

OXFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

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Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Introduction

This document is intended to further the work, worship and message of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Its chief purposes are:

- That we may have unity of purpose and action as Christians

“And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” –Mark 3 v 25

“Can two walk together except they be agreed?” –Amos 3 v 3

- That our church may be run in an orderly manner

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.”

–I Corinthians 14 v 33

“Let all things be done decently and in order.” – I Corinthians 14 v 40

- That we may have commonly agreed standards for what we teach in all our ministries

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising 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 to the end of the world. Amen.” – Matthew 28 v 19, 20

There are two parts to this document:

- The Covenant –This is the agreement each member makes with God and all other church members when he or she joins this church.
- The Statement of Faith –This is a statement of what we believe. While we recognise no authority in matters of faith apart from the Bible, there are many false views of Biblical truth held by groups and individuals. The statement of faith makes clear the church’s view on certain important matters of Biblical teaching.

Church Covenant¹

Of the Oxford Baptist Church

Whereas it appears that there is a need for a Free and Fundamental Baptist Church in this locality, we, after much prayer and seeking divine guidance, do now enter into this organisation of a church; composed of members who are received into fellowship upon their profession of faith in Christ Jesus as Saviour, their submitting themselves willingly to believer's baptism by immersion, and by their adoption of the Church Covenant, Statement of Faith and Articles which follow.

Having been led, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit of God², to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour³ and on the profession of our faith⁴, having been baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,⁵ we do now in the presence of God most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.⁶

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit⁷ to walk together in Christian love⁸, to strive for the advancement of this church⁹ in knowledge¹⁰, holiness¹¹ and faithful attendance; to promote its prosperity and spirituality¹²; to sustain its worship¹³, ordinances¹⁴, discipline¹⁵ and doctrines¹⁶; to contribute cheerfully and regularly¹⁷ to the support of the ministry¹⁸, the expenses of the church¹⁹, for giving aid to those who have need in the community²⁰ and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations²¹.

We also engage to maintain family²² and personal²³ Bible study and prayer; to educate our children in the faith²⁴; to seek the salvation of our family members and acquaintances²⁵; to walk cautiously in the world²⁶; to be just in our dealings²⁷; to be exemplary in our behaviour²⁸; to avoid malicious gossip²⁹, slander³⁰ and excessive anger³¹; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour³².

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love³³; to remember one another in prayer³⁴; to aid one another in sickness and distress³⁵; to cultivate Christian courtesy in speech³⁶; to be slow to take offence³⁷, but always to be ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay³⁸.

We moreover engage that if we move from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church of like faith and order, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word³⁹.

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|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Numbers 30 v 2 | 14. Matthew 28 vv 19,20 | 29. Ephesians 4 v 31 |
| Deuteronomy 23 v 21 | I Corinthians II vv 24,25 | I Timothy 5 v 13 |
| II Chronicles 15 v 12 | 15. Romans 16 v 17 | 30. II Corinthians 12 v 20 |
| 2. John 16 vv 7-11,14 | II Thessalonians 3 vv 14,15 | 31. Ephesians 4 v 26 |
| 3. John I v 12 | 16. Acts 2 v 42 | 32. Acts I v 8 |
| Acts 16 v 31 | 2 John 9-11 | Acts 8 v 4 |
| I Thessalonians 2 v 13 | 17. I Corinthians 16 v 2 | 33. Romans 12 v 10 |
| 4. Acts 2 v 41 | 18. Matthew 10 v 10 | I Thessalonians 5 v 14 |
| Acts 8 v 37 | Galatians 6 v 6 | 34. Ephesians 6 v 18 |
| 5. Matthew 28 v 19 | 19. Malachi 3 v 10 | I Thessalonians 5 v 25 |
| 6. I Corinthians 12 vv 12,13 | 20. Acts II v 29 | 35. Galatians 6 v 10 |
| Acts 2 v 47 | II Corinthians 8 vv 1-5 | 36. Titus 3 v 2 |
| 7. John 14 v 26 | 21. Luke 24 vv 46-48 | 37. Romans 12 v 19 |
| John 16 v 13 | Acts I v 8 | 38. Matthew 5 vv 23,24 |
| 8. Ephesians 5 vv 1,2 | 22. Deuteronomy II vv 18-20 | Matthew 18 vv 15-18 |
| I Thessalonians 4 v 9 | 23. Matthew 6 v 6 | 39. Acts 18 vv 27,28 |
| 9. Ephesians 2 v 21 | 24. Ephesians 6 v 4 | Romans 16 vv 1,2 |
| 10. II Peter 3 v 18 | 25. Mark 5 v 13 | I Corinthians 15 v 58 |
| 11. II Corinthians 7 v 1; | 26. Matthew 5 v 16 | Colossians 3 v 23 |
| Hebrews 10 v 25 | Ephesians 5 v 15 | |
| 12. Jude 20 | 27. Romans 12 v 17 | |
| 13. Hebrews 10 v 35 | 28. Ephesians 5 v 8 | |

Statement of Faith

Of the Oxford Baptist Church

The Inspiration of the Bible

We hold to the historic view of Sola Scriptura, believing in the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture. We believe the writings of the Old and New Testaments are fully God-breathed to the extent that God chose the very words from the human writer's vocabulary to express His own heart and mind. We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of scripture: therefore the Bible is the very Word of God, inerrant in all its assertions and teachings. It is the only infallible authority for both doctrine and life. The Bible is the special revelation of God once delivered and preserved for all generations. It is the only basis for true Christian unity. (II Timothy 3 v 16,17; Matthew 5 v 18; Acts 1 v 16; Mark 12 v 36; II Peter 1 v 19-21; Hebrews 4 v 12; John 17 v 17; Psalm 12 vv 6,7)

The Person of God the Father

We believe God is supreme in His Person, eternal in His being, absolute in His attributes, and glorious in His Perfection. We believe in the Trinity. There is one Triune God, the creator of heaven and earth, Who has revealed Himself in three distinct but equal Persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is personal, spirit, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, sovereign, perfect, immutable, eternal in His being, holiness, love, and wisdom. We believe that God is absolutely separate from and above the world as its Creator, yet everywhere present in the world as the Sustainer of all things. (Genesis 1 v 1; Matthew 28 v 19; Deuteronomy 4 v 35; 6 v 4; I Corinthians 8 v 6; John 1 v 1-3; Romans 1 vv 2-4; Ephesians 4 v 3-6)

The Person of Jesus Christ

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Godhead, God in the flesh. He was virgin born as no other man has ever been born nor ever will be born. By the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, this holy and sinless human nature was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary so that, in due time, He was born truly a man, and yet eternally God, now together in one person never to be divided. He is of the very same substance of God the Father and did not have His beginning in Bethlehem, but has eternally existed as the Son. By Him were all things created and by Him all things consist. He lived an absolutely sinless life and became the sinner's voluntary substitute on the Cross by His death for man's sin. Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day, giving eternal assurance of redemption's full payment and the satisfaction of God's righteous indignation toward sin. He ascended bodily into Heaven and He will come again to gather His saints to be with Himself. Christ alone is the Head of the church and the only mediator between God and men. (Isaiah 7 v 14; Matthew 1 v 18; Luke 1 v 35; John 1 v 1; 14 v 3; Galatians 4 v 4; I Thessalonians 4 vv 16,17; Colossians 1 v 18; I Peter 2 v 22; 3 v 18; I Thessalonians 3 v 13; Revelation 20 vv 11 – Revelation 21 v 4)

The Person of Holy Spirit

We hold to the historical Baptist doctrine concerning the Person and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead, possessing all the attributes of God the Father and God the Son and proceeds forth from both the Father and the Son. We believe that He executes the plan of God for our conviction and conversion. Christians are partakers of the Holy Spirit at the very moment of salvation and He is vitally important in the every day life of the believer. Not only does He regenerate, seal and indwell, He fills the believer and bestows gifts and empowers believers for service. He teaches the believer and sets him apart for a holy life. He convicts the unbelieving world of sin, of righteousness and of judgement. We believe that that so-called charismatic movement is based upon a misinterpretation of the work of the Holy Spirit that elevates "sign gifts" above biblical faith and is a catalytic agent in the ecumenical movement that seeks to join believers and unbelievers together in an unequal yoke. We reject the Charismatic movement and its trappings (worldly music, casual order of service, emphasis on sign gifts, etc.). The Holy Spirit testifies of our Saviour and the redemptive truths centred in Christ. (John 14 vv 16,17; 16 vv 8,13; I Corinthians 3 v 16; Acts 5 v 3,4; Ephesians 1 vv 13,14; Romans 8 v 9)

The Fall of Man

We believe that man was created by a direct act of God in the image and likeness of his Creator. By disobedience to the revealed will of God, man forfeited his reign over the earth and fell from his created state and standing with God. Therefore, Adam's sin was imputed to every human ever born of fallen man. All men are universally sinful both by nature and conduct, and are void of the righteousness of God. The fallen state of man brings about God's just wrath upon all who are unregenerate. All men are thus alienated from the life and family of God, without excuse, under the righteous judgment and wrath of God, and have within themselves no possible means of salvation. Because of Adam's sin, men are in no way able to please God or meet his righteous standard within themselves. (Genesis 1 v 27; Romans 3 v 23; 5 vv 12-19; Isaiah 53 v 6; Ephesians 2 v 1-3)

The Salvation of Sinners

We believe salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in the shed blood and finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We believe that salvation is the free gift of God, neither merited nor secured in part nor in whole by any virtue or work of man. Salvation is received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as a result of the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. The convicted man senses his need of repentance and turns to Christ as his only hope of salvation. Salvation is of the LORD, and is unable to be obtained by good works or observing ordinances. All true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life and a perfectly righteous standing in the family of God by new birth. We believe that the cross of Christ is redemptive, substitutionary, propitiatory and the only basis of reconciliation. (John 3 vv 3-6,16; 10 vv 28-29; Acts 16 v 31; Ephesians 2 vv 8-10; 1 Timothy 2 vv 5,6; 1 Peter 1 v 18-23; 1 John 2 v 2)

The Justification of Believers

We believe that God justifies each who comes to Him through Christ for salvation. This is done by forgiving their sins and imputing the righteousness of Christ to them without consideration of any of their works. Through faith, they believe in Christ Jesus that they may be justified by Him. Their faith is the means of receiving justification and is not to be regarded as a work or the ground of it, which is the merit of Jesus Christ alone. (Psalm 32 v 5; Micah 7 v 18; Luke 5 v 20; Romans 3 v 24, 26,28; 4 vv 5-8; 8 vv 30-32; 1 Corinthians 1 vv 30-31; Galatians 3 vv 8,9; Philippians 3 vv 8,9; Hebrews 1 v 14; 1 John 1 v 7; Revelation 7 v 14)

The Assurance of Salvation for Believers

We believe that those who receive Jesus Christ as Saviour have received an infallible hope. Based upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, our salvation is not dependent on our keeping of it, but Christ who shall never fail in keeping those who have been made His through salvation. Our security rests on the finished work of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the security of the believer is not conditional upon his circumstances, emotional experiences or strength. Assurance is also evidenced inwardly to the believer by the Holy Spirit that witnesses that we are the children of God. This assurance does not come by our own works, or by following the ordinances but by faith in the promises of God to the believer. God has given to all believers, as a present possession, eternal life and eternal redemption. Because salvation is eternal, it can never be lost or taken away. (John 10 vv 27-30; 1 John 2 vv 1,2; Romans 8 vv 31-34, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 6 v 19)

The Priesthood of Every Believer

We believe that Christ is our Great High Priest and through Him every born-again person has direct access into God's presence without the need of a human priest. Every believer has the right and responsibility to study and apply the Scriptures guided by the Holy Spirit. Each believer has been made a priest unto God and as such is to offer himself for service under Jesus Christ our Great High Priest. (II Timothy 2 v 15; Hebrews 4 vv 14-16, 5 vv 5-10, 7 v 25, 10 vv 19-22; 1 Peter 1 v 5,9; Revelation 1 v 6)

The Church

We believe that a local church is an organised body of believers that have been baptised after a credible confession of faith in Christ, recognising the two Biblical offices^a, self-governing, and bonded together for work, worship, mutual edification, observance of the ordinances^b, and the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel. The church is distinct from Israel in the Old Testament, and is autonomous with Christ as its Head. (Matthew 28 vv 19,20; Ephesians 1 vv 22,23; Acts 2 vv 41-47; Ephesians 4 vv 11-13; I Corinthians 12)

- A. The two offices of the church include the pastor and the deacon . (I Timothy 3 v 1-13; Philippians 1 v 1, Acts 14.23, Titus 1.5)
- B. We believe there are two ordinances given by Christ to the church: believer's baptism and observing the Lord's Supper. These ordinances have no saving merit; they only portray the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. We believe baptism is for believers only, and the mode of baptism practised by this church shall be full immersion. We believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial commemorating the death of our Lord Jesus. The use of bread and wine (non-alcoholic) are symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood. Partaking is only for true believers and faithful self-examination should precede its observance. (Matthew 3 v 16, 28 vv 19,20; John 3 v 23; Acts 2 v 41; Romans 6 v 4; Matthew 26 vv 26-29; I Corinthians 11 vv 23-32)

Heaven and Hell

We believe in the eternal blessedness of the saved in a literal Heaven and the eternal punishment of the lost in a literal Hell. At death, the saved go immediately to be with Christ in Heaven, their souls looking upon the face of God and waiting the full redemption of their bodies. Their lives and works shall be evaluated at the Judgement, yet this will not be to determine their eternal destination, but their eternal reward. They will experience the blessedness of God's presence for all eternity. The spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hell where they are kept under punishment until the Judgement. At this time, their bodies shall be raised from the grave and be cast into the eternal Lake of Fire, the place of final and everlasting punishment. (John 5 vv 28,29; 14 vv 2,3; Revelation 20 vv 14,15; 21 v 8; Matthew 25 v 46)

Current Trends in Theology

As a fundamental group of believers, we take our stand regarding the current trends that lead to discrediting the Bible and undermining the fundamentals of the faith. This church will use the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible for public reading, preaching and all instruction. Oxford Baptist Church takes a separatist stand against Neo-orthodoxy, Neo-evangelicalism, and the Ecumenical movement which seeks to unite all religions beneath one banner. We do not embrace the teachings of Hyper-Calvinism, Arminianism, the ungodly philosophy of Humanism or the Charismatic emphasis of the modern tongues movement as a ministry of the Holy Spirit. We recognise that walking in the truth of God's Word is the only basis of fellowship. (Romans 16 v 17; II Corinthians 6 vv 14-18; II Thessalonians 3 v 6; II John 7-11)