

NIGERIAN BAPTIST CONVENTION

STATEMENT OF FAITH

PREAMBLE

The statements of Faith herein constitute the consensus of opinion of the Baptist body known as the Nigerian Baptist Convention and are meant for general instruction and guidance of her people. They are not meant to add anything to the conditions of salvation as revealed in the New Testament, i.e. repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

This Statements of Faith and Practice is not a creed to be adopted. Baptists are a people who profess a living faith rooted in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the only authority for faith and practice among Baptists is Jesus Christ, whose life and will is revealed in Holy Scriptures.

A living faith exercises a growing understanding of truth and must be continually interpreted and related to the needs of each generation. No Statement of Faith can be regarded as complete, without error, or as an official document of authority demanding compulsory adherence.

Baptists emphasize the soul's competency before God, freedom in religion and the priesthood of the believer. However, there are certain doctrines that Baptists believe, cherish and uphold. It is the purpose of these Statements of Faith to set forth certain teachings which we uphold and believe.

THE HOLY BIBLE

The Bible, composed of thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books in the New Testament, was written by divinely inspired persons over many years and in several languages. God's written word to mankind is special and unlike any other writings. In it God reveals his actions in history. The Bible is a true record of God's work in the creation of the universe including the creation of mankind in his own image. The Scriptures reveal the nature and condition of mankind, the consequences of disobedience, God's judgement, salvation, plan and purposes. The Bible is the standard by which all statements of faith and creeds are to be judged. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's purpose in self-revelation, hence Christ is forever the criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 6:17-19; Joshua 8:34; Psalm 19:7-10; 119:11, 77,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16, 36; Matthew 5:17-18; 7:22-29; Luke 21:33; John 1:17; 5:39; Acts 2:16ff; Romans 15:4; 16:25; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

GOD

There is only one God and besides Him there is no other. He is the creator of heaven and earth and all therein. God is eternal. He has no beginning or end, He is all-knowing, all-wise and almighty. God is personal; he has will and purpose. He is the absolute ruler of the universe, the redeemer

and preserver of all his creation. God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit while continuing always to be one God. To Him belong our highest love, reverence and obedience.

Genesis 1:1; Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 50:10-11; Isaiah 40:28; 43:11; 44:6; 45:5, 6, 14, 18, 21-23; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; 10:30; Romans 5:5; 8:15; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Revelation 22:12-13.

THE TRINITY

The three revelations of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are a mystery which defies human understanding or ability to give adequate expression of man's experiences with his threefold nature. Man's attempt to explain the three revelations produced the word Trinity which means three-in-one. In the Trinity God reveals Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each having distinct attributes but without division of nature, essence or being. Genesis 1:26; John 1:1; 10:29-30, 37-38; 14:9-10; 1 John 5:7-8.

THE FATHER

God reveals Himself as Father with loving care over all his creation. God provides for both physical and spiritual needs of his creation. All those who have faith in Jesus Christ are able to know personally God's fatherly mercy in his judgement, correction and loving forgiveness.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff; 20:1ff; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

THE SON

The true God reveals Himself as the eternal Son of God. Conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, the Son of God was born into the world with complete divine and human natures, yet without sin. Jesus is the Son of God in a manner apart from all other of God's creatures. Jesus as Son of God acts and speaks in perfect union with God. He is absolutely obedient to the Father. Jesus is the Christ (Messiah) and is God in human flesh. He is all of God that mankind was able to see, feel and hear physically. Jesus is the incarnation of God in human flesh. He existed before creation and was the instrument in creation.

He is the beginning and final goal of history. He revealed God's nature and will for mankind in his ministry through word and deed. He was perfectly obedient to the divine plan of redemption of man from sin by his death on the cross. He was raised from the dead, after which He appeared alive to his disciples and many other witnesses on many occasions and in many places. He was exalted to heavenly places at God's right hand where He is the one perfect mediator between God and man effecting the reconciliation of man to God. He lives within every true believer as the ever present Lord.

Psalms 2:7ff; 110:1ff; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16, 27; 17:5; 28:16,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18; 8:29; 10:30, 36-38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16, 28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20, 28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5, 20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3, 34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 8:12-15, 24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:14; 12:10-11; 19:16.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

God manifests Himself as Holy Spirit. God as Holy Spirit inspired the writer of both the Old and New Testaments. The Holy Spirit illumines the mind of man to enable him to understand spiritual truth. He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgement. He calls men to repent of sin and come to the Saviour. He effects regeneration (the new birth). He cultivates Christian character and bestows the spiritual gifts by which believers perform their service in the church. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is the assurance that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. The Holy Spirit comforts the believer in times of trouble and enlightens and empowers the believer for worship, evangelism and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalm 5:11; 9:7ff; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 28:19; Mark 1:10, 12; Luke 1:35; 4:1, 18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 38; 4:31; 5:3; 7:55; 8:17, 39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14;3:16; 12:3-11;Galatians4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17

THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is inseparable from salvation. The Holy Spirit is the evidence of the life of Christ in every believer. He enters the believer once and forever. His presence is evidence of the believer's redemption. The Christian who consciously and consistently yields to the Holy Spirit is filled with the Holy Spirit. Christians are admonished to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is grieved when a Christian sins and Christians are warned not to grieve the Holy Spirit. John 7:38-39; 16:12-15; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9, 52; Ephesians 5:18

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

The Spirit-filled person unmistakably manifests the fruits of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance, which are evidence of the Spirit's control. Manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit testify to the saving and transforming power of Jesus Christ. Acts 4:31-35; 2 Corinthians 6:4-6; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 1:8; 1 Peter 1:22.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit gives to Christians certain gifts for the equipping of the believers for ministry and the building up of the church of Jesus Christ. These gifts are varied and many. Some are listed in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 and Ephesians 4. No believer has all of these gifts. No gift is superior to another or to be used as criteria for the spirituality of believers. Among the gifts are wisdom, teaching, tongues, interpretation of tongues, administration, healing, miracles, evangelism, prophecy, stirring speech, giving, leadership and exhortation. Scriptures specifically caution against the misuse of the gift of speaking in ecstatic utterance. It is not a forbidden gift, but must be interpreted and done decently and in order. Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 7:7; 12:4-11, 28; Ephesians 4:11-15; 1 Peter 4:10.

THE MAN

Man was created by the special act of God in God's own image. Man is a spiritual being with the capacity to fellowship with God. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and given the freedom of choice. Man misused this freedom by choosing to obey Satan rather than God and thus brought sin into the human race. The result is that his posterity inherited a nature and environment inclined toward sin and, like their forebears, as soon as they are capable of moral choice, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Though aware of God's everlasting power and divine nature, mankind refused to glorify God in their hearts. Only the grace of God can bring man into fellowship with Him and enable man to fulfill the purpose for which he was created. Man is incapable of self-redemption and reconciliation with God. In his gracious love and mercy, God intervened by taking the initiative in the person of Jesus Christ to save man from sin and restore him to fellowship with God. God's creation of man and His provision of salvation for man deem every person worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5, 7, 18-22; 3:1-24; 9:6; Psalm 1:1-6; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18, 23; 5:6, 12, 19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18, 29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19, 21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

EVIL

The Bible does not deal with the origin of evil. It assumes it, relates its destructive power, and shows how God deals with the problem of evil.

THE FALL OF MAN

Man was created in a state of innocence and was neither righteous nor sinful. To become either he exercised the right of choice. God permitted man to be tested and man chose to do that which was not God's will. This willful decision against God constituted sin. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-7; Romans 5:2; 6:16, 23.

SIN

The Scriptures describe sin as crookedness, violence, lawlessness, iniquity, wickedness, offence and rebellion. Sin may be defined as rebellion against God's will. God does not classify sin as large or small. The greatest sin is unbelief with respect to Jesus Christ. Genesis 2:17; Psalm 51:5; John 3:18; Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:16; James 2:9-11.

SATAN

Satan, God's created angelic being, by his own free act lost his original supremacy and dignity and became the prince of darkness, a fiend (an evil spirit). The angelic Lucifer became Satan when in pride he attempted to exalt himself above God. The Bible, Christ and the apostles present him as a real being about whom the saints are constantly warned. He has power over man limited to this life only. He was overcome by Christ and can be successfully resisted by the redeemed child of God. He will share an eternal doom with all those whom he has seduced. His chief aim is to deceive and destroy that which will bring glory and honour to the Almighty God. Job 1:1-22; 2:1-13; Isaiah 14:12-14; 64:6; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:4-9; James 1:14-15; Jude 13.

DEMONS

Like Satan, demons were created angelic beings of good. While some angels continue in their created functions, others followed their master in rebellion against God and are bent on the destruction of the gracious purposes of God. Scriptures indicate that some demons are bound and some are free to roam as wise, angelic beings, powerful, but not almighty. Seeking human possession, they have wills, emotions and desires. They are fierce and wrathful. They seek to possess unbelievers and oppress the redeemed children of God. They can never separate the Christian from God's love. Christians have authority in Christ to stand against demons. Matthew 9:34; 25:41; Mark 9:20-26; 16:17; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 16:16; 19:15; Romans 8:38-39; Ephesians 2:2; 6:10-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:4-9; 2 Peter 2:4; 1 John 4:1-6; Revelation 16:13-16.

SALVATION

Salvation is God's redemption of the whole man. It is offered freely to all who, in response to the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin, turn away from their sin and accept Jesus Christ as Saviour, for he is the one who, by his own death on the cross, obtained eternal redemption for them.

REGENERATION (THE NEW BIRTH)

Repentance and faith are inseparable graces of God that result in man's spiritual incorporation into the life of Christ. The experience is referred to as regeneration or "the new birth." In this experience one publicly commits his life and loyalty to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

JUSTIFICATION

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon the basis of His righteousness ascribed to sinful man. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favour with God.

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is the experience which begins with the "new birth" in which the believer is set apart and enabled by the Holy Spirit to grow in the likeness of Jesus Christ who was without sin and imperfection.

GLORIFICATION

Glorification is the final and blessed state of the believer. Glorification is the blessed and glorious culmination of salvation.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-66; 28:1-6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21, 36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; Acts 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18, 29-39; 10:9-10, 13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 30; 6:19-20; 15:50; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-40; 12:1-8, 14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-10; 21-11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-27; 22:1-5.

DELIVERANCE

When one is united with Christ he is delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's marvelous light. He is possessed by the Spirit of Christ and in him the righteousness of Christ dwells complete. Neither Satan nor his demons can possess the redeemed child of God. The believer is not, however, removed from the earthly domain of darkness wherein the demonic forces roam and seek to deceive and dishonour the Almighty God. Christians are urged to put on the whole armour of God to withstand the forces of evil. They are urged to resist the devil and he will flee. Christ has won victory over Satan and in His authority the Christian can stand against the evil forces of Satan and his demons.

Unbelievers in whom the righteousness of Christ has not been imputed (transferred) may be the helpless victims of demonic powers and demonic possession. Christians have the duty to present the message of deliverance to these helpless victims in the authority (name) of Jesus Christ and the message of God's eternal deliverance in salvation. All sin and evil are the work of Satan. Christians are commanded to present God's message of eternal salvation wherein a soul is eternally delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light. John 1:9; 9:5; 10:28; Romans 6:14; 8:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 2:12, 13; Colossians 1:13; 2:15; Hebrews 5:9; 9:12.