

FGBC Constitution: ARTICLE III

COVENANT AND STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section One. Covenant. The sovereign congregations which are members of this corporation are united in accepting the Holy Scriptures as the sole guide and authority in all matters of faith, doctrine and practice.

Section Two. Statement of Faith. The Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches has a corporate commitment to a basic body of beliefs founded on God's revealed truth. The Statement of Faith is the current expression of a never ending effort to clarify an understanding of the primary doctrines we accept.

It is the understanding of this Fellowship that, although individual Grace Brethren Churches remain distinct, autonomous legal entities, congregational church government relates alone to the incidental affairs of the local congregation and not to doctrinal practices or tenets which must be general or universal -- the same in all congregations. The basic doctrines of one congregation shall be the same as the basic doctrines in every other.

Accordingly, the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc., believing the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible to be the infallible rule of faith and of practice and feeling the responsibility to make known the divine message of the Bible, presents the following articles as a statement of those basic truths taught in the Bible which are common to our Christian faith and practice.

1. **THE BIBLE.** The Word of God, the sixty-six Books of the Old and New Testaments, verbally inspired in all parts, and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).
2. **THE ONE TRUE GOD.** Existing eternally as three persons -the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22; Matthew 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).
3. **THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.** His preexistence and deity (John 1:1-3), incarnation by virgin birth (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-23), sinless life (Heb. 4:15), substitutionary death (2 Cor. 5:21), bodily resurrection (Luke 24:36-43), ascension into heaven and present ministry (Heb. 4:14-16), and coming again (Acts 1:11).
4. **THE HOLY SPIRIT.** His personality (John 16:7-15), and deity (Acts 5:3-4), and His work in each believer: baptism and in-dwelling at the moment of regeneration (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9), and filling (Eph. 5:18) to empower for Christian life and service (Eph. 3:16; Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:22-23).
5. **MAN.** His direct creation in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28), his subsequent fall into sin resulting in spiritual death (Gen. 3:1-24; Rom. 5:12), and the necessity of the new birth for his salvation (John 3:3-5).
6. **SALVATION.** A complete and eternal salvation by God's grace alone received as the gift of God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
7. **THE CHURCH.** One true church, the body and the bride of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-32), composed of all true believers of the present age (1 Cor. 12:12-13); and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for world-wide gospel witness, each local church being autonomous but cooperating in fellowship and work (Eph. 4:11-16).
8. **CHRISTIAN LIFE.** A life of righteousness, good works and separation unto God from the evil ways of the world (Rom. 12:1-2), manifested by speaking the truth (James 5:12), maintaining the sanctity of the home (Eph. 5:22-6:4), settling differences between Christians in accordance with the Word of God (1 Cor. 6:1-8), not engaging in carnal strife but showing a Christ-like attitude toward all men (Rom. 12:17-21), exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), and maintaining a life of prayer (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6), including the privilege, when sick, of calling for the elders of the church to pray and to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:13-18).
9. **ORDINANCES.** The Christians should observe the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ which are (1)baptism of believers by triune immersion (Matt. 28:19) and (2)the threefold communion service, consisting of the washing of the saints' feet (John 13:1-17), the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20-22, 33-34; Jude 12), and the communion of the bread and the cup (1 Cor. 11:23-26).
10. **SATAN.** His existence and personality as the great adversary of God and His people (Rev. 12:1-10), his judgment (John 12:31), and final doom (Rev. 20:10).
11. **SECOND COMING.** The personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to remove His church from the earth (1 Thess. 4:16-17) before the tribulation (1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 3:10), and afterward to descend with the Church to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth (Rev. 19:11-20:6).
12. **FUTURE LIFE.** The conscious existence of the dead (Phil. 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31), the resurrection of the body (John 5:28-29), the judgment and reward of believers (Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10), the judgment and condemnation of unbelievers (Rev. 20:11-15), the eternal life of the saved (John 3:16), and the eternal punishment of the lost (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15).

Grace College and Seminary

Covenant of Faith

Statement of Doctrine

As stated under paragraph VI of the original Charter, it is one of the essential purposes of Grace "To carry on the educational activities of this corporation in complete harmony with the articles of the following 'Covenant of Faith,' which cannot be changed or diminished," and to which each member of the faculty and board of trustees is required to "subscribe annually in writing."

1. We believe in THE HOLY SCRIPTURES: accepting fully the writings of the Old and New Testaments as the very Word of God, verbally inspired in all parts and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God, altogether sufficient in themselves as our only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35, 16:13, 17:17, 2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).
2. We believe in THE ONE TRIUNE GOD: who is personal, spirit, and sovereign (Mark 12:29; John 4:24, 14:9; Ps. 135:6); perfect, infinite, and eternal in His being, holiness, love, wisdom, and power (Ps. 18:30, 114:7; Deut. 33:27); absolutely separate and above the world as its Creator; yet everywhere present in the world as the Upholder of all things (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 104); self-existent and self-revealing in three distinct Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 5:26; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14), each of whom is to be honored and worshiped equally as true God (John 5:23; Acts 5:3-4).
3. We believe in THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: who is the Second Person of the Triune God, the eternal Word and Only Begotten Son, our great God and Savior (John 1:1, 3:16; Titus 2:13; Rom. 9:5); that, without any essential change in His divine Person (Heb. 13:8), He became man by the miracle of Virgin Birth (John 1:14; Matt. 1:23), thus to continue forever as both true God Man, one Person with two natures (Col. 2:9, Rev. 22:16); that as Man, He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15; John 8:46); that as the perfect Lamb of God He gave himself in death upon the Cross bearing the sin of the world, and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our stead (Isa. 53:5-6; Matt. 20:28; Gal. 3:13; John 1:29); that He arose again from the dead and was glorified in the same body in which He suffered and died (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:25-28); that as our great High Priest He ascended into heaven, there to appear before the face of God as our Advocate and Intercessor (Heb. 4:14, 9:24; 1 John 2:1).
4. We believe in THE HOLY SPIRIT: who is the Third Person of the Triune God (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4), the divine Agent in nature, revelation, and redemption (Gen. 1:2; Ps 104:30; 1 Cor. 2:10; 2 Cor. 3:18); that He convicts the world of sin (John 16:8-11), regenerates those who believe (John 3:5), and indwells, baptizes, seals, empowers, guides, teaches, and sanctifies all who become children of God through Christ (1 Cor. 6:19, 12:13; Eph. 4:30, 3:16; Rom 8:14; John 14:26; 1 Cor. 6:11).
5. We believe in THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN: that he was the direct creation of God, spirit and soul and body, not in any sense the product of an animal ancestry, but made in the divine image (Gen. 1:26-29, 2:7 and 18-24; Matt. 19:4, 1 Thess. 5:23); that by personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, man became a sinful creature and the progenitor of a fallen race (Gen. 3:1-24, 5:3), who are universally sinful in both nature and practice (Eph. 2:3; Rom. 3:23, 5:12), alienated from the life and family of God (Eph. 4:18; John 8:42-44), under the righteous judgement and wrath of God (Rom. 1:18, 3:19), and have within themselves no possible means of recovery or salvation (Mark 7:21-23; Matt. 19:26; Rom 7:18).
6. We believe in SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH: that salvation is the free gift of God (Rom. 3:24, 6:23), neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or work of man (Titus 3:5; Rom. 4:4-5, 11:16), but received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 6:28-29; Acts 16:30-31; Eph. 2:8-9), in whom all true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God, deliverance and security from all condemnation, every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness, and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish (1 John 5:13; Rom. 3:22; Gal. 3:26; John 5:24; Eph. 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3; John 10:27-30); that this salvation includes the whole man, spirit and soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23-24); and apart from Christ there is no possible salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
7. We believe in RIGHTEOUS LIVING AND GOOD WORKS: not as the procuring causer of salvation in any

sense, but as its proper evidence and fruit (1 John 3:9-11, 4:19, 5:4; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:14; Matt. 7:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:10); and therefore as Christians we should keep the word of our Lord (John 14:23), seek the things which are above (Col. 3:1), walk as He walked (1 John 2:6), be careful to maintain good works (Titus 3:8), and especially accept as our solemn responsibility the duty and privilege of bearing the Gospel to a lost world in order that we may bear much fruit (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:19; John 14:16); remembering that a victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who learned they are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14), and who in gratitude for the infinite and undeserved mercies of God have presented themselves wholly to Him for His service (Rom. 12:1-2).

8. We believe in THE EXISTENCE OF SATAN: who originally was created a holy and perfect being, but through pride and unlawful ambition rebelled against God (Ezek. 18:13-17; Isa. 14:13-14; 1 Tim. 3:7); thus becoming utterly depraved in character (John 8:44), the great Adversary of God and His people (Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:10), leader of all other evil angels and spirits (Matt. 12:24-26, 25:41), the deceiver and god of this present world (Rev. 12:9; 2 Cor. 4:4); that his powers are supernaturally great, but strictly limited by the permissive will of God, who overrules all his wicked devices for good (Job 1:1-22; Luke 22:331-32); that he was defeated and judged at the Cross, and therefore his final doom is certain (John 12:31-32, 16:11; Rev. 20:10); that we are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God and by the Blood of the Lamb (Eph. 6:12-18; Rev. 12:11).

9. We believe in THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: that His return from Heaven will be personal, visible, and glorious—a Blessed Hope for which we should constantly watch and pray, the time being unrevealed but always imminent (Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Mark 13:33-37; Titus 2:11-13; Rev. 22:20); that when he comes He will first by resurrection and translation remove from the earth His waiting Church (1 Thess. 4:16-18), then pour out the righteous judgements of God upon the unbelieving world (Rev. 6:1-18:24), afterward descend with His church and establish His glorious and literal kingdom over all the nations for a thousand years (Rev. 19:1-20:6; Matt. 13:41-43), at the close of which He will rise and judge the unsaved dead (Rev. 20:11-15), and finally as the Son of David deliver up His Messianic Kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28), in order that as the Eternal Son He may reign forever with the Father in the New Heaven and the New Earth (Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 21:1-22:6).

10. We believe in FUTURE LIFE, BODILY RESURRECTION, AND ETERNAL JUDGMENT: that the spirits of the saved at death go immediately to be with Christ in heaven (Phil. 1:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:8), where they abide in joyful fellowship with Him until His second coming, when their bodies shall be raised from the grave and changed into the likeness of His own glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21; 2 Cor. 5:8), where they abide in joyful fellowship with Him until His second coming, when their bodies shall be raised from the grave and changed into the likeness of His own glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:35-58; 1 John 3:2), at which time their works shall be brought before the Judgment Seat of Christ for the determination of rewards, a judgment which may issue in the loss of rewards, but not in the loss of the soul (1 Cor. 3:8-15); that the spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until the final day of judgement (Luke 16:19-31; 2 Peter 2:9 ASV), at which time their bodies shall be raised from the grave, they shall be judged according to their works, and cast into the place of final and everlasting punishment ((Rev. 20:11-15, 21:8; Mark 9:43-48; Jude 13).

11. We believe in THE ONE TRUE CHURCH: the mystical Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus (Eph. 4:4; 5:25-32), which He began to build on the day of Pentecost (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47), and will complete at His second coming (1 Thess. 4:16-17); and into which all true believers of the present age are baptized immediately by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12-13 with 1:2); that all the various members of this one spiritual Body should assemble themselves together in local churches for worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching, united testimony; and the observance of the ordinances of our Lord (Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:41-47), among which are the following: the Baptism of believers by Triune Immersion (Matt. 28:20), the Laying on of Hands (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6), the Washing of the Saints' Feet (John 13:1-17), the Lord's Supper or Lovefeast (1 Cor. 11:17-22; Jude 12 ASV), the Communion of the Bread and Cup (1 Cor. 11:23-24), and Prayer and Anointing for the Sick (James 5:13-18).

12. We believe in SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD: that since our Christian citizenship is in heaven, as the children of God we should walk in separation from this present world, having no fellowship with its evil ways (Phil. 3:20 ASV; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:11), abstaining from all worldly amusements and unclean habits which defile mind and body (Luke 8:14; 1 Thess. 5:22; 1 Tim. 5:6; 1 Peter 2:11; Eph. 5:3-11, 18; Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 6:19-20), from the sin of divorce and remarriage as forbidden by our Lord (Matt. 19:9), from the swearing of any oath (James 5:12), from the use of unbelieving courts for the settlements of disputes between Christians (1 Cor. 6:1-9), and from taking personal vengeance in carnal strife (Rom. 12:18-21; 2 Cor. 10:3-4).

We understand that the above Articles do not by any means exhaust the content of our creed which is the whole Word of God, and they are not intended to set a limit beyond which faith cannot go within this Word; but we do

believe that in so far as these Articles extend they are a true presentation of the sound doctrine taught in the Scriptures, and therefore binding upon us as Christian believers.

The Message of the Brethren Ministry

The Message which Brethren Ministers accept as a divine entrustment to be heralded to a lost world, finds its sole source and authority in the Bible. This message is one of hope for a lost world and speaks with finality and authority. Fidelity to the apostolic injunction to preach the Word demands our utmost endeavor of mind and heart. We, the members of the National Ministerial Association of The Brethren Church, hold that the essential and constituent elements of our message shall continue to be the following declarations:

1. Our motto: The Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible.
2. The authority and integrity of the Holy Scriptures.

The ministry of The Brethren Church desires to bear testimony to the belief that God's supreme revelation has been made through Jesus Christ, a complete and authentic record of which revelation is the New Testament and, to the belief that the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, are the infallible record of the perfect, final and authoritative revelation of God's will, altogether sufficient in themselves as a rule of faith and practice.

3. We understand the basic content of our doctrinal preaching to be:
 - (1) The Pre-Existence. Deity and Incarnation by Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;
 - (2) The Fall of Man, his consequent spiritual death and utter sinfulness, and the necessity of his New Birth;
 - (3) The Vicarious Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ through the shedding of His own blood;
 - (4) The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in the body in which He suffered and died, and His subsequent glorification at the right hand of God;
 - (5) Justification by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, of which obedience to the will of God, and works of righteousness, are the evidence and result; the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the world, and the life everlasting of the just;
 - (6) The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, Who indwells the Christian and is his Comforter and Guide;
 - (7) The personal and visible return of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords, the glorious goal for which we are taught to watch, wait and pray;
 - (8) The Christian should "be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind"; should not engage in carnal strife, and should "swear not at all";
 - (9) The Christian should observe, as his duty and privilege, the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, among which are: (a) Baptism of Believers by Triune Immersion; (b) Confirmation; (c) the Lord's Supper; (d) the Communion of the Bread and Wine; (e) the Washing of the Saints' Feet; and (f) the Anointing of the Sick with Oil.