the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; I Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6)
3. We believe the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with souls and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment (Matt. 25:41-46; Mk. 9:43-48; Lk.16:19-26; II Thess.1:7-9; Jud.6-7; Rev. 20:11-15).

M. The Personality of Satan

We believe Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of man; and he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matthew 25:41; Rev 20:10).

N. Creation

We believe God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11).

O. Civil Government

We believe God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home; 2) the Church; and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the Church, and the state are equal and sovereign in the respective biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God (Rom 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; I Pet. 2:13-14).

P. Human Sexuality

We believe God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Gen. 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; I Cor. 5:1; 6:9; I Thess.4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).

Q. Divorce and Remarriage

We believe God intends marriage to last until one of the spouses die. We believe in troubled marriages, both partners should exhaust every avenue of reconciliation to preserve their union. We believe divorce is an allowable Scriptural option for the innocent mate, not a mandate, but only on Scriptural grounds (i.e., in cases of fornication, adultery, homosexuality, bisexuality, incest, bestiality, etc.). We believe an individual divorced on Scriptural grounds is free to remarry, but only in the Lord. Such divorced members may remarry in the Church at the discretion of the Pastor under such conditions he feels necessary and Scriptural to name. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the Church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of Pastor or deacon. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 5:32; 15:4; 19:3-12; Jn. 4:16-18; Rom. 7:1-4; I Cor. 7:10-15; I Tim. 3:2,12; Titus 1:6).

R. Abortion

We believe human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Lk. 1:44).

S. Missions

We believe God has given the Church a Great Commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:46-48; Jn. 20:21; Acts 1:8; II cor. 5:20).

T. Lawsuits Between Believers

We believe Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the Church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the Church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (I Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)

U. Giving

We believe every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local Church financially. We believe God has established the tithe as a basis for giving but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the Church, the relief of those members in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe or offering once the gift has been made (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 5:17-18 I Jn. 3:17).

SECTION 2 – AUTHORITY OF ARTICLES OF FAITH

The Articles of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however that the fore going Articles of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore is binding upon all members.