



AUSTRALIAN FELLOWSHIP OF
BIBLE-BELIEVING CHURCHES

Doctrinal Statement

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT (February 2016)

1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe in the Holy Bible, accepting fully the writings of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments as the very Word of God; that it was verbally and plenary inspired and was the product of Spirit-controlled men, and, therefore, is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks and is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

2 Timothy 3.16, 2 Peter 1.19-21

2. THE ONE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one living and true God, the infinite, intelligent, personal and loving Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all honour and praise; that in the unity of God co-exists three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct, but harmonious, offices in the Universe.

Genesis 1.1, Exodus 20.2-3, Deut. 4.35; 6.4, Ps. 2.7-9, John 1.1-3, Jn. 5.36-40, 1 Cor. 8.6

3. OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, without any essential change in His divine Person became Man by the miracle of the Virgin birth, thus to continue forever as both true God and true Man; that as Man He was tempted just as we are, but never once sinned; that as the perfect Lamb of God He gave Himself to the death of the Cross, bearing the sin of the world, and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our place; that He rose again from the dead and was glorified in the same body in which He suffered and died; that as our great High Priest He ascended into heaven, there to appear before the Heavenly Father as our Advocate and Intercessor.

Isa. 53.5-6, Matt. 1.23, Matt. 20.28, Col. 2.9, Lk. 24.36, John 1.14, Jn. 1.29, Jn. 8.46, Jn. 20.25-28, Gal. 3.13, Heb. 4.15, Heb. 4.14, Heb. 9.24, Heb. 13.8, 1 Jn. 2.1, Rev. 22.6

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Person

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person; equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in creation; that He convicts of sin, of judgement to come, and of righteousness; that He bears witness to and exalts the Person of Christ; that He is the agent in the new birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer.

Gen. 1.1-3, Matt. 28.19, Mk. 16.20, Lk. 1.35, Jn. 1.33, Jn. 3.5-6, Jn. 14.16-17, Jn. 14.26, Jn. 16.8-11, Rom. 8.14,16,26-27, 1 Cor. 13.8, 1 Cor. 14.21-22, Eph. 1.13-14, Heb. 9.14

The Gifts

Because of the present-day revival of the charismatic gifts, we affirm that spiritual gifts are divinely given at the instant of conversion by the Holy Spirit to every member of the body of Christ. The purpose of these gifts is to glorify God and to edify the Church to fulfil its divinely appointed task. There are gifts given to enable every believer to share in the ministry of edification and growth of the church. Revelation is not ongoing, tongues are neither the sign of baptism of the Spirit nor of spirituality and Christ's atonement was not to guarantee physical healing.

Therefore we understand that the present-day emphasis on gifts such as speaking in tongues and healing, such as is used in the charismatic movement today, is not valid. We believe that God can intervene in human history in a miraculous way should he choose to do so, however the occurrence of such interventions today are distinct from the phenomena of the miraculous sign gifts evident in Apostolic times.

The exercise of spiritual gifts must always be consistent with Scripture.

1 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 4:7-16; 1 Peter 2:24; 4:10-11

5. THE DEVIL OR SATAN

We believe that Satan was created by God as an angel but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of his creator, drawing with him many angels; that he is now the unholy prince of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness but is destined, however, to final defeat at the hands of Jesus Christ, and the judgement of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

Ezekiel 28.13-17, Jn. 8.44, Jn. 12.31-32, Jn. 16.11, 2 Cor. 4.4, Eph. 2.2, Eph. 6.12-18, Heb. 2.14, Rev. 12.9-10

6. CREATION & FALL OF MAN

We believe in the Genesis account of Creation, including the time frame of six (6), twenty-four (24) hour days, is to be accepted literally, not allegorically; that man was created directly in God's image and after His likeness, and that man's creation was not a matter of evolution from lower life forms. We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless state, and in consequence of which, all mankind are now sinners by nature and choice and, therefore, are under just condemnation without defence or excuse.

Gen. 1-3, Matt. 19.4, Jn. 8.42-44, Rom. 1.18, Rom. 3.23, Rom. 3.19, Rom. 5.12, Rom. 7.18, Eph. 4.18, I Thess. 5.23

7. SALVATION

The Atonement

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of Jesus Christ,

the son of God, who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the most tender sympathies with divine perfection. He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Saviour.

The New Birth

We believe that in order to be saved, the sinner must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Jesus Christ, and that the one formerly dead in trespasses and sins is made 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, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth.

The human response, as evidenced in relation to the new birth, is repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Justification

We believe that the believer who has exercised personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is justified; that Justification is that judicial act of God whereby the believer in Christ is declared righteous, which declaration incorporates the pardon of sin and the imputation of divine righteousness, not because of any works of righteousness on the believer's part, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood.

Jn. 3.3, Jn. 3.16, Acts 15.11, Rom. 3.24-25, Rom. 5.1, Rom. 6.23, 2 Cor. 5.17, Eph. 2.8-9 Gal. 2.16, Phil. 2.7-8, Heb. 2.14-17, 2 Peter 1.4, 1 Jn. 4.10, 1 Jn. 5.1

8. SANCTIFICATION & SEPARATION

We believe that sanctification is the divine setting apart of the believer unto God accomplished in a threefold manner; first, an eternal act of God, based upon redemption in Christ, establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Saviour; second, a continuing process in the Christian as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life; third, the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return.

We believe the Scriptures teach that every believer should be separated unto God, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, should walk in Christian love and holiness, exhibiting qualities of honesty, purity, integrity, loving kindness, all undertaken in the spirit of humility. We also believe that every believer is admonished not to love the world or the things of the world, but rather to flee evil desires, doing all things to the glory of God.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the integrity of biblical doctrine must be vigorously defended. Therefore, we kindly separate from any church, organisation or individual that teaches or tolerates doctrinal error as per the AFBC doctrinal statement. We reject ecumenism, which is to say that we refuse to sacrifice biblical convictions for the sake of unity in relation to evangelism or fellowship.

We believe that the Scriptures teach the principle that we should avoid fellowship or involvement with the unsaved in any combined Gospel ministry.

Jn. 17.17, 1 Cor. 1.30, 2 Cor. 3.18, 2 Cor. 6.14, Gal. 1.8-9, Eph. 5.25-27, I Thess. 4.3-4, 1 Thess. 5.23-24, 2 Tim. 2.16-18, 1 Jn. 3.2, 2 Jn. 9-11, Heb. 10.1-14, Jude 24-25, Rev. 22.11, Jude 3

9. THE LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that a local church is a congregation of believers under the discipline of the Word of God and the lordship of Jesus Christ organised to carry out the commission to evangelise, to teach, and to administer the ordinances of Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that the local church has the right of self- government free from interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organisations; and that the one and only Superintendent is Christ; that it is Scriptural for local assemblies to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation.

Acts 2.41-42, Acts 15.13-18, 1 Cor. 11.2, I Cor. 12.12-13, Eph. 1.22-23, Eph. 3.1-6, Eph. 4.11; 5.23, Col. 1.18

10. BAPTISM AND LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christ only gave two ordinances to His disciples – Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe both are symbolic in nature and neither confer any saving merit upon the recipient, but are to be undertaken after salvation. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a born again believer into water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to show forth a solemn and beautiful emblem of our identification with the crucified, buried and risen Saviour, through whom we died to sin and rose to a new life. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded by solemn self-examination and is to be observed by believers only.

Matt. 3.16, Matt. 28.18-20, Jn. 3.23, Acts 2.41-42, Acts 8.36-38, Rom. 6.3-5, 1 Cor. 11.23-28

11. THE RETURN OF CHRIST

We believe in the pre-tribulational return of Jesus Christ for His Church. This will be followed by a seven-year tribulation on the earth, climaxed by the pre-millennial return of Christ to the earth with His Church to usher in a literal thousand-year kingdom with the Saviour reigning. This will then be followed by the Great White Throne Judgement of unbelievers, and ultimately a new earth and new heaven.

Isa. 9.6-7, Dan. 9.25-27, Matt. 24.29-31, Luke 1.30-33, Jn. 5.28-29, Jn. 14.2, Acts 2.29-30, 1 Cor. 15.42-44, 1 Cor. 15.51-54, Phil. 3.20-21, 1 Thess. 4.13-18, Rev. 20.1-6, Rev. 3.10, Rev. 20.14-15, Rev. 21.4

12. ISRAEL

We believe that Israel is distinct from the Church. The promises of God, including the restoration of a redeemed remnant to the promised land under the reign of Jesus Christ her Messiah, will be literally fulfilled.

13. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; that rulers are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed, except only in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ as found in Scripture, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth.

Matt. 22.21, Acts 23.5, Rom. 13.1-7

14. MARRIAGE

We believe that marriage is the God-ordained union of a man and a woman, to the exclusion of others, voluntarily entered into for life. This association will only solemnize marriages that conform to this Biblical definition.

Gen. 2.24, Matt. 19.4-6, Rom. 1.26-27