

ARTICLE III -DECLARATION OF FAITH

The Meridian Baptist Church of Newton, Kansas, was conceived in the hearts of a small group of God's children, who felt that FREEDOM and LIBERTY of the individual Christian was to be expressed in some more far-reaching manner than just giving lip service to the basic principle. To this end, a plan of action was placed into motion. A truly INDEPENDENT, FUNDAMENTAL, MISSIONARY, EVANGELICAL, AND BAPTISTIC Church was brought into being, not to merely say, "thus and so", but to place into action the principles they so dearly loved and held sacred.

BIBLE DOCTRINE AND BIBLE PRINCIPLE MUST BE INSEPARABLE COMPANIONS IF THE CHURCH IS TO BE TRUE TO THE WORD OF GOD.

THEREFORE, we thus set forth to you, THE THINKING CHRISTIAN, what we believe to be true BIBLE DOCTRINE and PRINCIPLE, finding no room for compromise of those things which we hold dearer than life itself.

BIBLE DOCTRINE

(A) THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

WE BELIEVE the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and God-breathed. (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21).

(B) THE GODHEAD

WE BELIEVE in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deuteronomy 6:2-4; II Corinthians 13:14).

(C) THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. (John 1:12-14; Luke 1:35).

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Romans 3:24; I Peter 2: 24; Ephesians I: 7)

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Hebrews 9:24; Romans 8:34).

(D) THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit is a person Who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them until the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; II Corinthians 3:6; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9).

WE BELIEVE that He is the Divine Teacher Who guides into all truth, and that it is the privilege and duty of all to be filled with the Spirit. (John 16:13; I John 2:20-27; Ephesians 5:18).

(E) THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

WE BELIEVE in the personality of Satan, that he is the unholy god of this age, the author of all the powers of darkness, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire. (Matthew 4:1-3; II Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10).

- (F) THE CREATION
WE ACCEPT the Genesis account of creation and BELIEVE that man came by direct creation of God and not by evolution. (Genesis 1 and 2; Colossians 1:16-17; John 1:3).
- (G) THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN
WE BELIEVE that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God: and that man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- (H) SALVATION
WE BELIEVE that salvation is a free gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:18-19).
- (I) GRACE IN THE NEW CREATION
WE BELIEVE that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again: that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus: that it is instantaneous and not a process: that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God: that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel: that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life. (John 3:3; II Corinthians 5:17; I John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 16:30-33; II Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; II Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 2:13; John 3:8).
- (J) THE ETERNAL SECURITY AND ASSURANCE OF BELIEVERS
WE BELIEVE that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27; Romans 8:1,38,39; I Corinthians 1: 4-8; I Peter 1: 5) .

WE BELIEVE that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).
- (K) THE TWO NATURES OF THE BELIEVER
WE BELIEVE that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit: and that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. (Romans 6:13; 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; I Peter 1:14-16).
- (L) SEPARATION
WE BELIEVE that all the saved should live in such a manner as to not bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord: that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded by God. (II Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; I John 2:15-17; II John v s. 9-11).
- (M) THE LOCAL CHURCH
WE BELIEVE that a local church is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel: observing the ordinances of Christ: governed by His laws: exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word: that its officers are pastor and deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures.

WE BELIEVE the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we

have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations: that the one and only Superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit: that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel: that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation: that on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, and of benevolence, the will of the local church is final. (Acts 2:41-42; I Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:11; Acts 20:17-28; I Timothy 3:1-7; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23-24; Acts 15:13-18) .

(N) BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

WE BELIEVE that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life, that it is a prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. (Acts 8:26-39: John 3:23: Romans 6:3-5: Matthew 3:16: Colossians 2:12: I Corinthians 11:23-28).

(O) THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

WE BELIEVE that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked: that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem: while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. (Mal. 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17, 7:6; 3:23; I John 5:19; Proverbs 14: 32; Luke 16:25; Matthew 25: 34-41) .

(P) CIVIL GOVERNMENT

WE BELIEVE that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ Who is the only Lord of the conscience and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth. (Romans 13:1-7; II Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21-22; Acts 4:19: 5:20; 23:5; Matthew 22:21: Daniel 3:17-18).

(Q) SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

WE BELIEVE in the "Blessed Hope", the personal imminent, pretribulation and pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His Millennial Kingdom. (I Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11: 20:1-6; Revelation 3:10).

BIBLE PRINCIPLES

We know that the following statements could quite conceivably fall into the category of DOCTRINE... but in order to make our position clear, we will place it under the heading of BIBLE PRINCIPLE.

BIBLE PRINCIPLE TO US IS THAT ATTITUDE OF MIND AND ACTION WHICH CARRIES A CHURCH FORWARD IN THE STRENGTH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD AND NOT THE ENERGY OF THE FLESH.

THEREFORE, along with correct fundamental doctrine, a true New Testament Church must not incur the wrath of our Lord Jesus Christ by holding a principle or practice which Christ hates. Our Savior irrevocably states: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." Revelation 2:6