

MENNONITE CONFESSION OF FAITH

The work of rewriting and arranging the materials in this Confession of Faith was done by a committee chosen for this task (with the help of other brethren) at the Annual Biblical Discipleship and Fellowship Meeting held at Shedd, Oregon, August, 1962. The following year, March, 1963, the brethren on this committee presented their work at the second Biblical Discipleship and Fellowship Ministerial Meeting held at Sheldon, Wisconsin, requesting suggestions and criticisms. These were then incorporated into their work which was again presented the following year, March, 1964, at the third Biblical Discipleship and Fellowship Ministerial Meeting, held at Hartville, Ohio. At this meeting the work was discussed at length and adopted. The committee was requested to complete the work of editing and arrangement, and to proceed with publication of the same.

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A BRIEF HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF THE CHURCH

I. The Age of the Apostolic Church

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). With these words the original, apostolic church confessed her faith that Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour is the only Rock upon which the church builds her faith, and practice (Matthew 16:15-19).

The design of the church was ordained by God before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4; 3:9), revealed by Christ, and established and empowered by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

The time of the church's greatest purity and power was during the lifetime and ministry of the apostles and through them and their companions the New Testament was revealed by Christ and recorded by full verbal inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The apostolic church was threatened and persecuted by Jew and Gentile, religious authorities and governments, yet they fearlessly confessed that Christians must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29), that the church of Christ must be nonresistant and cannot participate in carnal warfare or civil government (Romans 12:4-21; 13:1-10), and that true Christians are called to lives of nonconformity to the world's wicked fashions and customs (Romans 12:1, 2; Acts 16:21; 1 Peter 4:1-4).

Despite slander and persecution, the faith of Jesus Christ spread throughout the Roman Empire and beyond by the time of the death of the last of the apostles. Wave after wave of persecution failed to destroy the faith of the church; rather, the blood of the martyrs seemed to be as seed from which more churches sprang. The Gospel was preached and lived in purity and power, and Christians never resorted to carnal weapons to defend their faith.

Gradually, however, some churches began to baptize people who were not converted. They compromised to get pagans within the church, hoping to reform them after they became members. Soon popular churches developed, baptizing even infants as well as

other unconverted people, and departed from apostolic standards of Gospel truth, purity, and power. Church leaders arose who knew not the apostles, and heeded not the New Testament, but ruled by compromise, politics, popularity, and ambition. Worldly church members entered the army, the government, the theaters, the bloody public games, and followed the fashions and lusts of the world. True Christian churches following the apostolic standards and discipline came to be in the minority.

II. The Dark Ages and the Non-Catholic Church

In the year 311, the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great, publicly professed tolerance of the Christian faith, and a few years later Christianity became the "official" religion of the government, the army, and the whole empire. From then on the empire professed to be "Christianized" (the Holy Roman Empire) and the church as a whole became "Romanized". Men began to speak of the Catholic or worldwide church.

This state-church system assembled ecumenical councils under orders from the emperor, and tried to enforce the Catholic doctrine and compromises on all churches. Soon the state churches imitated the Roman political system and established provincial religious governors called archbishops, and a central supreme ruler like the emperor at Rome, called the Pope.

These man-made officials declared that the nonresistant, nonconformist churches, which were still faithful to the apostolic Gospel and disciplines, were henceforth to be called heretics and killed. As Christ had prophesied: "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2b). As the apostle foretold: ". . . the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers (2 Timothy 4:3).

Great human reasoners arose, like Augustine, who argued that it is right for Christians to go to war and fight, right to baptize infants, right to torture and kill "heretics", right to obey only the Pope of Rome.

During these dark ages, when the Catholic church degenerated into superstition and murder and idolatry, there were many minority churches called by various names, who remained faithful to the Scriptures and maintained believer's baptism, the new birth experience, discipleship and disciplined churches, nonresistance and nonconformity. As they were hunted and killed in one area, they sprang up in other areas; they found their Gospel in the Word of God and considered the Roman and Greek churches to be fallen churches, part of the Babylonian harlot system of antichrist (Revelation 17:1-6).

III. The Age of the Reformers

The light of a new day began to dawn through the mists of the dark ages around the year 1500. All over Europe there was a rebirth of interest in studying the ancient writings, chief among them the Bible. As men began to study for themselves what the Scriptures actually taught, they became amazed at the simplicity and purity of the apostolic church and horrified at the complexity and corruption of the Catholic Church.

Reformers rose up to denounce the Catholic Church and cry out for a return to the Bible. Men like Martin Luther in Germany, Zwingli in Switzerland, Calvin in Geneva, Knox in Scotland, and many others, rose up to clamor for reformation of the Catholic Church.

Besides the great reformers who wanted merely at first to reform and purify the Catholic Church from within, there were radicals, such as Muentzer and Carlstadt, who did not aim for reform but agitated for bloody revolution to overthrow kings and rulers and confiscate the wealth of the rich to distribute to the poor.

The reformers rejected bloody revolution and called upon the princes and rulers who were favorable to the reformed doctrine, to crush the revolutions and defend the reformations against Catholic attackers. The reformers rejected the idolatry and superstition of the Catholic Church but accepted the state-church system of so-called Christian governments and Christian countries. They

broke with the Catholic Church, but the new reformed churches never broke with Constantine's and Augustine's teaching of a state-church system. They retained infant baptism; they defended killing and torture of "heretics"; they rejected the apostolic doctrine of discipleship, nonresistance, and nonconformity.

Because of this compromise of the reformers, there arose, early in the 1520's, groups of sincere Christians who rejected the idea of mere reformation of Catholicism, and aimed for nothing less than the restoration of the apostles' doctrine and fellowship—the restoration of the apostolic church disciplines of born-again members, discipleship for all, nonresistance, and nonconformity to the world. The leaders of the restoration movement were men like Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, George Blaurock, Dirk Philipps, and later Menno Simons.

The birthplace of the Mennonite Church was Zurich, Switzerland, and the year was 1525. The City Council of Zurich had made the decision to suppress the small group of believers led by Conrad Grebel, George Blaurock, and Felix Manz, because these men had refused to have their children baptized and had insisted that there be a thoroughgoing restoration of the doctrine of Fellowship of the apostolic church in accordance with Zwingli's original promise. However, Zwingli had betrayed his first vision and handed over to the secular government of the City Council the decision on how far the reformation should go.

A debate was arranged between Zwingli and his friends on the one hand, and the brethren opposed to infant baptism on the other hand. The City Council hoped that these believers could be won over by clever argument based on human reason, tradition, and threats of force, but the brethren were unshaken in their Scriptural belief that baptism belongs only to adult believers and that therefore the church must be composed only of born-again members. When the debate failed to move the brethren, the City Council passed cruel decrees forbidding them to meet, to teach, and to have any fellowship together.

Thus our forefathers were faced with tragic alternatives: they could surrender their vision of setting up a pure church on the pattern of the New Testament apostolic church and simply go along with the compromising state church of the reformers, or they could disobey the City Council and form their own church, withdrawing from the compromising reformers.

They chose to obey God rather than man, knowing that they would be subject to persecution and arrest. Meeting for prayer to seek God's guidance and grace on January 21, 1525, they were led to restore the apostolic pattern of the church by forming a brotherhood of believers on the basis of baptism and confession of faith. In that meeting they baptized one another, Conrad Grebel baptizing George Blaurock, and Blaurock baptizing the remainder of the group.

From that historic meeting they went forth with the joyful conviction that they should continue their fellowship, teaching and preaching their faith, summoning men everywhere to break with the world and worldly churches and become members of the Body of Christ. Thus the Mennonite church was founded in a prayer meeting, founded in holy disobedience to the attempt of the state to control the church, and founded in a deliberate withdrawal from the compromising organization of the popular reformers.

This resulted in their being opposed and persecuted by both the Catholic and Protestant reformers and brought untold suffering into the lives of those who stood for the truth of the Gospel.

By their enemies they were called Anabaptists (rebaptizers) because of their refusal to recognize infant baptism and their insistence on believer's baptism. Their movement was blessed of God and spread throughout Europe, being gladly received by the common people and those courageous leaders who desired to obey God and be true to the original pattern of the apostolic church.

In 1536, a priest in Holland, named Menno Simons (b. 1496, d. 1561) renounced Catholicism and united with the Anabaptists by believer's baptism. At this time there was much confusion among

the brethren in northern Europe because some revolutionaries had misled a minority of the Anabaptists into the violent Muensterite revolt. Menno Simons was powerfully used of the Lord to gather together and to establish the nonresistant, peaceful Anabaptists, organizing many congregations, and, by his many and skillful writings, defending the faith alike against the corrupt Catholicism, the compromising Protestantism of the reformers, and the violent fanaticism of the revolutionaries.

So influential was the work of this man of God, that those who followed his faith in Holland were called Mennonite. Gradually, later, this name was also given to the brethren in Switzerland, France, Germany, and elsewhere.

These Christian believers were hated and persecuted by both the Catholics and Protestant reformers—drowned, burned at the stake, beheaded, strangled, imprisoned, exiled. Their faith could not be exterminated, for they were the true inheritors and representatives of the apostolic faith, a suffering, cross-bearing church, but never a church that persecuted others, or took part in war, or followed the folly of the world or its fashions.

Thus it came about that the bright and shining faith of our Anabaptist forefathers has been carried on for more than 400 years by their descendants, today called Mennonites. During this long period of time, the bright vision of the restoration has at times dimmed, only to revive again as brightly as ever when men returned to the perfect pattern of the church of the New Testament.

IV. The Use of Confessions of Faith to Conserve The Standards of Faith and Practice

We are reminded by church history that many churches began by the desire of men of God to restore the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles. And yet we mark in alarm how most of the churches have tended to gradually drift away from apostolic standards and settle back down into the world out of which they were originally called. To the student of Mennonite history, similar trends are continually apparent among various Mennonite churches. If we

only compare ourselves among ourselves, and not by the standards of Scripture, if we only admonish in vague and general terms and do not lift up a standard in our churches by a clearly defined confession of faith, then we too will drift away from our moorings and be wrecked on the rocks of worldliness. The current of the world flows downhill, and always pushes against a high and holy standard.

For these reasons, the Anabaptist forefathers met to adopt confessions of faith. The Swiss Brethren, for example, had their origin on January 21, 1525, and by February 24, 1527 the various Anabaptist groups had subscribed to a common confession of faith—the Seven Articles of Schleitheim. But the Reformed church organized over April 13-15, 1525, and did not produce its confession of faith until 1534 in Basel, while the Lutheran church officially organized by the Diet of Spires on 1529 and produced their first confession of faith at Augsburg in 1530. Thus our Anabaptist forefathers were the first church organized with the first confession of faith, and in a very real sense the only New Testament church to come out of the Reformation period!

The Seven Articles of Schleitheim in 1527 dealt with seven Bible standards which the Catholic and Protestant churches were not upholding: 1. Baptism (adult believers rather than infants); 2. The Ban (strict church discipline to be maintained); 3. Communion (restricted to those of like faith and practice); 4. Separation (from the world and worldly churches); 5. Pastors in the Church (that they should be chosen by the church and supported according to need rather than be a professionalized and hireling clergy appointed by some centralized organization or institution); 6. Nonresistance (that true Christians may not take the sword or go to war or take part in politics as magistrates, etc.); 7. The Oath (that Christians may not swear oaths of any kind, but only solemnly affirm). These Seven Articles of the Schleitheim confession of faith served well as a high and holy standard round which the Anabaptist churches could rally for many years.

Later, other parts of the New Testament teaching which had been generally accepted began to be questioned and doubted and neglected, so more complete and detailed confessions of faith were produced by our forefathers. One of the most excellent of them is the Dortrecht Confession of Faith adopted April 21, 1632, by many Dutch Mennonites, and later by Alsatian, German, and American Mennonites.

It was never intended by those men who produced this confession that it would suffice for the rest of time. Therefore, from time to time others were adopted or supplements were made, to deal with the dangers facing each particular generation. For example, the regular session of the Mennonite General Conference held at Garden City, Missouri, August 24-26, 1921, adopted a supplementary statement of Christian Fundamentals in eighteen articles. This supplementary statement was adopted because it was felt that the church faced dangers from two new threats: Modernism was coming in and shaking the foundations of faith in the inspired Word of God, and liberalism was trying to tear down the conservative standards of nonconformity and nonresistance. But today, some 43 years later, the Mennonite churches are facing a new crisis. That new kind of Modernism, Neo-orthodoxy, is pushing into many Mennonite institutions and publications, and liberalism is in control of many church organizations and institutions to such an extent that the keeping of the ordinances, Christian separation in civil affairs and the twin doctrines of nonconformity and nonresistance are not just threatened, but have in part actually been given up by many members who are nonetheless continued in fellowship by their churches.

Obviously the time has come for another supplement to the confession of faith, to expose and contradict these errors, and defend the faith of our forefathers.

Because of these conditions, ordained men representing numerous conservative congregations fellow-shiping together, who seek to maintain and promote the Biblical, historic faith of the Mennonite

Church, assembled in the "Third Annual Biblical Discipleship and Fellowship Ministerial Meeting" at Hartville, Ohio, on March 23, 24, 25, 1964, and gave expression to the faith of the church in relation to these conditions in a statement of doctrine pertaining to conserving the fundamental standards of our Christian faith. This statement (which in this booklet follows the Dortrecht Confession) does not supersede the 18 Articles of the Dortrecht Confession which the church still confesses and teaches. This new statement of Christian Fundamentals is a revision of the articles of faith previously accepted at Garden City, Missouri, by General Conference in 1921. It gives expression to some of the doctrines and practices of the early church which at the time the former confessions were adopted were not a matter of difference, but have since that time been questioned or denied by many church organizations and institutions. For the sake of preserving the faith and teaching the Gospel as given by Christ and His apostles, the church has confessed in this formal manner her faith in and practice of the Gospel of salvation which is in Jesus Christ.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Almighty Father, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost. I believe in a holy general Christian Church, the communion of saints, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the flesh, and an eternal life.

SCHLEITHEIM CONFESSION
The Seven Articles of Schleithem,
Canton Schaffhausen, Switzerland, February 24, 1527
Adopted by a Swiss Brethren Conference
February 24, 1527

**Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of
God Concerning Seven Articles**

The articles which we discussed and on which we were of one mind are these:

- I. Baptism
- II. The Ban (Excommunication)
- III. Breaking of Bread
- IV. Separation from the Abomination
- V. Pastors in the Church
- VI. The Sword
- VII. The Oath

I. *Observe concerning baptism:* Baptism shall be given to all those who have learned repentance and amendment of life, and who believe truly that their sins are taken away by Christ, and to all those who walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and wish to be buried with Him in death, so that they may be resurrected with Him and to all those who with this significance request it (baptism) of us and demand it for themselves. This excludes all infant baptism, the highest and chief abomination of the Pope. In this you have the foundation and testimony of the apostles. Matthew 28, Mark 16, Acts 2, 8, 16, 19. This we wish to hold simply, yet firmly and with assurance.

II. *We are agreed as follows on the ban:* The ban shall be employed with all those who have given themselves to the Lord, to

walk in His commandments, and with all those who are baptized into the one body of Christ and who are called brethren or sisters, and yet who slip sometimes and fall into error and sin, being inadvertently overtaken. The same shall be admonished twice in secret and the third time openly disciplined or banned according to the command of Christ. Matthew 18. But this shall be done according to the regulation of the Spirit (Matthew 5) before the breaking of bread, so that we may break and eat one bread, with one mind and in one love, and may drink of one cup.

III. *In the breaking of bread we are of one mind and are agreed* (as follows): All those who wish to break one bread in remembrance of the broken body of Christ, and all who wish to drink of one drink as a remembrance of the shed blood of Christ, shall be united beforehand by baptism in one body of Christ which is the church of God and whose Head is Christ. For as Paul points out, we cannot at the same time drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of the devil. [1 Corinthians 10:21]. That is, all those who have fellowship with the dead works of darkness have no part in the light. Therefore all who follow the devil and the world have no part with those who are called unto God out of the world. All who lie in evil have no part in the good.

Therefore it is and must be (thus): Whoever has not been called by one God to one faith, to one baptism, to one Spirit, to one body, with all the children of God's church, cannot be made (into) one bread with them, as indeed must be done if one is truly to break bread according to the command of Christ.

IV. *We are agreed* (as follows) *on separation*: A separation shall be made from the evil and from the wickedness which the devil planted in the world; in this manner, simply that we shall not have fellowship with them (the wicked) and not run with them in the multitude of their abominations. This is the way it is: Since all who do not walk in the obedience of faith, and have not united

themselves with God so that they wish to do His will, are a great abomination before God, it is not possible for anything to grow or issue from them except abominable things. For truly all creatures are in but two classes, good and bad, believing and unbelieving, darkness and light, the world and those who (have come) out of the world, God's temple and idols, Christ and Belial; and none can have part with the other.

To us then the command of the Lord is clear when He calls upon us to be separate from the evil and thus He will be our God and we shall be His sons and daughters. [2 Corinthians 6:18]

He further admonishes us to withdraw from Babylon and earthly Egypt that we may not be partakers of the pain and suffering which the Lord will bring upon them. [2 Corinthians 6:17]

From this we should learn that everything which is not united with our God and Christ cannot be other than an abomination which we should shun and flee from. By this is meant all Catholic and Protestant works and church services, meetings and church attendance, drinking houses, civic affairs, the oaths sworn in unbelief and other things of that kind, which are highly regarded by the world and yet are carried on in flat contradiction to the command of God, in accordance with all the unrighteousness which is in the world. From all these things we shall be separated and have no part with them for they are nothing but an abomination, and they are the cause of our being hated before our Christ Jesus, Who has set us free from the slavery of the flesh and fitted us for the service of God through the Spirit Whom He has given us.

Therefore there will also unquestionably fall from us the unchristian, devilish weapons of force-such as sword, armor and the like, and all their use (either) for friends or against one's enemies-by virtue of the Word of Christ. Resist not (him that is) evil.

V. *We are agreed as follows on pastors in the church of God:*

The pastor in the church of God shall, as Paul has prescribed, be one who out-and-out has a good report of those who are outside the faith. This office shall be to read, to admonish and teach, to warn, to discipline, to ban in the church, to lead out in prayer for the advancement of all the brethren and sisters, to lift up the bread when it is to be broken, and in all things to see to the care of the body of Christ, in order that it may be built up and developed, and the mouth of the slanderer be stopped.

This one moreover shall be supported of the church which has chosen him, wherein he may be in need, so that he who serves the Gospel may live of the Gospel as the Lord has ordained. But, if a pastor should do something requiring discipline, he shall not be dealt with except (on the testimony of) two or three witnesses. And when they sin they shall be disciplined before all in order that the others may fear.

But should it happen that through the cross this pastor should be banished or led to the Lord (through martyrdom) another shall be ordained in his place in the same hour so that God's little flock and people may not be destroyed.

VI. *We are agreed as follows concerning the sword:* The sword is ordained of God outside the perfection of Christ. It punishes and puts to death the wicked, and guards and protects the good. In the Law the sword was ordained for the punishment of the wicked and for their death, and the same (sword) is (now) ordained to be used by the worldly magistrates.

In the perfection of Christ, however, only the ban is used for a warning and for the excommunication of the one who has sinned, without putting the flesh to death — simply the warning and the command to “sin no more”. [John 8:11]

Now it will be asked by many who do not recognize (this as) the will of Christ for us, whether a Christian may or should employ the sword against the wicked for the defense and protection of the

good, or for the sake of love.

Our reply is unanimously as follows: Christ teaches and commands us to learn of Him, for He is “meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” [Matthew 11:29] Also Christ says to the heathenish woman who was taken in adultery, not that one should stone her according to the Law of His Father (and yet He says, As the Father has commanded me, thus I do), but in mercy and forgiveness and warning, to “sin no more”. Such (an attitude) we also ought to take completely according to the rule of the ban.

Secondly, it will be asked concerning the sword, whether a Christian shall pass sentence in worldly disputes and strife such as unbelievers have with one another. This is our united answer. Christ did not wish to decide or pass judgment between brother and brother in the case of the inheritance, but refused to do so. Therefore we should do likewise.

Thirdly, it will be asked concerning the sword, shall one be a magistrate if one should be chosen as such? The answer is as follows: They wished to make Christ king, but He fled and did not view it as the arrangement of His Father. [John 6:15] Thus shall we do as He did, and follow Him, and so shall we not walk in darkness. For He Himself says, He who wishes “to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.” [Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34] Also, He Himself forbids the (employment of the force of the sword saying, The worldly princes lord it over them, etc., [Mark 10:42; Luke 22:25] but not so shall it be with you. Further, Paul says, “Whom [God] did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son,” [Romans 8:29] etc. Also Peter says, Christ has suffered (not ruled) and left us an example, that ye should follow His steps. [1 Peter 2:21].

Finally it will be observed that it is not appropriate for a Christian to serve as a magistrate because of these points: The government magistracy is according to the flesh, but the

Christian's is according to the Spirit; their houses and dwelling remain in this world, but the Christian's are in heaven; their citizenship is in this world, but the Christian's citizenship is in heaven; the weapons of their conflict and war are carnal and against the flesh only, but the Christian's weapons are spiritual, against the fortification of the devil. The worldlings are armed with steel and iron, but the Christians are armed with the armor of God, with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation and the Word of God. In brief, as in the mind of God toward us, so shall the mind of the members of the body of Christ be through Him in all things, that there may be no schism in the body through which it would be destroyed. For every kingdom divided against itself will be destroyed. Now since Christ is as it is written of Him, His members must also be the same, that His body may remain complete and united to its own advancement and upbuilding.

VII. *We are agreed as follows concerning the oath:* The oath is a confirmation among those who are quarrelling or making promises. In the Law it is commanded to be performed in God's Name, but only in truth, not falsely. Christ, who teaches the perfection of the Law, prohibits all swearing to His (followers), whether true or false — neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by our head — and that for the reason He shortly thereafter gives, For you are not able to make one hair white or black. So you see it is for this reason that all swearing is forbidden: we cannot fulfill that which we promise when we swear, for we cannot change (even) the very least thing on us.

Now there are some who do not give credence to the simple command of God, but object with this question: Well now, did not God swear to Abraham by Himself (since He was God) when He promised him that He would be with him and that He would be his God if he would keep His commandments, — why then should I not also swear when I promise to someone? Answer: Hear what the Scripture says: “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to

shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation.” [Hebrews 6:17, 18] Observe the meaning of this Scripture: What God forbids you to do, He has power to do, for everything is possible for Him. God swore an oath to Abraham, says the Scripture, so that He might show that His counsel is immutable. That is, no one can withstand nor thwart His will; therefore He can keep His oath. But we can do nothing, as is said above by Christ, to keep or perform (our oaths): therefore we shall not swear at all.

Then others further say as follows: It is not forbidden of God to swear in the New Testament, when it is actually commanded in the Old, but it is forbidden only to swear by heaven, earth, Jerusalem and our head. Answer: Hear the Scripture, He who swears by heaven swears by God’s throne and by Him who sitteth thereon. Observe: it is forbidden to swear by heaven, which is only the throne of God: how much more is it forbidden (to swear) by God Himself! Ye fools and blind, which is greater, the throne or Him that sitteth thereon?

Further some say, Because evil is now (in the world, and) because man needs God for (the establishment of) the truth, so did the apostles Peter and Paul also swear. Answer: Peter and Paul only testify of that which God promised to Abraham with the oath. They themselves promise nothing, as the example indicates clearly. Testifying and swearing are two different things. For when a person swears he is in the first place promising future things, as Christ was promised to Abraham. Whom we a long time afterwards received. But when a person bears testimony he is testifying about the present, whether it is good or evil, as Simeon spoke to Mary about Christ and testified, Behold this (child) is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against.

Christ also taught us along the same line when He said, “Let

your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” [Matthew 5:31] He says, Your speech or word shall be yea and nay. (However) when one does not wish to understand, he remains closed to the meaning. Christ is simply Yea and Nay, and all those who seek Him simply will understand His Word. Amen.

DORTRECHT CONFESSION

This Confession was written and adopted at a Peace Convention held at Dortrecht, on the 21st day of April, 1632.

A Declaration of the Chief Articles of Our General Christian Faith

Article I Concerning God and the Creation of All Things

Whereas it is declared that “without faith it is impossible to please him (God)” (Hebrews 11:6), and that “he that cometh to God must confess with the mouth, and believe with the heart, together with all the pious, according to the Holy Scriptures, that there is one eternal, almighty, and incomprehensible God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and none more and none other, before whom no God existed, neither will exist after Him. For from Him, through Him, and in Him are all things. To Him be blessing, praise, and honour, for ever and ever.

Genesis 17:1 — And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Deuteronomy 6:4 — Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.

Isaiah 46:9 — Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me.

1 John 5:7 — For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

In this one God, who “worketh all in all”, we believe. Him we confess as the Creator of all things, visible and invisible; who in six days created and prepared “heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein”. And we further believe, that this God still governs and preserves the same, together with all His works, through His wisdom, His might, and the “word of his power”.

Genesis 5:1, 2 — This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

Acts 14:15 — We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.

1 Corinthians 12:6 — And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Hebrews 1:3 — Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

When He had finished His works and, according to His good pleasure, had ordained and prepared each of them, so that they were right and good according to their nature, being, and quality, He created the first man, Adam, the father of all of us, gave him a body formed “of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”, so that he “became a living soul”, created by God “in his own image and likeness”, in “righteousness and true holiness” unto eternal life. He also gave him a place

above all other creatures and endowed him with many high and excellent gifts, put him into the garden of Eden, and gave him a commandment and an interdiction. Thereupon He took a rib from the side of Adam, made a woman out of it, brought her to him, and gave her to him as a helpmate and housewife. Consequently He has caused that from this first man, Adam, all men who “dwell on the face of the earth”, have been begotten and have descended.

Genesis 1:27 — So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Genesis 2:7, 15-17, 22 — And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Genesis 5:1 — This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him.

Acts 17:26 — And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.

Article II **The Fall of Man**

We believe and confess, that, according to the purport of the Holy Scriptures, our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not long remain in the happy state in which they were created; but did, after being seduced by the deceit and “subtilty” of the serpent, and envy

of the devil, violate the high command of God, and became disobedient to their Creator; through which disobedience “sin entered into the world, and death by sin”; so that “death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”, and thereby incurred the wrath of God and condemnation. For which reason our first parents were, by God, driven out of Paradise, to cultivate the earth, to maintain themselves thereon in sorrow, and to “eat their bread in the sweat of their face”, until they “returned to the ground, from which they were taken”. And that they did, therefore, through this one sin, so far apostatize, depart, and estrange themselves from God, that they could neither help themselves, nor be helped by any of their descendants, nor by angels, nor by any other creature in heaven or on earth, nor be redeemed, or reconciled to God; but would have had to be lost forever, had not God, who pities His creatures, in mercy, interposed in their behalf and made provision for their restoration.

Genesis 3:6, 23 — And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

Romans 5:12-19 — Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Psalms 47:8, 9 — God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

Revelation 5:3 — And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

John 3:16 — For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Article III

The Restoration of Man Through the Promise of the Coming of Christ

Regarding the restoration of our first parents and their descendants, we believe and confess: That God, notwithstanding their fall, transgression and sin, and although they had no power to help themselves, He was nevertheless not willing that they should be cast off entirely, or be eternally lost; but again called them unto Him, comforted them, and showed them that there were yet means with Him for their reconciliation; namely, the immaculate Lamb, the Son of God; who "was foreordained" to this purpose "before the foundation of the world", and who was promised to them and

all their descendants, while they (our first parents) were yet in paradise, for their comfort, redemption, and salvation; yea who was given to them thenceforward, through faith, as their own; after which all the pious patriarchs, to whom this promise was often renewed, longed and searched, beholding it through faith at a distance, and expecting its fulfillment — expecting that He (the Son of God) would, at His coming, again redeem and deliver the fallen race of man from their sins, their guilt, and unrighteousness.

John 1:29 — The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John 11:27 — She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

1 Peter 1:18, 19 — Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Genesis 3:15 — And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

1 John 2:1, 2 — My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 3:8 — He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning, For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Galatians 4:4, 5 — But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Article IV

The Advent of Christ Into This World, and the Reason of His Coming

We believe and confess further: That “when the fulness of the time was come”, after which all the pious patriarchs so ardently longed, and which they so anxiously awaited — the previously promised Messiah, Redeemer, and Saviour, proceeded from God, being sent by Him, and according to the prediction of the prophets and the testimony of the evangelists, came into the world, yea, into the flesh — so that the Word itself thus became flesh and man; and that He was conceived by the Virgin Mary (who was espoused to a man named Joseph, of the house of David), and that she bare Him as her firstborn son at Bethlehem, “wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger”.

John 4:25 — The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

John 16:28 — I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

1 Timothy 3:16 — And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Matthew 1:21 — And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

John 1:14 — And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Luke 2:7 — And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Further we believe and confess, that this is the same One,

“whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting”; who has “neither beginning of days, nor end of life”. Of whom it is testified, that He is “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last”. That this is also He — and none other — who was chosen, promised, and sent; who came into the world; and who is God’s only, first, and proper Son; who was before John the Baptist, before Abraham, before the world; yea, who was David’s Lord, and who was God of the “whole earth”, “the firstborn of every creature”; who was sent into the world, and Himself delivered up the body prepared for Him, as “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour”; yea, for the comfort, redemption, and salvation of all-of the human race.

Micah 5:2 — But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Hebrews 7:3 — Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Revelation 1:8 — I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Romans 8:32 — He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Colossians 1:15 — Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.

Hebrews 10:5 — Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.

But how, or in what manner, this worthy body was prepared, or how the Word became flesh, and He Himself man, we content

ourselves with the declaration which the worthy evangelists have given and left in their description thereof; according to which we confess with all the saints, that He is the Son of the living God, in whom exists all our hope, comfort, redemption, and salvation, and which we are to seek in no one else.

Luke 1:31-35 — And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

John 20:31 — But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Further, we believe and confess by authority of Scripture, that when He had ended His course, and “finished” the work for which He was sent into the world, He was by the providence of God, delivered into the hands of the unrighteous; suffered under the judge, Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, was buried, rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven, where He now sits on the right hand of the Majesty of God on high;” and from whence He will come again to judge the living and dead.

Luke 23:1, 52, 53 — And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

Luke 24:5, 6, 5 1 — And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

Thus we believe the Son of God died — “tasted death for every man”, shed His precious blood, and thereby bruised the head of the serpent, destroyed the works of the devil, “blotted out the handwriting”, and purchased redemption for the whole human race; and thus He became the source of eternal salvation to all who from the time of Adam to the end of the world, shall have believed in Him, and obeyed Him.

Genesis 3:15 — And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

1 John 3:8 — He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Colossians 2:14 — Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

Romans 5:18 — Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Article V
The Law of Christ, Which Is the Holy Gospel,
or the New Testament

We also believe and confess, that Christ, before His ascension, established and instituted His New Testament and left it to His followers, to be and remain an everlasting testament, which He confirmed and sealed with His own precious blood; and in which He has so highly commended to them, that neither men nor angels may change it, neither take therefrom nor add thereto.

Jeremiah 31:31 — Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.

Hebrews 9:15-17 — And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Matthew 26:28 — For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Galatians 1:8 — But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

1 Timothy 6:3-5 — If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, from such withdraw thyself.

Revelation 22:18, 19 — For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are

written in this book:

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Matthew 5:18 — For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Luke 21:33 — Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

And that He has caused this Testament (in which the whole counsel and will of His heavenly Father, so far as these are necessary to the salvation of man, are comprehended) to be proclaimed, in His name, through His beloved apostles, messengers, and servants (whom He chose and sent into all the world for this purpose) — to all nations, people, and tongues; these apostles preaching repentance and remission of sins; and that He, in said Testament, caused it to be declared, that all men without distinction, if they are obedient, through faith, follow, fulfill, and live according to the precepts of the same, are His children and rightful heirs; having thus excluded none from the precious inheritance of eternal salvation, except the unbelieving and disobedient, the headstrong and unconverted, who despise such salvation; and thus by their own actions incur guilt by refusing the same, and “judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life”.

Mark 16:15 — And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Luke 24:46, 47 — And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Romans 8:17 — And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we

may be also glorified together.

Acts 13:46 — Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Article VI

Repentance and Amendment of Life

We believe and confess that, as the “imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth”, and consequently inclined to all unrighteousness, sin and wickedness, that, therefore, the first doctrine of the precious New Testament of the Son of God is, Repentance and amendment of life.

Genesis 8:21 — And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

Mark 1:15 — And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Therefore those who have ears to hear, and hearts to understand, must “bring forth fruits meet for repentance”, amend their lives, believe the Gospel, “depart from evil and do good”, desist from wrong and cease from sinning, “put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”. For neither *Baptism, Sacrament, nor church fellowship*, nor any other external ceremony, can, without faith, the new birth, and a change or renewal of life, help, or qualify us, that we may please God, or receive any consolation or promise of salvation from Him.

Luke 3:8 — Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance,

and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Ephesians 4:22-24 — That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Colossians 3:9, 10 — Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

But, on the contrary, we must go to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith”, and believe in Jesus Christ, as the Scriptures speak and testify of Him. Through which faith we obtain the pardon of our sins, become sanctified, Justified, and children of God; yea, partakers of His mind, nature, and image, as we are born again of God through His incorruptible seed from above.

Hebrews 10:21, 22 — And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

John 7:38 — He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

2 Peter 1:4 — Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Article VII **Holy Baptism**

Regarding baptism, we confess that all penitent believers, who

through faith, the new birth, and renewal of the Holy Ghost, have become united with God, and whose names are recorded in heaven, must, on such Scriptural confession of their faith, and renewal of life, according to the command and doctrine of Christ, and the example and custom of the apostles, be baptized with water in the ever adorable name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to the burying of their sins, and thus to become incorporated into the communion of the saints; whereupon they must learn to observe all things whatever the Son of God taught, left on record, and commanded His followers to do.

Matthew 3:15 — And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Matthew 28:19, 20 — Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:15, 16 — And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Acts 2:38 — Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8:12 — But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:38 — And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

Acts 9:18 — And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was

baptized.

Acts 10:47 — Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

Acts 16:33 — And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

Romans 6:3, 4 — Know ye riot, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Colossians 2:12 — Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Article VIII **The Church of Christ**

We believe in and confess a visible church of God, consisting of those, who, as before remarked, have truly repented, and rightly believed; who are rightly baptized, united with God in heaven, and incorporated into the communion of the saints on earth.

1 Corinthians 12:13 — For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit,

And these, we confess, are a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation”, who have the testimony that they are the “bride” of Christ; yea, that they are children and heirs of eternal life — a “habitation of God through the Spirit”, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which “Christ himself is the chief cornerstone” — the foundation on which His church is built.

John 3:29 — He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him,

rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

Matthew 16:18 — And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Ephesians 2:19-21 — Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.

Titus 3:7 — That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

1 Peter 1:18, 19 — Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1 Peter 2:9 — But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

This church of the living God, which He has purchased and redeemed through His own precious blood, and with which He will be according to His own promise — for her comfort and protection, “alway, even unto the end of the world”; yea, will dwell and walk with her, and preserve her, that no “winds” nor “floods”, yea, not even the “gates of hell shall prevail against her” — may be known by her evangelical faith, doctrine, love, and godly conversation; also by her pure walk and practice, and her observance of the true ordinances of Christ, which He has strictly enjoined on His followers.

Matthew 7:25 — And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Matthew 16:18 — And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 28:20 — Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

2 Corinthians 6:16 — And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Article IX
The Office of Teachers and Ministers
(Male and Female) in the Church

Regarding the offices, and election of persons to the same, in the church, we believe and confess: That, as the church cannot exist and prosper, nor continue in its structure, without offices and regulations, that therefore the Lord Jesus has Himself (as a father in his house) appointed and prescribed His offices and ordinances, and has given commandments concerning the same, as to how each one should walk therein, give heed to his own work and calling, and do it as it becomes him to do.

Ephesians 4:11, 12 — And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

For He Himself, as the faithful and great Shepherd, and Bishop

of our souls, was sent into the world, not to wound, to break, or destroy the souls of men, but to heal them; to seek that which is lost, and to pull down the hedges and partition wall, so as to make out of many one; thus collecting out of Jews and heathen, yea, out of all nations, a church in His name; for which (so that no one might go astray or be lost) He laid down His own life, and thus procured for them salvation, made them free and redeemed them, to which blessing no one could help them, or be of service in obtaining it.

1 Peter 2:25 — For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Matthew 18: 11 — For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

Ephesians 2:13, 14 — But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.

John 10:9, 11, 15 — I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And that He, besides this, left His church before His departure, provided with faithful ministers, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, whom He had chosen by prayer and supplication through the Holy Spirit, so that they might govern the church, feed His flock, watch over, maintain, and care for the same; yea, do all things as He left them an example, taught them, and commanded them to do; and likewise to teach the church to observe all things whatsoever He commanded them.

Ephesians 4:11, 12 — And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Luke 6:12, 13 — And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.

Luke 10:1 — After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Matthew 28:20 — Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Also that the apostles were afterwards, as faithful followers of Christ and leaders of the church, diligent in these matters, namely, in choosing through prayer and supplication to God, brethren who were to provide all the churches in the cities and circuits, with bishops, pastors, and leaders, and to ordain to these offices such men as took “heed unto themselves and unto the doctrine”, and also unto the flock; who were sound in the faith, pious in their life and conversation, and who had — as well within the church as “without” — a good reputation and a good report; so that they might be a light and example in all godliness and good works; might worthily administer the Lord’s ordinances baptism and sacrament — and that they (the brethren sent by the apostles) might also, at all places, where such were to be had, appoint faithful men as elders, who were able to teach others, confirm them in the name of the Lord “with the laying on of hands”, and who (the elders) were to take care of all things of which the church stood in need; so that they, as faithful servants, might well “occupy” their Lord’s money, gain thereby, and thus, “save themselves and those who hear them”.

1 Timothy 3:1 — This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

1 Timothy 4:14-16 — Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Acts 1:23, 24 — And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen.

Titus 1:5 — For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

Luke 19:13 — And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

That they should also take good care (particularly each one of the charge over which he had the oversight), that all the circuits should be well provided with almoners, who should have the care and oversight of the poor, and who were to receive gifts and alms, and again faithfully to distribute them amongst the poor saints who were in need, and this is in all honesty, as is becoming.

Acts 6:3-6 — Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and

Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

Also that honourable old widows should be chosen as servants, who besides the almoners, are to visit, comfort, and take care of the poor, the weak, afflicted, and the needy, as also to visit, comfort, and take care of widows and orphans; and further to assist in taking care of any matters in the church that properly come within their sphere, according to their best ability.

1 Timothy 5:9, 10 — Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Romans 16:1, 2 — I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

And as it further regards the almoners, that they (particularly if they are fit persons, and chosen and ordained thereto by the church) may also in aid and relief of the bishops, exhort the church (being, as already remarked, chosen thereto), and thus assist in word and doctrine; so that each one may serve the other from love, with the gift which he has received from the Lord; so that through the common service and assistance of each member, according to his ability, the body of Christ may be edified, and the Lord's vineyard and church be preserved in its growth and structure.

2 Timothy 2:2 — And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Article X The Lord's Supper

We also believe in and observe the breaking of bread, or the Lord's Supper, as the Lord Jesus instituted the same (with bread and wine) before His sufferings, and also observed and ate it with the apostles, and also commanded it to be observed to His remembrance, as also the apostles subsequently taught and observed the same in the church, and commanded it to be observed by believers in commemoration of the death and sufferings of the Lord — the breaking of His worthy body and the shedding of His precious blood—for the whole human race. So is the observance of this sacrament also to remind us of the benefit of the said death and sufferings of Christ, namely, the redemption and eternal salvation which He purchased thereby, and the great love thus shown to sinful man; whereby we are earnestly exhorted also to love one another — to love our neighbor — to forgive and absolve him — even as Christ has done unto us and also to endeavor to maintain and keep alive the union and communion which we have with God, and amongst one another; which is thus shown and represented to us by the aforesaid breaking of bread.

Matthew 26:26 — And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Mark 14:22 — And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

Luke 22:19, 20 — And he took bread, and gave thanks, and

brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Acts 2:42, 46 — And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

1 Corinthians 10:16 — The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 — For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Article XI

The Washing of the Saints' Feet

We also confess a washing of the feet, of the saints, as the Lord Jesus did not only institute and command the same, but did also Himself wash the feet of the apostles, thereby giving an example that they also should wash one another's feet, and thus do to one another as He did to them; which they also afterwards taught believers to observe, and all this is a sign of true humiliation; but yet more particularly as a sign to remind us of the true washing —

the washing and purification of the soul in the blood of Christ.

John 13:4-17 — He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to You?

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

If I then, you Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

1 Timothy 5:9, 10 — Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently

followed every good work.

Article XII Matrimony

We also confess that there is in the church of God an “honourable” state of matrimony between two believers of the different sexes, as God first instituted the same in paradise between Adam and Eve, and as the Lord Jesus reformed it by removing all abuses which had crept into it, and restoring it to its first order.

Genesis 1:27 — So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Genesis 2:18, 21-24 — And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

In this manner the Apostle Paul also taught and permitted matrimony in the church, leaving it to each one’s own choice to enter into matrimony with any person who would unite with him in such state, provided that it was done “in the Lord”, according to the primitive order; the words, “in the Lord”, to be understood, according to our opinion, that just as the patriarchs had to marry amongst their own kindred or generation, so there is also no other liberty allowed to believers under the New Testament

dispensation, than to marry amongst the “chosen generation”, or the spiritual kindred of Christ; that is, to such — and none others — as are already, previous to their marriage, united to the church in heart and soul, have received the same baptism, belong to the same church, are of the same faith and doctrine, and lead the same course of life, with themselves.

1 Corinthians 7:39 — The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 9:5 — Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

Genesis 24:4 — But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

Genesis 28:6, 7 — When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram.

Numbers 36:6-9 — This is the thing which the Lord doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.

So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.

Such are then, as already remarked, united by God and the church according to the primitive order, and this is then called, “Marrying in the Lord”. 1 Corinthians 7:39. (See above.)

Article XIII **The Office of Civil Government**

We also believe and confess, that God has instituted civil government, for the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the pious; and also further, for the purpose of governing the world, countries and cities; and also to preserve its subjects in good order and under good regulations. Wherefore we are not permitted to despise, blaspheme, or resist the same; but are to acknowledge it as a minister of God and be subject and obedient to it, in all things that do not militate against the law, will, and commandments of God; yea, “to be ready to every good work”; also faithfully to pay it custom, tax, and tribute; thus giving it what is its due; as Jesus Christ taught, did Himself, and commanded His followers to do. That we are also to pray to the Lord earnestly for the government and its welfare, and in behalf of our country, so that we may live under its protection, maintain ourselves, and “lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”. And further, that the Lord would recompense them (our rulers), here and in eternity, for all the benefits, liberties, and favors which we enjoy under their laudable administration.

Romans 13:1-7 — Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is

good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

For he is the minister of God to thee for good.

But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Titus 3:1, 2 — Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

1 Peter 2:17 — Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Matthew 17:27 — Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Matthew 22:20, 21 — And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

1 Timothy 2:1, 2 — I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Article XIV

Defense by Force

Regarding revenge, whereby we resist our enemies with the sword, we believe and confess that the Lord Jesus has forbidden His disciples and followers all revenge and resistance, and has thereby commanded them not to “return evil for evil, nor railing for railing”; but to “put up the sword into the sheath,” or, as the prophets foretold, “beat them into plowshares”.

Matthew 5:39, 44 — But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.

Romans 12:14 — Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

1 Peter 3:9 — Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Isaiah 2:4 — And he shall Judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Micah 4:3 — And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

From this we see, that, according to the example, life, and doctrine of Christ, we are not to do wrong, or cause offense or vexation to anyone; but to seek the welfare and salvation of all men; also if necessity should require it, to flee, for the Lord’s sake,

from one city or country to another, and suffer the “spoiling of our goods”, rather than give occasion of offense to anyone: and if we are struck on our “right cheek, rather to turn the other also”, than revenge ourselves or return the blow.

Matthew 5:39 — But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Matthew 10:23 — But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

Romans 12:19 — Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

And that we are, besides this, also to pray for our enemies, comfort and feed them, when they are hungry or thirsty, and thus by well-doing convince them and overcome the evil with good.

Romans 12:20, 21 — Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Finally, that we are to do good in all respects, commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God”, and according to the law of Christ, do nothing to others that we would not wish them to do unto us.

2 Corinthians 4:2 — But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

Matthew 7:12 — Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Luke 6:31 — And as ye would that men should do to you, do

ye also to them likewise.

Article XV The Swearing of Oaths

Regarding the swearing of oaths, we believe and confess, that the Lord Jesus has dissuaded His followers from and forbidden them the same; that is, that He commanded them to “swear not at all”; but that their “Yea” should be “yea”, and their “Nay, nay”. From which we understand that all oaths, high and low, are forbidden; and that instead of them we are to confirm all our promises and covenants, declarations and testimonies of all matters, merely with “Yea that is yea”, and Nay that is nay”; and that we are to perform and fulfill at all times, and in all things, to everyone, every promise and obligation to which we thus affirm, as faithfully as if we had confirmed it by the most solemn oath. And if we thus do, we have the confidence that no one — not even government itself — will have just cause to require more of us.

Matthew 5:34-37 — But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne:

Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

James 5:12 — But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

2 Corinthians 1:17 — When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay?

Article XVI

Excommunication, or Expulsion From the Church

We also believe in and acknowledge the ban, or excommunication, a separation or spiritual punishment by the church, for the amendment, and not for the destruction, of offenders; so that what is pure may be separated from that which is impure. That is, if a person, after having been enlightened, and received the knowledge of the truth, and has been received into the communion of the saints, does willfully, or out of presumption, sin against God, or commit some other “sin unto death”, thereby falling into such unfruitful works of darkness, that he becomes separated from God, and is debarred from His kingdom—that such an one—when his works are become manifest, and sufficiently known to the church—cannot remain in the “congregation of the righteous”; but must, as an offensive member and open sinner, be excluded from the church, “rebuked before all”, and “purged out as a leaven”, and thus remain until his amendment, as an example and warning to others, and also that the church may be kept pure from such “spots” and “blemishes”; so that not for the want of this, the Name of the Lord be blasphemed, the church dishonoured, and a stumbling block thrown in the way of those “without”, and finally, that the offender may not be condemned with the world, but that he may again be convinced of the error of his ways, and brought to repentance and amendment of life.

Isaiah 59:2 — But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

1 Corinthians 5:5, 6, 12 — To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven

leaveneth the whole lump?

For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

1 Timothy 5:20 — Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

2 Corinthians 13:10 — Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

Regarding the brotherly admonition, as also the instruction of the erring, we are to “give all diligence” to watch over them, and exhort them in all meekness to the amendment of their ways (James 5:19, 20); and in case any should remain obstinate and unconverted, to reprove them as the case may require. In short, the church must “put away from among herself him that is wicked”, whether it be in doctrine or life.

James 5:19, 20 — Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Article XVII

The Shunning of Those Who Are Expelled

As regards the withdrawing from, or the shunning of, those who are expelled, we believe and confess, that if anyone, whether it be through a wicked life or perverse doctrine — is so far fallen as to be separated from God, and consequently rebuked by, and expelled from, the church, he must also, according to the doctrine of Christ and His apostles, be shunned and avoided by all the members of the church (particularly by those to whom his misdeeds are known), whether it be in eating or drinking, or other

such like social matters. In short, that we are to have nothing to do with him; so that we may not become defiled by intercourse with him, and partakers of his sins; but that he may be made ashamed, be affected in his mind, convinced in his conscience, and thereby induced to amend his ways.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 — I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

Romans 16:17 — Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 — And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Titus 3:10, 11 — A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject;

Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

That nevertheless, as well in shunning as in reproving such offender, such moderation and Christian discretion be used, that such shunning and reproof may not be conducive to his ruin, but be serviceable to his amendment. For should he be in need, hungry, thirsty, naked, sick or visited by some other affliction, we are in duty bound, according to the doctrine and practice of Christ and His apostles, to render him aid and assistance as necessity may require; otherwise the shunning of him might be rather conducive to his ruin than to his amendment.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 — Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

Therefore we must not treat such offenders as enemies, but exhort them as brethren, in order thereby to bring them to a knowledge of their sins and to repentance; so that they may again become reconciled to God and the church, and be received and admitted into the same — thus exercising love toward them, as is becoming.

2 Thessalonians 3:15 — Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Article XVIII **The Resurrection of the Dead and the Last judgment**

Regarding the resurrection of the dead, we confess with the mouth, and believe with the heart, that according to the Scriptures — all men who shall have died or “fallen asleep”, will through the incomprehensible power of God at the day of judgment, be “raised up” and made alive; and that these, together with all those who then remain alive, and who shall be “changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump”, shall “appear before the judgment seat of Christ”, where the good shall be separated from the evil, and where “every one shall receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”; and that the good or pious shall then further, as the blessed of their Father, be received by Christ into eternal life, where they shall receive that joy which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man”. Yea, where they shall reign and triumph with Christ for ever and ever.

Matthew 22:30-32 — For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Matthew 25:31 — When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

Daniel 12:2 — And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Job 19:25, 26 — For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

John 5:28, 29 — Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 — Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 — But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

And that, on the contrary, the wicked or impious, shall, as the accursed of God, be cast into “outer darkness”; yea, into eternal hellish torments; “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not

quenched"; and where — according to Holy Scripture — they can expect no comfort nor redemption throughout eternity.

Isaiah 66:24 — And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

Matthew 25:46 — And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Mark 9:46 — Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Revelation 14:10, 11 — The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

May the Lord through His grace make us all fit and worthy, that no such calamity may befall any of us; but that we may be diligent and so take heed to ourselves, that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. Amen.

Now these are, as before mentioned, the chief articles of our general Christian faith, which we everywhere teach in our congregations and families, and according to which we profess to live; and which, according to our convictions, contain the only true Christian faith, which the apostles in their time believed and taught; yea, which they testified to by their lives and confirmed by their deaths; in which we will also, according to our weakness, gladly abide, live, and die, that at last, together with the apostles and all the pious we may obtain the salvation of our souls through

the grace of God.

Thus were the foregoing articles of faith adopted and concluded by our united churches in the city of Dort, in Holland, on the 21 st day of April, in the year of our Lord 1632, and signed by the following ministers and teachers:

Sciedam

Cornelis Bom
Lambrecht Paeldink

Leyden

Christian de Kopink
Jan Weyns

Dort

Isaac Koenig
Johann Cobryssen
Jan Jacobs
Jacuis Terwen
Claes Dirksen
Mels Gysbaerts
Adrian Cornelis

Blockzyl

Claes Claesson
Peter Peterson

Flissingen

Dillaert Willeborts
Jacob Pennen

Middleburg

Bastian Willemsen

Lieven Marymehr

Utrecht

Herman Segers
Jan Heinrich Hochfield
Daniel Horens
Abraham Spronk
Wilhelm von Brockhuysen

Creveldt

Herman op den Graff
Wilhelm Kreynen

Zealand

Cornelis de Moir
Isaac Claes

Gorcum

Jacob von Sebrecht
Jan J. von Kruysen

Arnheim

Cornelis Jans
Dirk Renderson

Jan Winkelmans

Amsterdam

Tobias Goverts
Peter Jansen Mayer
Abram Dirks
David ter Haer
Peter Jan von Zingel

Rotterdam

Balten C. Schumacher
Michael Michiels
Israel von Halmael
Heinrich D. Apeldoren
Andreas Lucken

Ziriczee

Anton Cornelis
Peter Jan Zimmerman

Harlem

John Doom
Peter Gryspeer
Dirk Wouters

Kolenkamp

Peter Joosten

Bommel

Wilhelm Jan von Exselt
Gispert Spiering

From the Upper Country

Peter von Borsel
Anton Hans

Besides this confession being adopted by so many churches, and signed by their ministers, all the churches in Alsace and Germany afterwards adopted it unanimously. Wherefore it was translated from the Holland into the languages of these countries — into French and German — for the use of the churches there, and for others, of which this may serve as a notice.

The following attestation was signed by the brethren in Alsace, who examined this confession and adopted it as their own.

We, the undersigned, ministers of the Word of God, and elders of the church in Alsace, hereby declare and make known, that being assembled this 4th of February in the year of our Lord 1660, at Ohnenheim, on account of the Confession of Faith, which adopted at the Peace Convention in the city of Dort, on the 21 st day of April in the year 1632; and having examined the same, and found it, according to our judgment, in agreement with the Word

of God, we have entirely adopted it as our own. Which we, in testimony of the truth, and a firm faith, have signed our own hands, as follows:

MINISTERS

<i>Magenheim</i>	<i>Isenheim</i>	<i>Heidelberg</i>
John Miller	Henry Schneider	John Ringer

<i>Kunenheim</i>	<i>Baldenheim</i>	<i>Markirch</i>
Rudolph Egli	Jacob Schebly	Adolph Schmidt

ELDERS

<i>Markirch</i>	<i>Ohnenherim</i>	<i>Jepsenheim</i>
Jacob Schmidt	Ulrich Husser	John Rudolph Bumen
Bertram Habich	Jacob Gochnauer	

<i>Duerrsanzenheim</i>	<i>Kueneheim</i>
Jacob Schneider	Henry Frick

Postscript to the Foregoing 18 Articles

From an authentic circular letter of the year 1557, from the Highland to the Netherland churches, it appears that from the Eyfelt to Moravia there were 50 churches, of which some consisted of from 500 to 600 brethren. And that there were about that time, at a conference at Strasbourg, about 50 preachers and elders present, who discoursed about matters concerning the welfare of the churches.

These leaders of the nonresistant Christians endeavored earnestly to propagat the truth; so that like a “grain of mustard seed”, of small beginning, it grew against all bloody persecution, to the height in which it is to be seen in so many large churches in Germany, Prussia, the Principality of Cleves, &c., and particularly in the United Netherlands.

But finally, alas! There arose disunion amongst them about matters of faith, which so deeply grieved the peaceably disposed amongst them, that they not only thought about means to heal the schism, and restore union, but did also take the matter in hand, and concluded at Cologne, in the year 1591, a laudable peace between the Highland and Netherland churches. Still the schism was not fully healed. Consequently in the years 1628 and 1630, it was deemed necessary at a certain conference, by some lovers of peace to appoint another conference, in order to see whether they could come to an understanding, and the schism be fully healed. Consequently, in order to attain their object in the most effectual manner, there assembled at Dort, from many of the churches in Holland, on the 21st of April, 1632, fifty-one ministers of the Word of God, appointed for said purpose; who deemed it advisable that a Scriptural confession of faith should be drawn up, to which all parties should adhere, and on which this peace convention and the intended union should be founded and built. Which was then accordingly drawn up, publicly adopted, confirmed, signed, the so much wished for peace obtained, and the light again put on the candlestick, to the honour of the non-resistant Christianity.

CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALS

In recent years conditions in the realm of Christian activity and doctrine are such that the Church must place distinct emphasis on Christian living. Particular doctrines of the Church have been attacked and there has been much compromising with the world on matters of Christian living.

Because of these conditions, ordained men representing numerous conservative congregations fellow-shipping together, who seek to maintain and promote the Biblical historic faith of the Mennonite Church, assembled in the "Third Annual Biblical Discipleship and Fellowship Ministerial Meeting" at Hartville, Ohio, on March 23, 24, 25, 1964, and gave expression to the faith of the church in relation to these conditions in a statement of doctrine pertaining to

conserving the fundamental standards of our Christian faith. This statement does not supersede the 18 Articles of the Dortrecht Confession which the church still confesses and teaches. The new statement of Christian Fundamentals is a restatement of the articles of faith previously accepted at Garden City, Missouri, by General Conference in 1921 . It gives expression to some of the doctrines and practices of the early church which at the time the former confessions were adopted were not a matter of difference, but have since that time been questioned or denied by many church organizations and institutions. For the sake of preserving the faith and teaching the Gospel as given by Christ and His apostles, the church has confessed in this formal manner her faith in and practice of the Gospel of salvation which is in Jesus Christ.

Articles of Faith

Article I - Of the Word of God

We believe in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God; that it is authentic in its matter, authoritative in its counsels, inerrant in the original writings, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We reject Neo-orthodoxy, intellectualism, relativism, and other philosophies where the authority of the Word is rejected, questioned or displaced by human reason. 1 Corinthians 2:5-7, 14; John 10:35; 2 Samuel 23:2; Psalm 12:6; 119:160; Jeremiah 1:9; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

Article II - Of the Existence and Nature of God

We believe that there is but one God, eternal, infinite, perfect, and unchangeable; Who exists and reveals Himself in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Genesis 17:1; Isaiah 40:23; 57:15; Malachi 3:6; Genesis 1:2; Hebrews 1:8; 13:8; Matthew 28:19.

Article III - Of Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God (John 1:1, 2; Hebrews 13:8), that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35; Matthew 1:20), and born of a virgin—the perfect God-man

(Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; 1 Timothy 2:5); that He was without sin (2 Corinthians 5:21), the divinely appointed sacrifice (Galatians 3:13), who, by His death on the cross, made the only atonement for sin by the shedding of His blood (1 Peter 2:22-24), thus reconciling man to God (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20); that He was resurrected bodily from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Acts 3:26; 10:40), ascended to glory (Acts 1:11; Ephesians 1:19-21), and "ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Revelation 1:18; Hebrews 6:20; 7:26); and He is the only head of the church (Colossians 1:18).

Article IV - Of the Holy Spirit

We believe in the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:3, 17; John 16:7, 8, 13, 14; 1 Corinthians 3:16), the third person of the Trinity (Matthew 28:19); that He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that He exalts Christ and illuminates the Word of God (John 16:7-15); that He is received at the New Birth in Holy Spirit baptism (John 3:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13) and indwells and comforts the believer by a continuing work of grace in his heart (John 14:16-18); that He guides the believer into all truth, empowering him for service and enabling him to live a life of righteousness by His renewing and cleansing power (Acts 1:8; Romans 8:1-4). We believe in the gifts of Christ to His church (Ephesians 4:8-11); distributed and administered by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4, 11). We warn against modern healing and tongues movements, and the second work of grace emphasis, which do not spring from the Spirit of God, but from the flesh, and are a reproach to the cause of Christ (2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Corinthians 14:40).

Article V- Of Creation

We believe that the Genesis account of creation is a historic fact and literally true; that the Bible is a Book of Redemption, yet is scientifically accurate. Genesis 1:1, 21, 27; Exodus 20:11; Mark 10:6; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:10; 11:3.

Article VI - Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created by an immediate act of God

(Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7; Psalm 33:6-9), in His own image, and after His likeness; that by one act of disobedience man became sinful in his nature (Genesis 2:16, 17), spiritually dead, subject to physical death and to the power of the devil (Ephesians 2:1-3, 12), from which fallen condition he was unable to save himself (John 6:44; Romans 5:6); that this condition became the lot of all mankind (Romans 5:12; 1:18-32).

Article VII - Of Salvation

We believe that man is saved by the mercy and grace of God through faith in the redemptive work of Christ (Acts 15:11; Ephesians 2:8; Matthew 1:21; Galatians 3:13), the power of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:22, 23), and the indwelling, renewing, and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4-7); that repentance precedes forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Matthew 3:8; Luke 24:47), and includes "fruit" or evidences of a change of heart and life, and that faith issues in obedience (Acts 5:32; 6:7; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 1:5; 16:25, 26), in yieldedness and complete surrender to God (Romans 6:13-22; 12:1, 2); that through this experience man becomes a partaker of eternal life and all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Peter 1:4), and lives a life of victory over the flesh, the world, and Satan (1 Peter 5:9; Galatians 1:4; 2:20; 1 Timothy 4:10).

Article VIII - Of Assurance

We believe it is the privilege of all believers to know that they have passed from death unto Life (1 John 3:14; 5:13; Romans 8:16), that God is able to keep them from falling (Jude 24), but that obedience of faith is essential to the maintenance of one's salvation and growth in grace (Galatians 3:11; John 8:31, 32; 2 Peter 1:5-11; Romans 1:5; 16:26); that the teachings of (absolute) predestination and unconditional eternal security of the believer give false assurance of salvation (Revelation 22:17; John 15:6).

Article IX - Of the Church

We believe that the Church is the body of Christ, composed of all those who through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord

Jesus Christ have been born again and baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13). Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and therefore the supreme and final authority in His church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:23). He has vested in the local body of faithful believers the responsibility to form a congregation, set up standards, and administer discipline according to the principles already established in His Word (Matthew 16:18, 19; 18:17-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5, 11-13).

We believe that the church is neither an ecclesiastical hierarchy where ministers, bishops, boards, committees, church councils, or conferences arbitrarily rule (1 Peter 5:3; 3 John 9, 10), nor a democracy where rule is by popular majority (2 Timothy 4:3, 4). But the Church is a Theocracy in which the triune Godhead is directly active; Jesus Christ as the Head (Ephesians 5:23), subject to the Father (Hebrews 1:1-8), and by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-15), commands, directs, and controls His Church by His Word through a chosen and called ministry (Acts 1:17, 20-26; 6:1-6; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13). We consider inter-congregational and inter-fellowship counselling and conferring both Scriptural and necessary (Acts 15:2-4).

We believe it is the Church's divinely appointed mission to preach the Gospel to every creature, teaching obedience to all His commandments (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Acts 20:27, 28).

Article X - Of Discipline

We believe that in order to Scripturally observe the ordinances and to maintain true doctrine and consistent practice, the local body of believers has the God-given authority and responsibility according to Scriptural teaching: (1) to choose officials (bishops, ministers, and deacons)—the use of the lot is recommended where there is more than one qualified nominee (Acts 1:15-26; 6:1-6; 13:1-4; 14:23; Titus 1:5); (2) to regulate the observances of the ordinances (1 Corinthians 11); (3) to exercise wholesome discipline (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5); (4) to organize and conduct her work in a manner consistent with her high calling and essential to her greatest effectiveness (Acts 20:28-32; Galatians 2:7-14; Ephesians

4:11-16).

Therefore, having the "keys of the kingdom", the Church must guard the door of entrance into her fellowship. She must also "bind and loose", make consistent application of Scriptural principles to everyday living, and maintain a pure and holy fellowship by exercising impartial, loving, Scriptural discipline (Matthew 16:19; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15; Hebrews 12:5-11; 2 Corinthians 7).

We believe that a member who transgresses against another and refuses to be reconciled, or a member who is an unrepentant, or an open, sensual sinner, must, according to the Scripture, be excommunicated from the fellowship of the believers (Matthew 18:15-18; Titus 3:10; 1 Corinthians 5).

Article XI - On Separation

We believe that we are called with a holy calling to a life of separation from the world and its follies, fashions, sinful practices and methods (1 Peter 2:9; Titus 2:11-14), that the Scriptural teaching on the unequal yoke forbids courtship or intermarriage with unbelievers, membership in secret orders, and worldly business or labor associations, and also cooperation with religious organizations who do not hold to the whole Gospel (2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:11).

Therefore, since Christians are called to be strangers and pilgrims in this world and stewards of material things, we believe that luxury and ostentatious display are inconsistent with our calling (1 Peter 2:11; 4:10; 1 John 3:17).

Since the attire of the world is largely governed by the sensual appeal of the flesh (1 John 2:15-17; Ephesians 2:2, 3), we must avoid such a course and endeavor to follow the Scripture (Romans 12:1, 2). The Word teaches the propriety of modesty (covered bodies, 1 Timothy 2:9), and that flashy or superfluous clothing or makeup on the body is not for saints (1 Peter 3:3-5; 5:5, 6). We believe that the principles of nonconformity, modesty and simplicity can best be maintained by uniformity, therefore, we believe uniform plain attire in the congregation is necessary.

We believe that the current cultural practice of the wedding ring is a violation of the Scriptural command prohibiting the wearing of jewelry (1 Timothy 1:9).

Our church buildings are dedicated to the service of God, and so ought not be used for carnal entertainment or weddings and funerals which detract from the simplicity of the Gospel.

The New Testament emphasis is on a spiritual worship (John 4:24), with the personal participation of the individual (Acts 17:24, 25; 1 Corinthians 14:15), and we conclude that instrumental music ought not be used in our worship services.

Since commercial entertainment, including sports, movies, television, and radio, are largely used for the pleasure of an unregenerate society, and even the so-called religious movies and broadcasts are so often mixed with the false, we believe they are as a whole detrimental to the life and growth of the church (3 John 11; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 2 Timothy 2:22; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

The Scriptures teach that church and state are distinct and separate (John 18:36; Romans 12 and 13), and so we believe that Christians cannot participate in military service or politics, either by holding public office, by voting, or in applying pressure upon the government in the regulation of their affairs, but rather that we should give ourselves to prayer on their behalf (1 Timothy 2:1, 2). We further believe that we should keep aloof from all movements which seek the reformation of society independent of the merits of the death of Christ and the experience of the New Birth.

In regard to life insurance, we believe that it is inconsistent with filial trust in the providence and care of our Heavenly Father (Psalm 118:18; Jeremiah 17:5, 7), and further that we should not depend on human organizations or government, but that the church should assume responsibility where genuine material needs exist in the brotherhood (Matthew 6:24-34; Galatians 6:10).

Article XII - On Ordinances

The Ordinance of Water Baptism was commanded by Christ (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19, 20), and was intended as an outward

sign of a previous inner cleansing by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and by it the applicant testifies to the church and to all men that he has forsaken the world and his own carnal will and desires and has voluntarily placed himself under the lordship of Jesus Christ until death. As this rite initiates members into the visible body, care should be exercised that conversion has been genuine and that there has been a definite cutting off from the old life and walking in the new life in Christ Jesus in sincerity before admittance. We believe that pouring is the Scriptural mode (Acts 2:16-18, 41; 10:45, 47; 1 Corinthians 10:1, 2; 1 Peter 3:20, 21). We believe further that children are spiritually safe prior to the age of accountability, being covered by the blood of Christ, and that baptism should not be administered until there has been a clear experience of conversion and commitment to Christ. We reject the formal, public dedication of children as having no New Testament authority for its practice.

The Lord's Supper as instituted by Christ is a memorial of the Lord's sacrifice and a testimony of the participants' faith in His death and future return (Luke 22:19,

20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). We commune with the Lord and one another. The emblems denote, among believers, unity and oneness in the Lord. There needs to be peace among members of the congregation as well as a common standard of faith and conduct. 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17,

21; Matthew 5:23, 24; 18:15-35; Hebrews 12:14. Since participating unworthily is serious (1 Corinthians 11:27, 28), the necessity of self-examination and the purging out of the unrepentant is obvious (1 Corinthians 5:8-13). We believe in close communion (limited to those who are one in faith) and clean communion (where the church has dealt with known sin).

The Ordinance of the Washing of the Saint's Feet was established by the same authority as communion and is to be literally observed with equal regularity. It teaches the principles of humility, equality, and loving service. John 13:1-17; 1 Timothy 5:10.

The Holy Kiss is a Christian greeting commanded in the Scripture,

and is a token of a loving, holy Fellowship in the Lord. It is not to be limited to church leaders, and is not to be replaced by some greeting of our culture, but is to be practiced regularly by all Christians as they meet together. Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14; Acts 20:37. The Woman's Veil (1 Corinthians 11:1-16) is a veil of religious significance and is not a weather garb. It signifies the principles of headship. The Scripture teaches that the veil should be a covering for the head (v. 5) and suggests that it be patterned after nature's covering, the hair (vs. 14, 15). The Scriptures also teach that the cutting of woman's hair is contrary to the will of God (vs. 5, 6). Since the principle of headship, the attitude of prayer, and the alertness to witness are to be continual on the part of Christian women, the veil should be worn at all times.

The Anointing with Oil (James 5:13-16) is to be administered by the elders of the church to a sick brother or sister who calls for it in faith. On the part of all involved, there must be confession of all sin and complete submission to the will of God. The oil is symbolical, not of medicine, but of the healing power of God.

Marriage between one man and one woman is an institution of God, dissoluble only by death; on the part of the Christian it should be "only in the Lord"; and consistency requires that the marriage relation be entered into only by those of like precious faith (1 Corinthians 7:39; Amos 3:3; Romans 7:2, 3). Marriage is entered into by way of an outward ceremony that signifies a covenant relationship. The binding together of husband and wife for life is a type of the union of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22, 23). Divorce and remarriage were permitted in the Old Testament because of the hardness of their hearts, but Jesus reestablished the creation standard of the permanence of marriage (Mark 10:3-12). We find in Matthew 19:9 and in 1 Corinthians 7:11, 14, 15 two possible exceptions, permitting separate living (not divorce), but no exception for remarriage while the former companion is living. Remarriage while the former companion is living is a state of adultery (Mark 10:11, 12; Romans 7:2, 3).

Article XIII - On the Propagation of the Faith

We believe that every born-again child of God is an Ambassador of Jesus Christ; therefore his responsibility as a Christian is to glorify God (1 Peter 2:9) and to seek reconciliation of sinful men to Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). This can be accomplished only by taking advantage of every opportunity (Ephesians 5:16) to personally witness to the saving grace and glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8), by word of mouth (Romans 10:8-10), and by living a consistent Christian life (Titus 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:12).

Furthermore, we believe that each local fellowship, in order to facilitate the carrying out of the above mentioned responsibilities, ought to have a Scriptural and an orderly program of "lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes". Such a witness, subject to congregational approval, could include one or more of the following: Sunday Schools, prayer meetings, Bible meetings, revival and evangelistic meetings, Bible study fellowships, cottage meetings, street meetings, services in jails and convalescent homes, hospital visitation, tract distribution, and Christian schools. We believe that any faithful publishing work is very helpful and should be supported. We believe that evangelization by colonization is a good work and should be encouraged and promoted.

Article XIV - On Apostasy

We believe that the latter days will be characterized by general lawlessness and departure from the faith (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-5); that on the part of the world, "Iniquity shall abound" (Matthew 24:12) and "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13; Mark 13:22); that on the part of the church, there will be a falling away (2 Thessalonians 2:3) and the "love of many shall wax cold"; that "false teachers shall abound" (Matthew 24:11, 24; Acts 20:28-30; 2 Peter 2:1).

Present-day evidences of such apostasy are quite prevalent. Many church organizations are dominated by a compromising leadership

seemingly intent on maintaining organizational unity at the expense of faithfulness and obedience to the Scriptures. Such compromise leads to exaltation of leaders and blind denominational loyalty rather than loyalty to the Word of God. We also see many of the church institutions, once faithful, now succumbing to world pressures and trends, unequal yokes, other unholy alliances, and the pursuit of accreditations. The emphasis on higher education (colleges, universities, and seminaries) has resulted in the acceptance of ungodly philosophies and centralization of power that has undermined the faith of many. The present-day ecumenical movements that ignore doctrinal unity and purity of practice are unscriptural. Such conditions and trends, church and worldwide, indicate that we are now living in these perilous times, and warrant our withdrawal from all such fellowship (Romans 16:17, 18). We believe that the coming of the Lord is imminent (Matthew 24:29-31, 44).

Article XV - Of the Resurrection

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the bodily resurrection of all men, both of the just and the unjust—of the just to the resurrection of life, and of the unjust to the resurrection of condemnation. John 20:20, 24-29; Luke 24:30, 31; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

Article XVI - Of the Coming of Christ

We believe in the personal, imminent coming of our Lord as the blessed hope of the believer; that we who are alive and remain, together with the dead in Christ who will be raised, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and thus ever be with the Lord. John 14:2, 3; Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:44; Hebrews 10:37; Titus 2:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Article XVII - Of the Intermediate State

We believe that in the interval between death and resurrection, the righteous will be with Christ in a state of conscious bliss and comfort, but that the wicked will be in a place of torment, in a state of conscious suffering and despair. Luke 16:19-31; 23:43;

Philippians 1:23;

2 Corinthians 5:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:10; 2 Peter 2:9 (R.V.).

Article XVIII - Of the Final State

We believe that hell is the place of torment, prepared for the devil and his angels, where with them the wicked will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire forever and ever, and that heaven is the final abode of the righteous where they will dwell in the fullness of joy forever and ever. Matthew 25:41, 46; Jude 7; Revelation 14:8 11; 20:10, 15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Revelation 21:3-8; 22:1-5.