

Comparison of MB Confessions of Faith

1902

1975

1999 Update 2024

Foreword	Preface	Introduction
<p>The confession of faith here to follow is a short statement of the fundamental doctrines of the denomination of "The Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America", a branch of the larger body of the "Mennonites" first appearing in history about the year 1536, when the founder of the denomination, Menno Simons, left the Roman Church and began the establishment of independent churches soon grouped together with others under the name, "Anabaptists."</p> <p>The "Mennonite Brethren Church" as an independent denomination was first founded January 6, 1860, in southern Russia. Historically it claims full connection with the larger body of Mennonites now represented by a large number of branches. In its doctrine it differs from most of these in some of its principles, yet having in common with them many of the principles first set up by its honored founder. The following pages will show to what extent the doctrinal view of this denomination agrees with the doctrines of</p>	<p>The Mennonite Brethren Church has throughout its history emphasized biblical authority in all matters of faith and practice. This emphasis exalts the centrality of Scripture and counsels a proper use of creedal statements and confessions of faith as expressions of our understanding of Scripture. Such documents are to be regarded as descriptive more than normative. They are never to be given equal status with the Bible.</p> <p>The Mennonite Brethren Church is historically and theologically rooted in evangelical Mennonite-Anabaptism of the sixteenth century Reformation which sought to recapture the faith and life of the New Testament church. Our forefathers agreed with Menno Simons, after whom Mennonites are named, that "No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). Numerous confessions in the Anabaptist tradition were used in the preparation of the first Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith.</p>	<p>The Mennonite Brethren Church is rooted in the evangelical Anabaptist sixteenth-century Reformation, a movement that sought to recapture the faith and life of the New Testament church. The Mennonite Brethren Church was born as a renewal movement in Russia on 1860. World mission efforts and widespread migrations have produced a movement that circles the globe. The Mennonite Brethren Church emphasized the centrality of biblical authority, articulating confessions of faith in order to connect scriptural teaching with contemporary discipleship. With Menno Simons, we hold central the biblical statement, "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).</p> <p>The 2014 US Mennonite Brethren (USMB) Confession of Faith contains wording of Article 13 which has been revised from the 1999 North American version of the Confession of Faith. The 1999 North American confession is a complete revision of earlier Mennonite Brethren confessions of faith. The 1902 confession, adopted in Russia and North America, was</p>

<p>other Mennonite bodies and upon what points it differs from them.</p> <p>In the years 1874–1880 large numbers of the denomination came over from Russia and founded the church in North America. Up to the year 1900 it had no creed in printed form. The brethren of the same faith in Russia had several documents of doctrinal teaching but had never developed the same fully nor printed them in complete form. About the year 1900 the denomination, still strongly represented in Russia, drew up and accepted the confession that was formally adopted by the "Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America" in its annual session of the Conference in the year 1902.</p> <p>Since then a new edition of the confession was made necessary and such was issued by the denomination's "Publishing House" in the year 1916. This edition was printed only in the German language. In it the exact text of the adopted confession was retained, but a grouping into paragraphs was made and a few additions of scriptural references put in.</p> <p>This present edition of the confession is necessitated by the growth of the denomination, which by this</p>	<p>A confession such as this one is an expression of the biblical ideals of the brotherhood, revised from time to time, reflecting the faith which such a fellowship believes and preaches. Its validity depends on its biblical character; its usefulness depends on its ability to communicate our understanding of the biblical message. The Mennonite Brethren Church accepts God's revelation in Scripture to be trustworthy and authoritative.</p> <p>Since the nature and mission of the church call for a concise statement of what a brotherhood believes, the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches has undertaken to rewrite the Confession of Faith to make it more readable. May it serve as a guide and a messenger, exhorting believers to live the faith they proclaim.</p>	<p>revised in 1975. The 1999 confession was written and adopted by the North American Mennonite Brethren Church for use in the United States and Canada. The framers of the 1999 confession gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. Following a decade-long process of writing, consulting Mennonite Brethren congregations and sister national conferences and revising, the 1999 confession gained final approval at the General Conference meetings in Wichita, Kansas in July of that year. That version was jointly owned by both the Canadian Conference of MB Churches and the US Conference of MB Churches following the dissolution of the General Conference in 2000.</p> <p>At the 2010 USMB Convention in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, the USMB Board of Faith and Life was given the task of reviewing and revising Article 13 of the 1999 Confession of Faith in order to bring it into compliance with our current understanding of the Bible and how we live that out. After months of consulting with individuals, churches, districts and the Canadian Conference of MB Churches, followed by multiple revisions and acceptance by the International Community of Mennonite Brethren, the USMB Board of Faith and Life proposed the current wording</p>
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<p>time claims quite a number of members that will be able to read it only in the American language. In the work of translation the aim has been to give as literally as is consistent with good English the exact statements of the text in the German. In the translations of passages from the Bible the "King James Version has been adhered to throughout. After the drafting of the translation it has been carefully read in committee. Rev. H.S. Voth and Rev. P.C. Hiebert together with the, writer going over the translation carefully before its publication.</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ accompany the translation and may it become a means for the grouping in the faith in things fundamental in our denominational doctrine. May it help much to glorify the great name of our Lord!</p> <p>H. F. Toews.</p>		<p>of Article 13 at the USMB Convention in Santa Clara, California in July 2014 where delegates approved the article as it appears here.</p> <p>The Bible is our written authority. As Anabaptists, we believe that authoritative interpretation of the Bible is the result of corporate reflection under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This confession is the result of such a process and not only describes how the US Mennonite Brethren Church interprets the Bible for our context, but is also an authoritative guide for biblical interpretation, theological identity and ethical practice.</p> <p>The reader should be alert to the following literary conventions adopted for this confession. Scripture references are listed at the conclusion of each article. These references are not meant to be exhaustive nor do they serve primarily as proof-texts for the articles. Pronouns referring to God are uniformly upper case to remind the reader that the use of the masculine pronoun is a convention of human language. God is neither male nor female; human male and female are created in the image of God. A more complete commentary and pastoral application of the Confession is available from Kindred Productions. A liturgical version of the Confession, <i>Confessing Together</i>, is also commended</p>
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		<p>for use in congregational worship.</p> <p><i>(Revised and updated from the 1999 Confession of Faith Introduction)</i></p>
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<p>I. Concerning God</p> <p>We believe with the heart and confess with the mouth before all men according to the contents of the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:9-10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Galatians 1:8; cf. "Conclusion".</p> <p>I. CONCERNING GOD. 1. That there is one God, Creator of the heavens and the earth and all visible and invisible things; that He is eternal, almighty, omniscient, alone wise, holy, just and veracious, infinite and omnipresent, alone good and perfect, invisible and incomprehensible, a Spirit; that He is love; merciful, patient, long-suffering; that He is faithful and unchangeable, all sufficient and blessed; that He is the well-spring of life; that He only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; that He sustains and governs and worketh all things; that He is mighty in council and mighty in deed, a Lord of lords and King of kings. The heaven is His throne, and the</p>	<p>The Mennonite Brethren and God</p> <p>We believe in God, the eternal Spirit, infinite in holiness, power, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, love and mercy. This one and only eternal God has revealed Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.</p> <p>The Father</p> <p>We believe in God the Father, who created all things. He can be known to the extent that He has revealed Himself in word and deed as the source and sustainer of life. He is a God of love who orders all things to serve His eternal purpose. In mercy and grace He adopts as His children all who repent of their sin and trust in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.</p> <p>The Son</p> <p>We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, whom the Father sent to reconcile us to Himself and to redeem us from sin and eternal death. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary. Thus He is true God and true man according to the Scriptures. He lived a perfect, holy and sinless life. In the redemptive purpose of God, He suffered crucifixion and</p>	<p>Article 1: God</p> <p>We believe in the one, true, living God, Creator of heaven and earth. God is almighty in power, perfect in wisdom, righteous in judgment, overflowing in steadfast love. God is the Sovereign who rules over all things visible and invisible, the Shepherd who rescues the lost and helpless. God is a refuge and fortress for those in need. God is a consuming fire, perfect in holiness, yet slow to anger and abounding in tender mercy. God comforts like a loving mother, trains and disciplines like a caring father, and persists in covenant love like a faithful husband. We confess God as eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.</p> <p>God the Father</p> <p>God the Father is the source of all life. In Him we live and move and have our being. The Father seeks those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth, and hears the prayers of all who call on Him. In the fullness of time, the Father sent the Son for the salvation of the world. Through Jesus Christ the Father adopts all who respond in faith to the gospel, forgiving those who repent of their sin and entering into a new covenant with them. God gives the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, to all His children. God's creative and redemptive love</p>
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earth His footstool. Thousand thousands minister unto Him and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him. His name is Lord of hosts; the heavens and all the earth are full of His glory.

Deuteronomy 4:35; Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:19-20; Psalms 33:6; Psalms 90:2; Revelation 4:9; Genesis 17:1; Revelation 1:8; Psalms 139:1-4; Romans 16:27; Jude 25; Leviticus 11:44; Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8; Exodus 9:27; Psalms 11:7; Psalms 51:6; Psalms 145:17; Revelation 15:3; Revelation 16:5; Psalms 139:7-12; Matthew 5:48; Psalms 25:8; Matthews 19:17; Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; Psalms 147:5; Romans 11:33; John 4:24; 1 John 4:9; Genesis 34:6; Luke 6:36; Romans 2:4; Thessalonians 3:3; Exodus 3:14; Malachai 3:6; James 1:17; Isaiah 43:22-24; 1 Timothy 6:15; Psalms 36:10; Jeremiah 2:13; 1 Timothy 6:16; Deuteronomy 10:17; 1 Timothy 6:15; Isaiah 51:15; Psalms 19:2; Habakkuk 3:3.

2. This one God has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; John 16:13-15; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Numbers 6:24-26.

3. Concerning God, the Father, we believe and confess, that of Him the whole family in heaven and earth is named; that He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; in

death for our sin. He rose from the dead for our justification and ascended into heaven where He now intercedes for all who believe. He will come again to judge the living and the dead and to establish His eternal Kingdom.

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, one with the Father and the Son, sent by them to effect redemption in man. He convicts, regenerates, guides, teaches, rebukes, indwells, empowers, comforts, intercedes, unites believers into one body, and glorifies Christ.

Basic Scriptures cited are representative, and not exhaustive: Genesis 1; Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Psalms 139; Isaiah 40; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1, 18; John 4:24; John 15:26; Romans 8:1-17, 26-27; 2 Corinthians 3:17; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:6-8; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Hebrews 11:6; Jude 25.

sustains this world until the end of the age.

God the Son

The Son, through whom all things were created and who holds all things together, is the image of the invisible God. Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, Jesus took on human nature to redeem this fallen world. He revealed the fullness of God through his obedient and sinless life. Through word and deed Jesus proclaimed the reign of God, bringing good news to the poor, release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. Christ triumphed over sin through His death and resurrection, and was exalted as Lord of creation and the church. The Savior of the world invites all to be reconciled to God, offering peace to those far and near, and calling them to follow Him in the way of the cross. Until the Lord Jesus returns in glory, He intercedes for believers, acts as their advocate, and calls them to be His witnesses.

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the Counselor, is the creative power, presence and wisdom of God. The Spirit convicts people of sin, gives them new life, and guides them into all truth. By the Spirit believers are baptized into one body. The indwelling Spirit testifies that they are God's children, distributes gifts for ministry, empowers for witness, and produces the fruit of righteousness. As Comforter, the Holy Spirit helps God's children in their weakness, intercedes for them according to God's will and assures them of eternal life.

particular, that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and all His believers, and that He has made all things through the Son, the Eternal Word, and through the breath of His mouth. 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:15; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Matthew 6:9; Romans 8:14-15; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; Genesis 1:2; Psalms 33:6; Job. 33:4.

4. Concerning Christ the Son of God, we believe and confess, that He is our Lord, Redeemer and Savior; the eternal living Son of God, begotten of the Father from eternity in an inconceivable manner; that He is His only begotten Son, the true God, magnified in eternity. Luke 2:11; Luke 2:30; John 4:42; Romans 3:24; Matthew 1:21; Micah 5:1; John 1:1; John 17:5 and 24; Hebrews 13:8; Psalms 2:7; Hebrews 1:5-10; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 17:5; John 1:14; John 3:16 and 18; Romans 9:5; 1 John 5:20.

5.

A -- This eternal Son of God, when the time was fulfilled, was sent by the Father from heaven into the world, that His purpose, which He had before the foundation of the world, might be accomplished; namely, to redeem us from the eternal

Genesis 1; Exodus 15:2-3; Exodus 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Psalm 8; Psalm 23; Psalm 139; Isaiah 55:8-9; Isaiah 66:12-13; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hosea 11:1-4; Matthew 1:18-25; Matthew 5-7; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 4:18-19; John 1:1-18; John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4; Romans 8:1-17; I Corinthians 12:4-7; I Corinthians 13; I Corinthians 15:3-8; II Corinthians 1:22; II Corinthians 5:16-21; II Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 1:15-2:22; Ephesians 3:14-21; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-20; I Timothy 6:15-16; II Timothy 2:11-13; Hebrews 12:7-11; I Peter 2:21-25; I John 2:2; Revelation 5:5-6, 9-10.

curse. John 3:13 and 31; 1 Peter 1:20; John 3:16 Galatians 3:13; Romans 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21.
 B -- That He through the wonderful power of the Father and working of the Holy Spirit (in conception) was made flesh, a man, of the highly-favored and among the women blessed virgin Mary, was born of her and so in all things became like unto us, but without sin, and thus is true God and true man, our only Savior, Jesus Christ.
 Galatians 4:4;
 Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:28-35; Luke 2:7, 11, 21; Philippians 2:6-8; Hebrew 2:17-18; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5; 1 Peter 2:22; Colossians 1:3-14; 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

6. He has, after a perfect, holy, and sinless life, suffered for us under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried for our sins, descended into hell (into the lower regions of the earth, into prison or Hades) and upon the third day, for our justification, was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the almighty Father and intercedes for us; from whence He will come again in glory to judge the

living and the dead, and to establish the kingdom of righteousness and peace, of joy and glory, which kingdom shall have no end.* Matthew 26-27; Mark 14 and 15; Luke 22-23; John 18 and 19; Matthew 12:40; Acts 2:27; Ephesians 4:9; 1 Peter 3:18-19; Revelation 1:18; 1 Corithinans 15:15; Hosea 13:14; Romans 4:25; Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20 and 21; Acts 1; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 1:3; Psalms 22:29; Psalms 96:10-13; Psalms 99:4; Luke 21:31; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 12:10; Revelation 20-22.

- Menno Simons has written concerning the person of Christ thus: "I teach all plain and simple, that Jesus Christ, magnified, true God and, true man, is a son of God and a son of man, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the pure virgin Mary; a man poor and able to suffer like unto us in all things excepting sin." - Transl.. from "Glb. Bekenntnis der M. in Preuszen und Ruszland.)

7. Concerning the Holy Spirit. We believe in the Holy Spirit, that giveth life, the Comforter proceeding from the Father, being sent by the Father and the Son, through whom the Father and the Son work, and that He is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, one with them in His divine being; Him

we see in the work of creation; He was in the prophets that through Him spoke; He in a bodily form as a dove descended upon our Lord at His baptism; He was poured out upon the apostles of the Lord on holy Pentecost day; He is in all believers; He, is in the Church of Christ, teaching, leading, rebuking, comforting, renewing and satisfying; and He glorifies Christ.* 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; John 6:63; John 14:26; John 15:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Matthew 10:20; Galatians 4:6; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Hebrews 9:14; Acts 5:3, 4, 9; Psalms 33:6; Genesis 1:2; Job. 33:4; 1 Pet. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:21; Matt. 3:16; Acts 2:1-13; Ezek. 36:26-27; 1 Cor. 3:16; John 14:16, 17, 26, 27; Acts 5:9-11; Titus 2:11-12; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 2:27; John 16:14; Revelation 1:4; Revelation 3:6; Revelation 22:17.

- Menno Simons (Vollstaendige Werke, Seite 268, Teil II.): "We confess that the Holy Ghost is a true, real and personal Spirit, as the Church Fathers called Him, and. this in a divine sense, like as the Father is a real father and the Son is a real son."

8. We confess the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to be one, unseparated and unintermingled in their being, willing and action; worthy

and partaking of the same glory and worship, in the sense that the Father is true eternal God, the Son is true eternal God, and the Spirit is true eternal God. And yet we believe not in three Gods, but in one eternal, incomprehensible trauma God.* Luke 3:22; Revelation 1:4-5; (Revelation 1:4; Revelation 3:6; Acts 20:28) ; John 10:30; John 14:16, 26; John 15:26; John 16:13-15; Revelation 4:2-3; Revelation 5:5-6; Revelation 7:17; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; John 5:23; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 5:12-13; 1 Peter 4:14; 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 20; Ephesians 4:30; Isaiah 48:16; Isaiah 61:1; Ezekiel 11:5; Matthew 10:20; Matthew 12:18; Acts 8:27 and 39; Acts 16:6; Romans 8:2; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 4:6; Matthew 6:9; Isaiah 9:5; Micah 5:1; John 1:1-14; John 8:58; John 20:28; Romans 9:5; 1 John 5:20; Hebrew 1:3-10; Revelation 1:5-7 and 17; Hebrews 9:14; Matthew 12:31-32; Acts 5:3-4; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Revelation 1:14-2:7; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 6:3; Isaiah 61:1; Revelation 4:8; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Numbers 6:24-26.

- Menno Simons (page 263 in Vollstaendige Werke): "We believe and confess with the Holy Scriptures that this one eternal, almighty, unsearchable,

<p>unspeakable and incomprehensible God is the eternal Son and with His eternal, incomprehensible Holy Spirit. We confess that the Father is truly God, the Son is truly God and the Holy Spirit is truly God -- not in a physical and comprehensible, but in a spiritual and, inconceivable way. -- "Menno S. quotes in his confession, that the ancients called Father, Son and Holy Spirit three persons and thereby understood, the three beings." (Meus. K. Handb. 4, 549). -- C.H. Spurgeon: "To the one God of heaven and of earth be alone honor and, praise in the trinity of His holy persons etc. To the glorious Father, as the God of the Covenant of Israel, to the gracious Son, the Savior of His people, and to the Holy Ghost, the author of holiness, be eternal praise," etc. (Eng. Predigtsammlung, Bd. 36, Widmung.)</p> <p>9. Unto Him alone we worship and praise and honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen.</p>		
	<p><u>The Revelation of God</u></p>	<p>Article 2: Revelation of God God's Self-Revelation</p>

	<p>We believe that God has revealed His power and deity in the created universe so that man can know Him. God revealed Himself in saving word and deed in the Old Testament and established a covenant relationship with His people. He revealed Himself supremely and finally in the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament.</p> <p>We believe that all Scripture is inspired by God as men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit. We accept the Old and New Testaments as the infallible Word of God and the authoritative Guide for the faith and life of Christian discipleship. We believe that the Old Covenant was preparatory in nature, finding its fulfillment in the New Covenant. Christ is the key to understanding the Bible; the Old Testament bears witness to Him, and He is the One whom the New Testament proclaims.</p> <p>Psalms 19; Psalm 119:105; Luke 24:27, 44; Romans 1:18-23; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Hebrews 1:1-2; Hebrews 8:5-13</p>	<p>We believe that God has made Himself known to all people. God's power and nature have always been evident in creation. The Old Testament reveals God as the one who established a covenant relationship with Israel to make known to all people the eternal plan of salvation. God revealed Himself supremely in Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit continues to make God known to individuals and the church; this revelation is always consistent with the Scriptures.</p> <p>The Written Word of God</p> <p>We believe that the entire Bible was inspired by God through the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit guides the community of faith in the interpretation of Scripture. The person, teaching and life of Jesus Christ bring continuity and clarity to both the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament bears witness to Christ, and Christ is the One whom the New Testament proclaims. We accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God and the authoritative guide for faith and practice.</p> <p><i>Genesis 9:1-17; Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 6:2-8; Psalm 19:1-11; Psalm 119; Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:27, 44-47; John 1:16-18; John 16:13; Acts 8:34-35; Romans 1:18-21; Hebrews 1:1-2; Colossians 1:15-23; II Timothy 3:14-17; II Peter 1:16-21.</i></p>
		<p>Article 3: Creation and Humanity</p> <p>Creation</p>

		<p>We believe that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and they were very good. All of creation expresses God's sovereign will and design, but remains distinct from the Creator. The universe belongs to God, who takes care and delight in sustaining it. Creation declares God's wisdom and power, calling all to worship Him.</p> <p>Humanity</p> <p>Humans, the crowning act of creation, were designed to live in fellowship with God and in mutually helpful relationships with each other. God created them male and female in the image of God. The Creator gave them the mandate to rule and care for creation as a sacred trust, and the freedom to obey or disobey him. Through the willful disobedience of Adam and Eve, sin entered the world. As a result, human nature is distorted and people are alienated from God and creation. Creation is under the bondage of decay. Humans and all creation long to be set free.</p> <p>The New Creation</p> <p>Sin, guilt, and death will not prevail. God will create a new heaven and a new earth in which there will be no evil, suffering, and death. The first signs of this new creation are already present in those who accept God's forgiveness through Christ. In Christ all things are being reconciled and created anew.</p> <p><i>Genesis 1-3; Psalm 8:6; Psalm 19:1-6; Psalm 24:1-2; Psalm 89:11; Psalm 95:5; Psalm 104; Proverbs 8:22-31; Isaiah 40:12-31; Isaiah 44:24; John 1:1-4, 10; John 17:5; Romans 1:19-20; Romans 5:17, 21;</i></p>
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<p>II. Concerning Sin and Redemption</p> <p>10. Concerning sin we believe and confess, that God created man in His own image, upright and innocent, capable of blessed fellowship with Himself. But man, being tempted of Satan, sinned, fell away from God, and fell into physical and spiritual death with all his descendants, so that man is conceived and born in sin as a child of wrath incapable of and not inclined toward the divine good, but capable of and inclined toward evil. Genesis 1:27, 31; Genesis 2:25; Ecclesiastes 7:30; Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:1-19; James 1:3-15; John 3:6; John 8:44; Romans 5:12, 18; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:6-7; Psalms 51:7; Psalms 58:4; Ephesians 2:1-3; Genesis 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:25; Romans 3:10-18; Romans 7:22-23.</p> <p>11. Concerning redemption, we believe, that man can be redeemed from the curse of</p>	<p>Man and Sin</p> <hr/> <p>We believe that man (man=mankind) was created in the image of God, sinless, and in fellowship with God, with a free will to make moral choices. But man sinned, and willfully disobeyed God, breaking fellowship with Him and bringing physical, spiritual and eternal death on the whole human race. Consequently all are sinful by nature, guilty before God and in need of forgiveness through Christ.</p> <p>Psalms 19; Psalm 119:105; Luke 24:27, 44; Romans 1:18-23; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Hebrews 1:1-2; Hebrews 8:5-13</p>	<p>Article 4: Sin and Evil</p> <p>Sin and Its Consequences</p> <p>We believe that the first humans yielded to the tempter and fell into sin. Since then, all people disobey God and choose to sin, falling short of the glory of God. As a result, sin and evil have gained a hold in the world, disrupting God’s purposes for the created order and alienating humans from God and thus from creation, each other and themselves. Human sinfulness results in physical and spiritual death. Because all have sinned, all face eternal separation from God.</p> <p>Principalities and Powers</p> <p>Sin is a power that enslaves humanity. Satan, the adversary, seeks to rule creation and uses sin to corrupt human nature with pride and selfishness. In sin people turn from God, exchanging the truth about God for a lie, worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator. Sin opens individuals and groups to the bondage of demonic principalities and powers. These powers also work through political, economic, social and even religious systems to turn people away from holiness, justice</p>

eternal death, the wages of sin, and the wrath of God, only through the one eternal and sufficient redeeming and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the lamb of God; and by His grace only are we justified without works, and He only is the ground of our choosing-, renewing, and sanctification. John 1:29; John 14:6; Hebrews 9:26; Hebrews 10:14, 26; Isaiah 53; Hebrews 9:11-15; Galatians 3:10-13; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7; Romans 3:24; Romans 5:19; Ephesians 1:3-6; 1 Peter 1:3; John 17:19; 1 Corinthians 1:30.

12. Concerning **divine predestination** and **man's will** we believe, that from eternity it has been the free pleasure and the gracious purpose of God to redeem sinners to the praise of His glory, wherefore also Christ after the premeditated council was selected of God before the foundation of the world, that through His incarnation, life, teaching, death, resurrection and ascension He should be the Redeemer, as our great **Prophet, only High Priest** and eternal **King**, that all that obey His Gospel believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

13. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;

Salvation by Grace

We believe that there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ. The purpose of His coming was to redeem man from the judgment and power of sin and to reconcile him to God. Through the shedding of His blood, Christ provided the one sufficient sacrifice for sin and established God's New Covenant.

We are saved by the grace of God through faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, convicts man of his sin and need for salvation. Those who repent of their sin and trust in Christ as Saviour and Lord receive forgiveness. By the power of the Holy Spirit they are born into the family of God and receive the assurance of salvation. Saving faith involves a surrender of the will to Christ, a complete trust in Him, and a

and righteousness. Whether in word, deed, thought or attitude, all humans are under the domination of sin and, on their own, are unable to overcome its power.

Genesis 3; Genesis 6:11-12; Psalm 14:1-3; Psalm 36:1-4; Psalm 52:1-7; Psalm 58:1-5, 82; Isaiah 53:6; Ezekiel 16:49-50; Amos 2:4-8; Mark 7:20-23; John 8:34, 44; Romans 1:21-32; Romans 3:9-18, 23; Romans 5:12-14, 18-19; Romans 6:23; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:1-3; Ephesians 6:12; I Peter 5:8-9; I John 1:8-10; Revelation 12:9.

Article 5: Salvation

God's Initiative

We believe that God is at work to accomplish deliverance and healing, redemption and restoration in a world dominated by sin. From the beginning, God's purpose has been to create for Himself a people, to dwell among them and to bless them. Creation and all of humanity are without hope of salvation except through God's love and grace. God's love is fully demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God's Plan

Throughout history, God has acted mightily to deliver people from bondage and draw them into a covenant relationship. Through the prophets God prepared the way of salvation until finally God reconciled the world to Himself by the atoning blood of Jesus. As people place their

<p>according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestined us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. Ephesians 1:3-14; Ephesians 3:10-12; Colossians 1:13. Compare "Kingdom"; Romans 8:28-39; John 10:28-29; 1 Peter 1:20; Philippians 2:7; Philippians 2:7; John 14:6; John 6:63; Acts 3:22; Hebrews 4:14-16; Psalms 2:6-12; Revelation 17:-14; Romans 1:5, 10, 13, 16; John 3:16-21; Acts 2:23.</p> <p>14. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Strive to enter in at the strait gate. Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. Revelation 22:17; Matthew 11:28; Matthew 23:37-38; Luke 13:24; Philippians 2:12-13; 2 Peter 1:10; Ezekiel 33:11; Isaiah 55:7; Psalms 103:1-8; Psalms 22; Psalms 145:9; Matthew 26:41.</p> <p>15. Concerning conversion, renewal or the new birth we believe, that through the living and powerful Word of</p>	<p>joyful obedience to His Word as a faithful disciple.</p> <p>Acts 2:42, 46; Ephesians 1:13-14, Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 4:12; Hebrews 9:15-28; 1 John 1:9</p>	<p>trust in Christ, they are saved by grace through faith, not of their own doing, but as a gift of God. God forgives them, delivers them from sin's bondage, makes them new creatures in Christ, empowers them by the Holy Spirit and seals them for eternal life. When sin and death are finally abolished and the redeemed are gathered in the new heaven and the new earth, God will have completed the plan of salvation.</p> <p>Humanity's Response</p> <p>Though Jesus entered a world ruled by sin, He chose not to submit to its allure and broke its domination. Through His obedient life, His death on the cross and His glorious resurrection, Christ triumphed over Satan and the powers of sin and death, opening the way for all people to follow. Convicted by the Holy Spirit, people turn from sin, entrust their lives to God, confess Jesus Christ as Lord and join the family of God. All who receive Christ are born again, and have peace with God, and are called to love one another and live at peace with their neighbor. Those whom God is saving no longer live for themselves for they have been set free from sin and called to newness of life.</p> <p><i>Exodus 6:1-8; Exodus 15:2; Exodus 20:2; Psalm 68:19-20; Isaiah 43:1; Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 10:45; John 1:12; John 3:1-21; John 13:34-35; John 16:8-11; Romans 3:24-26; Romans 5:8, 12-21; Romans 8:18-25; Romans 10:9-10; I Corinthians 1:18; II Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 1:5-10; Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 1:13-14; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14-18; Hebrews 4:12; Hebrews 5:7-9; Hebrews 9:15-28; Hebrews 11:6; I</i></p>
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God man is awakened from sin. John 1:9.

16. If he now is obedient and does not close heart against the working of divine grace, he receives repentance unto life, to see his sin, repent of it, confess and forsake it; and in recognition of the holy and just judgment of God through prayer seeks refuge in Christ as the only Savior from the guilt of sin and the lust thereof and receives through faith in Him forgiveness of sins, justification, and the witness and sealing of the Holy Spirit that he is a child of God and heir of life eternal. Hebrews 4:12; Acts 2:37; Isaiah 55:10-11; Revelation 3:20; Luke 24:47; Acts 11:18; Acts 26:18; Luke 15:18-21; Luke 18:13; 1 John 1:9; Psalms 32:1-5; Psalms 51; 2 Corinthians 7:10; James 5:16; Psalms 34:15; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7; Revelation 16:7; Matthew 11:28; John 14:6 and 13; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:24-28; Romans 8:16-17; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 5:10-11; Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30; 1 John 2:20 and 27; Titus 3:5-7.

17. This great change in the heart of man is the work of the Holy Spirit who, according to the gracious will of God; accompanies the Word with His powerful working and thus by means of the redemption through Christ worketh the new birth and renewal of the sinner unto a new life of

John 4:7-11; Revelation 5:9-10; Revelation 21:1-4.

This one significantly out of order **Article 10: Discipleship**

Following Jesus

We believe that Jesus calls people who have experienced the joy of new birth to follow Him as disciples. By calling His followers to take up the cross, Christ invites them to reject the godless values of the world and offer themselves to God in a life of service. The Holy Spirit, who lives in every Christian, empowers believers to overcome the acts and attitudes of the sinful nature. Filled with love and gratitude, disciples delight to obey God.

United in a Distinct Community

Christians enjoy fellowship with God and other believers. At baptism believers are joined to the local

sanctification and a joyous hope of eternal life. Acts 16:14; 1 Corinthians 2:4-5; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Corinthians 12:3; John 1:12-13; John 3:3, 5, 7; 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18; Galatians 6:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:4; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Acts 10:44-48. Compare also IV.

18.

Regarding **sanctification** we believe and confess, that without it no one shall see the Lord. Sanctification is a fruit and result of the saving faith in Jesus Christ, which faith worketh through love; for faith without works is dead. Hebrews 12:14; Galatians 5:6; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Acts 15:9; Romans 6:22; 1 Corinthians 1:13; James 2:14-26; Matthew 7:16-27.

19. After the reign of sin has been overcome in the heart of the regenerated person, he will show through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit and partaking of the divine nature, all diligence to add to his faith virtue and love, to make his calling and election sure and to offer soul and body as a living sacrifice to God in thankfulness and love, remindful of the words: We love Him because He first loved us. Romans 6:6-12; 1 John 3:3; 2 Peter 1. 3-11; Romans 12:1 ff; 1

church, commit themselves to build up the body of Christ and witness to the good news of the Christian hope. In community members grow in maturity as they demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit, use their spiritual gifts and practice mutual accountability in the disciplines of the Christian life. Christians confess sin, repent and experience God's grace in the life of the Christian community.

Demonstrating True Faith

Jesus teaches that discipleship is the way of self-denial and promises blessing for those who suffer for righteousness. Disciples are to resist worldly values and systems, the sinful nature and the devil. Disciples give generously and reject materialism which makes a god out of wealth. Disciples treat others with compassion and gentleness and reject violence as a response to injustice. Disciples speak honestly to build others up and reject dishonest, vulgar, and careless talk; they seek to avoid lawsuits to resolve personal grievances, especially with other believers. Disciples maintain sexual purity and marital faithfulness and reject immoral premarital and extramarital relationships and all homosexual practices. To be a disciple means to be true to Jesus in everyday life.

Psalm 1; Psalm 119; Amos 5:24; Matthew 5-7; Matthew 18:15-20; Mark 8:34-38; John 8:31-32; John 13:34-35; John 15:14-15; Acts 2:41-47; Romans 1:24-32; Romans 8:1-30; Romans 12; I Corinthians 6:9-11; I Corinthians 11:1; I Corinthians 12:1-13; II Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:16-26; Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-12, 15-16; Ephesians 5:1, 18;

Thessalonians 5:23; 1 John 4:19.

20. In such a life of sanctification the regenerate person is still capable of sinning, Hebrews 12:1 and Romans 7:7-21, if he be not watchful and remain not in Christ. 1 John 1:8-10; 1 John 2:1-2; Matthew 26:41; John 15:4-6; cf. paragraph 42.

21. Essence and aim of sanctification is implicit love toward God and a hearty brotherly love and love for the neighbor, which is created and nurtured through the Holy Spirit. Matthew 7:12; Matthew 22:37-40; Galatians 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:7. Through this love the Christian becomes the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Matthew 5:13-14; Ephesians 5:8; cf. Kingdom.

22. The purpose of sanctification is the glorification of God. Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 2:9-10; 1 Peter 2:12.

23. The one perfect example of sanctification is the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. John 12:26; Ephesians 4:12-13; Philippians 2:5; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Corinthians 1:1; Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 13:7.

24. The power of sanctification is Christ through faith dwelling in the heart of the regenerate man. Ephesians 3:16-19; John 14:23.

The Christian Life

We believe that the Holy Spirit lives in every Christian and transforms him into the image of Christ. He empowers the believer to follow Christ and to be an effective witness for Him.

The Christian lives in fellowship with God and other believers, and joins the local church at baptism. He/she contributes to the building of the body of Christ with spiritual and material gifts. Nurtured through the Word, fellowship and prayer, the believer grows more Christlike, glorifies God, and is a witness for Him in everyday life.

Believers attain spiritual maturity as they yield to Christ and obey His/her Word. In Christ the believer puts off the former way of life with its sinful affections and lusts. He/she is no longer enslaved to sin and Satan. His/her body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and should not be defiled or abused in any way. The believer is not to be bound by the tyranny of things. He/she seeks to dedicate his/her time, talents and possessions to Christ and His kingdom. The fruit of the Spirit is to be increasingly evident in his/her life, especially in his/her relationship to others. The Holy Spirit empowers him to gain victory over sin and temptation, to live a pure life, and to do good. Yet all followers of Christ continually need the forgiving, chastening, and cleansing grace of the Lord.

Matthew 5:13-16; John 12:26; John 15:4-5; Romans 6; Romans 8:9-16;

Philippians 2:6-8; Colossians 3:1-17; I Thessalonians 4:3-8; I Thessalonians 5:17; I Timothy 1:9-11; I Timothy 2:1-8; I Timothy 4:6-8; II Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 12:1-3; Hebrews 13:4-5; James 1:22-27; James 4:7; I Peter 2:20-25; I Peter 3:15; I Peter 5:8-9; I John 1:3; I John 6-9; I John 2:15-17.

<p>Without this gracious indwelling of Christ and God the believer has neither power to stand against sin nor power to grow in the inner man. John 15:4-5; Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 1:11; Colossians 2:19; 2 Peter 3:18.</p> <p>25. Sanctification is progressive throughout life and the believers have their perfection only in Christ. Philippians 3:9-15; 1 Thessalonians 4:1; Matthew 5:48; Colossians 2 10; Colossians 3:14. Even in a holy walk the believers need at all times the forgiving, chastening and cleansing grace of God through the blood of Christ.* Titus 2:11-12; Hebrews 12:5-11; James 2:10; 1 John 1:6-10; 1 John 2:1-2; Daniel 9:18.</p> <p>26. The perceptible means of grace, which God has ordained in his Word and through which the Holy Spirit worketh in virtue of the redeeming blood of Christ in the work of conversion and sanctification are the Word (the preaching) in conversion; the Word, holy baptism, and the Lord's Supper for the converted in the congregation of the believers, the Church of Christ. Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:14 etc.; Acts 8:4 etc. and 35. Acts 10:34-44. Acts 16:13-32; Colossians 3:16; (cf "Close", quotation) ; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12 and</p>	<p>Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 2:1-4; Ephesians 4:1-16; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 3:17:18.</p>	
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38; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 16:33; Acts 2:42 and 46; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians ch. 14.

27. Prayer accompanies all these divinely ordained means and all acts of the spiritual life of every Christian and ceaseth not in the entire congregation of God, the New Testament priesthood, according to the teaching and example of the Lord' Jesus and His apostles as we read: Luke 3:21; Hebrews 5:7; Matthew 6:5-18; Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 11:1-13; Acts 2:21; 9:11; 22:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Acts 2:42; 3:1; Mark 9:29; James 5:13-16; Leviticus 6:6 (13) ; Isaiah 62:6; Revelation 5:9; 8:3 and 4; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Luke 18:1-8; Acts 1:23-26; 6:6; 13:1-3; 14:23; 12:5; Hebrews 13:3; Ephesians 6:18-19; Daniel 9:1-22; Genesis 18:22-32; Psalms 50:14-15; Philippians 4:6; Romans 8:26-27.

- Menno Simons writes concerning regeneration and sanctification: "What is regeneration other than the change and renewal of man, which God worketh through faith in Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit; also that man is created out of God, born out of His seed, made after His image, renewed to know Him, partaking of His divine nature and born of His spirit to serve God in holiness and righteousness in a new

<p>nature of the Spirit all his life! Where this happens and is accomplished there is the true new birth, there is the new creature in Christ Jesus!" (Glaubensbekenntnis der Mennoniten in Preussen und, Ruzsland, Berdjansk, 1874. - transl.)</p>		
<p>III. Concerning the Congregation, the Church of God or Assembly of Believers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "Church" is the called-out congregation of believers, assembled, and acting, according to its calling. <p>28. We believe and confess our faith in the existence of one holy, general Christian, apostolic Church, the congregation of saints.</p> <p>29. This congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed through His own blood and washed them from their sins, and gave Himself for the church; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Acts 20:28; Revelation 1:5; Ephesians 5:25-27.</p>	<p>The Church of Jesus Christ</p> <hr/> <p>We believe that the church is one body, the bride of Christ, established through God's redemptive work in history. Believers from all nations, races and social classes, regenerated by faith in Christ and cleansed by His blood, are baptized by His Spirit into one body and separated to God and are members of this body, whose head is Christ. Despite diversity in congregations and denominations, the Spirit works a basic unity which results in cooperation and fellowship with believers of other Christian groups. The Scriptures, particularly the records of the New Testament church, guide believers in questions of life and doctrine. Through His Spirit the Lord gives gifts to the church to be exercised for the upbuilding of believers and the propagation of the Gospel.</p> <p>Organization</p> <p>The local church is an association of believers, baptized and organized for worship, fellowship, nurture, service and witness. Each congregation regulates its own affairs.</p>	<p>Article 6: Nature of the Church</p> <p>Called by God</p> <p>We believe the church is the people called by God through Jesus Christ. People who respond in faith are united with the local congregation by the public confession of baptism. Church members commit themselves to follow Christ in a life of discipleship and witness as empowered by the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Body of Christ</p> <p>The church is one body of believers, male and female, from every nation, race and class. The head of this body is Christ. The church, united by the one Spirit, makes Christ visible in the world. The church exists as local bodies of believers and as a worldwide community of faith.</p> <p>Worship</p> <p>The church is nourished and renewed as God's people gather regularly to glorify God. The early church gathered on the first day of the week to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The worshipping community celebrates God's faithfulness and grace,</p>

<p>30. The Church of Christ is composed of all that through true faith in Jesus Christ and through obedience to the Gospel have separated themselves from the world and have their fellowship in the Holy Spirit with God the Father and Jesus Christ their only mediator, and have come unto an innumerable company of angels and unto the spirits of just men made perfect, as 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. Ephesians 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1-2; cf. "choosing", "conversion", "sanctification"; Romans 6:17; 10:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:17; Acts 2:40-41; John 15:1-5; 1 John 1:3; 1 Timothy 2:5; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Hebrews 12:22-24; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; Matthew 6:16-18; 1 Timothy 3:15.</p> <p>31. Although the members of this church belong to all nations and ranks scattered here and there throughout the world and are divided in denominations, yet they all are one and among one another brethren and members and exist as one body in Christ their head, who is the Lord, Chief, Shepherd, Prophet, Priest and King of the church. Revelation 5:9; Colossians 3:11; James 1:1; Revelation ch. 2 and 3; John 17:21; 1 Corinthians ch. 12; Ephesians</p>	<p>Congregations, committed to the Word of God and to this confession, affiliate as a denomination or a conference, whose polity is outlined in the constitution of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. The work of the brotherhood (brotherhood=all members of the church, not gender specific) is conducted in a spirit of interdependence, love and submission one to another under the Lordship of Christ.</p> <p>Christian Nurture and Discipline</p> <p>By washing the feet of His disciples, the Lord Jesus admonished His followers to practice personal humility, seek continuous cleansing and render loving service. Similarly, Christians today should engage in humbled service, mutual exhortation and disciplined living. In the church every member is to be concerned for the welfare of fellow-members and to intercede for them in prayer. Through public teaching, sympathetic encouragement, private counseling and earnest rebuke, the church promotes constructive discipline. Believers are encouraged to live a life of Christian discipleship, and to progress toward spiritual maturity so that the church will glorify God in the world.</p> <p>God's Word is the standard for church discipline. Christians living in sin must be admonished in brotherly love and sincerity. Where private counseling fails, the church exercises redemptive discipline. If warnings are disregarded and the attitude of rebellion and estrangement persists, the offender is formally excluded from the fellowship of the church. Believers, however,</p>	<p>reaffirms its faithfulness to God, builds up the members of the body, and seeks God's will for its life and mission. As the church observes baptism, and the Lord's Supper, it proclaims the good news of salvation.</p> <p>Fellowship and Accountability</p> <p>The church is a covenant community in which members are mutually accountable in matters of faith and life. They love, care, and pray for each other, share each other's joys and burdens, admonish and correct one another. They share material resources as there is need. Local congregations follow the New Testament example by seeking the counsel of the wider church on matters that affect its common witness and mission. Congregations work together in a spirit of love, mutual submission, and interdependence.</p> <p>The New Testament guides the practice of redemptive church discipline. The church is responsible to correct members who continue to sin. Congregations forgive and restore those who repent, but formally exclude those who disregard discipline.</p> <p>Gifts for Ministry</p> <p>Through the Holy Spirit God gives gifts to each member for the well-being of the whole body. These gifts are to be exercised in God's service to build up the church and to minister in the world.</p> <p>God calls people to equip the church for ministry. Leaders are to model Christ in their personal, family, and church life. The church is to discern</p>
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4:1-16; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:4-7; Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18; Matthew 20:25-28; 23:8-12; 1 Peter 2:17; Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4; Hebrews 13:20; Acts 3:22-23; Hebrews 4:15; 7:21; 9:11-15; Romans 8:84; 1 John 2:1; John 18:37; Luke 1:33; Hebrews 7:1-3; Revelation 15:3; 17:14.

32. The characteristics of the true Church are: the fruits of conversion and of the right faith in Jesus Christ revealed in a life of sanctification according to the teaching of Christ and His apostles; the diligent searching of the Scriptures and the preaching of the pure Gospel in all the world; practice of the holy ordinances of Christ which are, **baptism** and the Lord's Supper, the free confession of God and Jesus Christ before all men; fervent brotherly love, fellowship and submission among themselves and love of their neighbors; diligence to uphold the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace; taking up the cross in following Jesus; watching with prayer and supplication and thanksgiving for all men, and the prayerful and joyful waiting for the coming of the Lord and the establishment of His kingdom. 1 John 4:1; Matthew 3:8-9; Matthew 6:10; Acts 1:6-7; Luke 21:31; Hebrews 9:28; 2 Thessalonians 1:7 and 10; 2

must continue to practice love and compassion toward the erring one in order to win him/her back. When he/she repents of his/her sin, the church forgives, reinstates him/her into fellowship and encourages him/her in the Christian life

Matthew 18:15-35; John 13:1-17; John 17:21; Acts 2:38-44; Acts 15:1-28; 1 Corinthians 12-14; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 2:10-22; Ephesians 5:21, 25-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 1 Thessalonians 14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; Revelation 5:9

The Mission of the Church

We believe that the command to make disciples of all nations is the primary task of the church. Every member has the responsibility to be a witness to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and to call mankind to be reconciled to God. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation and is able to meet the total needs of mankind.

Matthew 2:23; Matthew 11:5; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

The Christian Ministries

We believe that God, through the Holy Spirit, has endowed His children with gifts for Christian ministry. Each member lovingly ministers to the other until all are built up to the maturity of Christ. Some members of the church have received special gifts for leadership, pastoral, preaching,

leaders prayerfully, and to affirm, support, and correct them in a spirit of love.

Matthew 16:13-20; Matthew 18:15-20; John 13:1-20; John 17:1-26; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 37-47; Acts 11:1-18; Acts 15:1-35; Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 5:1-8; I Corinthians 12-14; II Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 3:26-28; Galatians 6:1-5; Ephesians 1:18-23; Ephesians 2:11-22; Ephesians 4:4-6; Ephesians 11-16; I Thessalonians 5:22-23; I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9; I Peter 2:9-12; I Peter 5:1-4.

Article 7: Mission of the Church

The Great Commission and the Great Commandment

We believe the good news of God's salvation in Jesus Christ is for all people. Christ commands the church to make disciples of all nations by calling people to repent, and by baptizing and teaching them to obey Jesus. Jesus teaches that disciples are to love God and neighbor by telling the good news and by doing acts of love and compassion.

The Witness

The Holy Spirit empowers every Christian to witness to God's salvation. The church as a body witnesses to God's reign in the world. By its life as a redeemed and separated community the church reveals God's saving purposes to the world.

Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 22:34-40; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 1:15; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-37; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8;

<p>Peter 3:12-14; (cf. II, "Church" and IV. "Prayer" and V.)</p> <p>33. Those which show these characteristics of true fellowship with God in their lives, even if accompanied by weakness and imperfection and yet in uprightness are through Christ cleansed and regenerated, true members of His body and heirs of eternal life. They constitute the spiritual house, the holy temple of God, the chosen generation, the kingly and holy priesthood of God to offer spiritual sacrifice well pleasing to God through Jesus Christ. Romans 14:1; 15:1; Philippians 3:12, 15, 16; Proverbs 2:7; 2 Timothy 2:19; Romans 8:1, 14, 17; Colossians 1:12; Matthew 7:21; 2 Timothy 2:19; (cf. Discipline) ; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Peter 2:5, 9.</p> <p>34. But He, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, searcheth the reins of the hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to his works. Revelation 2:1 and 93.</p> <p>35. This Church of God is upheld by the preaching of the holy Gospel and the teaching and leadership of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 2; John 14:26; John 16:13. All questions relating to doctrine and life in the</p>	<p>teaching, evangelistic, diaconal ministries. The church prayerfully recognizes these gifts and calls these persons. They must live above reproach, faithfully teach the Word of God and express loving concern for the well being of others. A congregation under the Holy Spirit's guidance, may commission or ordain such servants.</p> <p>The church, in turn, shall love, respect and support them. She must also be on guard to detect and correct or dismiss false teachers.</p> <p>Isaiah 6:1-10; Jeremiah 3:15; Acts 6:1-6; Acts 13:1-4; Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:1-10; 1 Timothy 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; Titus 3:10; 1 Peter 5:1-5</p>	<p><i>Romans 1:16-18; II Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 3:10-11.</i></p>
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congregation are decided according to the example of the apostolic church, as we read: Acts 15:1-28; 1 Corinthians 14:40; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Ephesians 5:21; Colossians 2:5; 1 Corinthians 11:16; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; 2 Timothy 2:14; **Rule and guide** of the church for all times are the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. Psalms 119:105; Matthew 5:21-22; 17:5; Luke 10:16; Matthew 23:8-10; 1 Corinthians 3:9-11; 2 Peter 1:13 and 15; Galatians 1:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; (cf. "Close").

36. The **stewards** of the mysteries of God in the church are primarily the ministers and servants of Jesus Christ, who is the only priest and mediator of the New Testament. 1 Peter 4. 10; 1 Corinthians 4:1; Hebrews 5:6; 7:17; 9:15; 10:12; 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:34.

37. **Concerning the office of the ministers or servants of the Word and of the deacons** (servants, helpers, overseers of the poor) we believe and confess, that according to the practice of the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles, God has given to His church the power through the leadership of the Holy Spirit to ordain ministers and servants for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body

of Christ. Matthew ch. 10; Luke ch. 10; Acts 13:1-4; 20:28; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Corinthians ch. 12; Ephesians 4:11-14.

38. The **commission** to such office (service) is accomplished according to the method of the apostolic church through the servants of the Church, who in fervent prayer call upon the name of God, fully trusting that Christ, as head of the church, through His Holy, Spirit will reveal those who shall be useful in service, thus fulfilling His divine promise: And I will give you pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. Acts 1:15-26; 13:1-4; 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6; Matthew 18:19-20; John 14 13-14; Jeremiah 3:15; Acts 9:15; Romans 1:1-5; 1 Corinthians 16:15; Galatians 1:1.*

39. The required qualifications of servants of the Word the Spirit has made known in the Word: An elder or bishop (overseer, shepherd, preacher of the Gospel) shall be blameless as a steward of God, apt to teach, holding fast the faithful Word. He must take heed therefore unto himself and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers, to feed the church of God, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, not as

being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock doing the work of an evangelist, making full proof of his ministry. So shall he, when the chief Shepherd shall appear receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 3:17; 4:2-5; Titus 1:5-9; 2:7; Romans 12:7-11; Acts 20:28 and 31; Matthew 20:25-28; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; James 3:1.

40 The church shall count such servants worthy of double honor, shall love them, obey them, impart to them all manner of good, according to the Scriptures. 1 Timothy 5:17-19; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Peter 5:5; Luke 10:1 and 7; Galatians 6:6; 1 Corinthians ch. 9. But from false teachers the church shall turn away and shall put them aside according to the teaching of the Lord Jesus and His apostles. Matthew 7:15 and 16; Acts 20:29-31; Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 4 1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 4:3-5; Titus 3:10; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1-6; 2 John 7-11. 3 John 9-11; Jude vs. 4, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25; 1 John 2:27-28; cf. Conclusion.

41. Concerning the office of **deaconry** we believe, that the church shall choose men according to the example of the apostolic church, as such are designated in Acts 6:1-6; and 1 Timothy 3:8-10. These

are by virtue of their calling into service placed under duty to supply the poor and the suffering in their want with the provisions given by the church, and according to the measure of their gifts to assist in the building up of the church and to serve according to the teaching of Paul: Hath any one a ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Romans 12:7-11.

¶42. **Concerning Christian exhortation, pastoral care and church discipline** our Lord Jesus taught: Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Matthew 18:15-20. The apostle Paul writes: Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as

also ye do. Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14; Acts 20:28 and 32.

43. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new Lump. If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one do not eat. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. What part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Now we command you brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly; have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet court him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them, a man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject. 1 Timothy 5:20; 1 Corinthians 5:6, 7, 11, 13; 2 Corinthians 6:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15; Romans 16:17 (cf. above "Marks") The church shall treat such excommunicated persons with love and

helpful compassion, as it behooves a Christian to love all men, yea, even his enemies. 2 Thessalonians 3:15; Philippians 4:5.

44. If an excommunicated person shows repentance and sorrow over his sin, the church shall forgive him again and accept him into membership according to the word of the Savior, when Peter said to, Him: Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, until seventy times seven.

Matthew 18:21-35. And the apostle Paul teaches: Sufficient to such man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrarywise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 2 Corinthians 2:2-11.

45. Note to the subject:
"Church of God", paragraph 35, Acts 15 and paragraph 39, "Elder and Bishop".

In the household of the M. B. Church the order obtains, that one elder or a substitute for the elder acts as moderator of local churches and leader. The other ministers are his co-workers With the various affairs of the entire denomination the

suitable elders and other brethren are entrusted. The decisions made at the annual sessions of the entire denomination (triennial general conference or annual district conference) become operative in such local church through acceptance at a regular church council meeting. In making decisions in the local church council or in the general conference meetings the rule obtains that, whenever a non-desirable difference of view arises, the minority willingly submit itself ; for thus only can freedom and order be upheld in the house of God. (See "Glbk. und Verfass." 1873.)

- Menno Simons taught concerning the election of ministers of the Word: Some without the aid of men are called out by the Lord and sent by His Spirit, as was the case with the prophets and apostles and as had the house of Stephanus addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, 1 Corinthians 16:15. Others are secured through the aid of believers, as we read Acts 1. (Mennos Fundamente Buch I, Seite 148 in der Stiftungskunde der M. Br. Gem. 6. Januar, 1860. Jedoch gilt der Gemeinde I. Job 4:1. Siehe auch Seite 27, Irrlehrer.)

IV. Concerning Christian Baptism

46. We believe and confess, that Christian baptism is a holy, visible, evangelical, sacred act and ordinance (institution) of Christ commanded by the Lord Himself for a sacred sign of regeneration and embodiment in Him and His church. Holy Baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but for the honest believer a blessed representation of the purging from the inner sinful uncleanness of the soul by the blood of Christ, through which forgiveness of sin has been received, and the answer of a good conscience toward God. Cf. II., "Conversion." 1 Corinthians 12:27; 1 Peter 3:21; Revelation 1:5.

47. The practice of baptism consists in this, that all, that hear the Gospel and in repentance of heart and living faith accept it, on their confession of a new life from God (Colossians 2:12-13) are baptized (immersed) in* water according to the command of Christ: All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 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

Christian Baptism

We believe that Christians should obey their Lord's command to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To qualify for baptism, one must repent of sin and trust Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord. We practice water baptism of the believer by immersion.

Baptism symbolizes death to sin and resurrection to the new life in Christ and the receipt of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a public commitment to discipleship. At baptism the believer enters into the full fellowship and work of the church. Local congregations may receive into fellowship those who have been baptized by another mode on their confession of faith.

Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:2-6; Colossians 2:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 1 Peter 3:21

Article 8: Christian Baptism

Confession

We believe that when people receive God's gift of salvation, they are to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Baptism is a sign of having been cleansed from sin. It is a covenant with the church to walk in the way of Christ through the power of the Spirit.

Meaning

Baptism by water is a public sign that a person has repented of sins, received forgiveness of sins, died with Christ to sin, been raised to newness of life and received the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a sign of the believer's incorporation into the body of Christ as expressed in the local church. Baptism is also a pledge to serve Christ according to the gifts given to each person.

Eligibility

Baptism is for those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and commit themselves to follow Christ in obedience as members of the local church. Baptism is for those who understand its meaning, are able to be accountable to Christ and the church, and voluntarily request it on the basis of their faith response to Jesus Christ.

Practice

We practice water baptism by immersion administered by the local church. Local congregations may receive into membership those who have been baptized by another mode on their confession of faith. Persons who claim baptism as infants and

am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. – 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. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; John 3:22.

48. This command of the Lord the apostles have carried out and thereby many have been brought into the faith and have been baptized, both men and women, as especially on the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem. And they, which gladly received the words of Peter and the other apostles were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Acts chapters 2, 8, 10, 16.

49. The **children** of believers (Acts 2:39) shall continually be brought before the Lord in prayer by the parents and the church, and shall be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and instructed in the Scriptures according to the measure of their understanding. 1 Timothy 2:1; Matthew 19:13-15; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 3:15; Luke 2:42. When later they have advanced so far that they can comprehend the calling voice of the holy Gospel, and accept the Word with a repentant heart and

wish to become members of a Mennonite Brethren congregation are to receive baptism on their confession of faith.

Matthew 3:13-17; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:2-6; I Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 2:12-13; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 4:4-6.

take faith in the Lord Jesus, it becomes them unto their own desire and free confession to receive holy baptism, as says the Apostle Paul: So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Luke 2:52; Acts 8:5, 6, 12; 10:33-48; 16:14, 15, 31-34; Romans 10:17; John 3:5-8; Matthew 4:1; 2 Timothy 2:19.

50. Baptism shall rightfully be administered once in the life of the believer. Ephesians 4:5.

51. The believers are bound together through baptism as having died unto sin to walk in the newness of life as taught by the apostle Paul: How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, 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. The believers have in baptism put on Christ (Galatians 3:27). Therefore every one must contribute according to his calling and gifts toward the support and betterment of the body Of Christ in spiritual and temporal things with diligence. Matthew 25:14; Luke 13:13; 1 Corinthians 4:1-10; 1 John 3:17; James 1:27; 2:15-16; 1 John 2:12-14;

Colossians 3:18-25; 4:1; Romans 16:1-4; 6; Titus 2:1-10; Matthew 21:15-16; 1 Corinthians ch. 13. As true members of the household of God and children of the kingdom (Matthew 13:38), they shall carefully guard the holy privileges of divine citizenship and duties received of Christ their head and be subject to all the commandments of their King and obedient to them according to His Word: Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded to you. Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 1:22; 2:19-20; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42.

- Compare Matthew 3:11 and John 1:26 according to English Revised and American Revised Versions. "Baptism is administered by immersion in water" (*Erklaerung der Menn. Bruedergemeinde vom 7. Mai 1862, und June 1868*): "Baptism in the Greek 'baptismos' and in the Latin 'mersio' means that something be entirely dipped into water, until it meet above. Also without doubt, the German word 'Taufe' (baptism) comes from the word 'Tiefe' (depth)". . . . (Dr. Luther, *Sermon on Baptism*). -- "The word, 'baptizo', 'baptize' means to immerse and the practice of immersion was observed by the

early church". (Words of Calvin in De Baptismo).
 -- In the "Confession of Faith" etc. of Cornelius Ris approved of the Mennonite churches "zur Bonne" in Amsterdam and many others in the year 1773, we read (by C.H.A. van der Smissen in "*Kurzgefaszte Geschichte und Glaubenslehre der Mennoniten*") "Article XXV. Concerning water baptism": "Regarding holy baptism we understand thereby an immersion of the entire body in and under water". Romans 6:4; Matthew 3:16:Acts 8:37-38." But then it says further: "or an abundant sprinkling with the same which latter mode we find generally appropriate in these northern regions, because thereby the same benefits are expressed)". Notice that in this immersion is attested to by three places in Scripture whereas no Scripture is mentioned in this confession for sprinkling. The well-known old Mennonite preacher Jacob Denner (died 1746) was, according to the Mennonite authors, pastor C.H.A. van der Smissen and pastor Berend C. Roosen, preacher of the "Dompelaars" which

<p>word signifies "immersion church" in Altona and Friedensstadt, Germany. Menno Simons Treatise on baptism has the title: "Die Christliche Taufe in dem Wasser, erklart aus dem Worte Gottes (Christian Baptism in water, explained out of the Word of God)." See his "Vollstaendige Werke."</p>		
<p>V. Concerning the Lord's Supper</p> <p>52. We believe, that this is a holy, visible, evangelical practice and ordinance (institution) of Christ. Bread and wine are used. The bread is broken, and distributed as also is the wine, and is partaken of by such as believe and have been baptized according to the ordinance of Christ, and that have examined and judged themselves. This holy ordinance is to be practiced faithfully and in simplicity in accordance with the example set by our Lord as found in the Gospels and in the teachings of Paul: For I 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 broke 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</p>	<p>The Lord's Supper</p> <p>Members of the church observe the Lord's Supper as instituted by Christ. The elements, the bread and the fruit of the vine, symbolize Christ's broken body and shed blood. They remind us of His suffering and death for our salvation and our unity in Him.</p> <p>In preparation for this fellowship of the Lord's Supper, every believer is to examine himself and partake of the elements in a worthy manner. Those who have peace with God, live in peace with their fellowmen, and have been baptized are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper, thereby testifying to His death until He comes.</p> <p>The Lord's Supper expresses the fellowship and unity of believers with Christ. It is a supper of remembrance, celebration and praise which strengthens believers for true discipleship and service.</p> <p>Matthew 16:24; Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians</p>	<p>Article 9: Lord's Supper</p> <p>Meaning</p> <p>The church observes the Lord's Supper, as instituted by Christ. The Supper points to Christ, whose body was broken for us and whose blood was shed to assure salvation for believers and to establish the new covenant. In the Supper the church identifies with the life of Christ given for the redemption of humanity and proclaims the Lord's death until He comes. The Supper expresses the fellowship and unity of all believers with Christ. It is a supper of remembrance, celebration and praise which strengthens believers for true discipleship and service.</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>In preparation for the fellowship of the Lord's Supper, all believers examine themselves. All those who understand its meaning, confess Jesus Christ as Lord in word and life, are accountable to their congregation and are living in right relationship with God and others are invited to participate in the Lord's Supper. The normal pattern in the New Testament</p>

<p>took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as Often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. -- But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.</p> <p>53. In this holy supper we are brought to see that Christ's holy body was sacrificed on the cross and His precious blood shed for the remission of our sin, and that He now being glorified in His heavenly state, is life-giving bread, meat and drink for our souls, and unites Himself with all true believing souls for spiritual communion according to His Word: Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me. Galatians 3:1; Ephesians 1:7; Mark 16:19; Ephesians 2:6; Philippians 3:21; John 6:51, 53-58, 63; Revelation 3:20.</p> <p>54. Only the gracious enlightenment and fellowship of the Holy Spirit can enable the believer to</p>	<p>11:23-32; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Revelation 3:20</p>	<p>was that baptism preceded participation in the Lord's Supper.</p> <p><i>Matthew 26:26-30; Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.</i></p>
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rightfully examine himself, and prepare him to partake of this holy supper in a worthy manner and teach the hidden meaning of the same, so that in partaking of the Lord's supper they may be fed with the body and blood of Christ, thus to partake of all His sufferings and His merits and be greatly comforted in the strong covenant of grace with God, their heavenly Father. John 6:63; 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Romans 3:24; Isaiah 53:4, 5, 10; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 40:1-2; 54:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:24.

55. Thus this sacrament becomes for the believing church a supper of praise and thanksgiving, in which it rejoices over the blessed promises of the holy supper with their divine Redeemer and all His saints in the Kingdom. It becomes a supper strengthening the believer for ready service and true following of Christ in patiently bearing His cross and for growth in true love in all things into Him, which is the head, even Christ, for the building up and betterment of His temple, the Church. All this is carried out as a joyous thank-offering through Jesus Christ for all gifts of divine grace and well doing to the glory of God the Father. Luke 13:29; 22:16, 18; Revelation 19:7, 9; Mark 14:26; Acts 2:46-47; Matthew 16:24; John 12:26; Romans 12:1; Ephesians 4:15-16; 1 Peter 2:5; Psalms 116:12-14; 50:23; Philippians

1:11; 1 John 4:19; cf. II.
Sanctification and Means etc.

56. This supper of holy communion of the believers with Christ, their head, is at the same time the expression of holy communion of the believers among themselves and it binds them together in love, peace, and unity according to the words of the Scriptures: The cup of the 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? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 6:15; of paragraph 43, "Church Discipline".

Concerning the washing of the feet by the Lord and among the believers.

57. We believe, confess, and practice this in the church according to the example and command of our Savior, as we read: Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end He rose from the 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 So after He had washed their

<p>feet 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, your 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. John ch. 13; 1 Timothy 5:10.</p>		
<p>VI. Concerning Matrimony</p> <p>58. We believe and confess, that it is a divine institution introduced by God Himself in paradise and confirmed in the case of our first parents, Adam and Eve, one man and one woman -- for mutual help and joy and for the prevention of all uncleanness and disorder - and blessed to fill the earth. Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18-24; Proverbs 5:17-18.</p> <p>59. This institution of God, the Lord Jesus Christ has confirmed. Thereby it has been sanctified for the believers of the New Covenant; only let it be entered upon in the Lord in accordance with divine and human ordinance, and let this tie be confirmed and sanctified by the church</p>	<p>Marriage and the Christian Home</p> <hr/> <p>We believe that God instituted marriage for the intimate companionship of husband and wife, and for the procreation and nurture of children. In marriage two mature partners find fulfillment in sharing mutual love, concerns, joys, ideals, ambitions and responsibilities. Those who marry should share a common Christian commitment; a believer should not marry a non believer. We believe that divorce constitutes a basic violation of God's intention for marriage.</p> <p>Christian parents should nurture their children through exemplary godly living, by praying for them, by leading them in family worship, by teaching them the Scriptures, and by training</p>	<p>Article 11: Marriage, Singleness and Family</p> <p>We believe that marriage and the family are instituted by God. The church blesses both marriage and singleness and encourages families to grow in love.</p> <p>Marriage</p> <p>Marriage is a covenant relationship intended to unite a man and a woman for life. At creation God designed marriage for companionship, sexual union and the birth and nurture of children. Sexual intimacy rightfully takes place only within marriage. Marriage is to be characterized by mutual love, faithfulness and submission. A believer should not marry an unbeliever.</p> <p>The community of faith blesses and nurtures marriage relationships, and</p>

<p>through the Word of God and prayer and the matrimonial life be kept sacred. Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians ch. 7; 1 Peter 2:13; 1 Timothy 4:5; John 2:1-2; Matthew 22:1-14; Hebrews 13:4.</p> <p>60. Concerning the sacredness and firm union of the matrimonial bond our Lord and Savior teaches: He which made them at the beginning made them male and female and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder Moses because the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:and whosoever marrieth her which is put away committeth adultery, and causeth her to commit adultery. Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-15; and 39; Ephesians 5:22-33.</p>	<p>and discipline them in a manner pleasing to the Lord.</p> <p>Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18-24; Proverbs 5:18-19; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:4-9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:22-23, Ephesians 6:4; Hebrews 13:4</p>	<p>makes every effort to bring reconciliation to troubled marriages. Human sinfulness, however, may sometimes lead to divorce, a violation of God's intention for marriage. With truth and compassion the family of God offers hope and healing while continually upholding the biblical ideal of marital faithfulness.</p> <p>Singleness</p> <p>Singleness is honored equally with marriage, sometimes even preferred. The church is to bless, respect and fully include those who are single. Those who remain single may find unique opportunities to advance the kingdom of God. God calls all people, single and married, to live sexually pure lives.</p> <p>Family</p> <p>God intends family relationships at all stages of life to be characterized by love. Children are a gift from God. Godly parents instruct and nurture their children in the faith. Parents are to discipline their children wisely and lovingly, not provoking them to anger. Children are to honor and obey their parents.</p> <p><i>Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 2:18-24; Genesis 5:1-2; Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 22:16-17; Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; Deuteronomy 6:4; Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 31; Matthew 5:32; Matthew 10:34-39; Matthew 19:3-12; Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 3:31-35; Mark 7:9-13; Mark 10:6-11; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2-3; Romans 14:12; I Corinthians 7:8-40; II Corinthians 6:14-15; Ephesians 5:21-33; Ephesians 6:1-4;</i></p>
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<p>VII. Concerning the Christian Day of Rest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sabbath in the Hebrew means "rest", "celebration". (Heyse, Rost, Brockhaus and others.) <p>61. We believe and confess: The New Testament day of rest and solemn assembly for the purpose of united worship of God and the building up of believers among themselves is, according to the example and practice of the apostles under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the first day of the week, that is the day of resurrection of our Lord and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This sanctified day is to be celebrated in the spirit and according to the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus and His apostles. On this day the preaching of the Gospel, the care and nurture of the Christian life, and the practice of the sacred ordinance shall especially take place. This day is a gift of grace of our good God in Christ for our spiritual and temporal welfare. Exodus 20:8; Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1-36; John 20:1; 19:26, Acts 2:1; Acts 20:7; Corinthians 16:1-2; Matthew</p>	<p>The Lord's Day and Work</p> <p>We believe that God intended man (man=mankind) to work diligently and honestly in his/her chosen vocation. The Christian should continually seek to build God's Kingdom through his/her work.</p> <p>Following the New Testament example, believers commemorate the resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the first day of the week. On the Lord's Day believers occupy themselves especially with worship and instruction in the Word, Christian fellowship and service and refreshing themselves in body and soul, and limiting their labour to work of necessity and deeds of mercy.</p> <p>Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-10; Matthew 6:33; Luke 24:1-36; Acts 2:1; 20:7; Romans 14:5-6; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; Hebrews 10:23-25</p>	<p>Out of order</p> <p>Article 16: Work, Rest and the Lord's Day</p> <p>We believe that God's act of creation is the model for human activity. While sin has corrupted work and rest, redeemed people are called to restore labor and rest to their proper place.</p> <p>Work</p> <p>As creatures made in the image of God, Christians imitate the Creator by working faithfully as they are able. They are to use their abilities and resources to glorify God and to serve others. Because they bear the name of Christ, all believers are called to work honestly and diligently and to treat others with respect and dignity.</p> <p>Rest</p> <p>As God rested on the seventh day, people are called to observe regular times of rest. Rest is an act of thankfulness for what God has provided. It is an act of trust, reminding humans that it is not their work but God who sustains them. Rest is an act of hope, anticipating the future rest assured by the resurrection of Jesus.</p> <p>The Lord's Day</p> <p>Following the New Testament example, believers gather to commemorate the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week. On the Lord's Day, believers joyfully devote themselves to worship,</p>

<p>12:1-14; Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-11; John 5:9-16; 9:13; Colossians 2:16-17; Romans 14:5-6; Psalms 118:24.</p> <p>62. Nevertheless, it remains a duty to work six days honestly and diligently and to follow our civil pursuits, but keeping in mind the word of the Lord: Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Exodus 20:9; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Matthew 6:33.</p>		<p>instruction in the Word, prayer, breaking of bread, fellowship and service. They limit their labor to work of necessity and deeds of mercy.</p> <p><i>Genesis 1:26-2:3; Genesis 2:15; Genesis 3:14-19; Exodus 20:8-11; Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 46:10; Psalm 95:6-11; Ecclesiastes 3:13; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 24:1-36; Acts 2:42-47; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:2; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 2:16-17; Colossians 3:22-4:1; II Thessalonians 3:6-10; Hebrews 4:1-10; Hebrews 10:23-25; Revelation 1:10.</i></p>
<p>VIII. Concerning the Divine Law</p> <p>63. We believe and confess, that the outward part of it dealing with sacrifices, sacred places, times, objects, meats, genealogies, etc., the shadow of things to come, have been fulfilled and set aside by Christ. Romans 10:4; Hebrews 7:19; ch. 9; 10:1; Romans 14:2-6; Galatians 4:3, 9, 10; Colossians 2:16-28; Titus 3:9. But in its spiritual and moral sense the law, in substance expressed in the ten commandments, and by Christ elaborated and given deeper meaning (Matthew ch. 5 etc.) is binding for all times and useful, if any man use it lawfully. Romans 7:14; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:8-10; Exodus 20:17; Matthew 5:17-20; Romans 3:31; 7:12; 1</p>		

<p>Timothy 1:8-10; Galatians ch. 3; Romans 3:20; 7:7.</p>		
<p>IX. Concerning the Office of Power; Concerning the taking of an Oath; Concerning Revenge, Non-Resistance and Love of Enemies; and Concerning the Kingdom of God</p> <p>Concerning the Office of Powers.</p> <p>64. We believe and confess: That God, who is a King of all kings and Lord of all lords has put into all lands rulers and powers for the common good and welfare and the leading of a good honorable civil life. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God For he is the minister of God and beareth not the sword in vain. He (the ruler) is for the protection of the just but a revenge to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For this reason are all believers, yea, all men subject to fear the powers and bound by the word of God to honor them and obey them in all things not conflicting with the Word of God. They are bound to pay tribute and</p>	<p>Christian Integrity</p> <p>Although the swearing of oaths was permitted in Old Testament times, it is forbidden by Christ. Christians are obligated to speak the truth because they are always in the presence of God. Therefore we simply affirm the truth in legal transactions. Because lodges and secret societies require the use of oaths and also because they foster the formation of intimate alliances with unbelievers, we discourage membership in secret societies but rather seek to promote fellowship and brotherhood in the church.</p> <p>Matthew 5:33-37; Matthew 23:1-12; John 18:19-23; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:6-13; James 5:12</p> <p>The State</p> <p>We believe that God instituted the state to maintain law and order in civil life and to promote public welfare. The functions and responsibilities of the state are distinct from those of the church. The chief concern and primary allegiance of all Christians should be to Christ's kingdom. It is our Christian duty to pray for those in government and to proclaim truth, love, righteousness, and redemption. We should respect those in authority, exercise social responsibility, witness against corruption, discrimination and injustice, pay taxes, and obey all laws</p>	<p>Article 12: Society and State</p> <p>The State as Instituted by God</p> <p>We believe that God instituted the state to promote the well-being of all people. Christians cooperate with others in society to defend the weak, care for the poor, and promote justice, righteousness and truth. Believers witness against corruption, discrimination and injustice, exercise social responsibility, pay taxes, and obey all laws that do not conflict with the Word of God.</p> <p>God has given governments authority to maintain law and order and to punish wrongdoers. Followers of Christ respect and pray for those in authority so that peaceful order may prevail. We deplore the loss of life in the exercise of state-sanctioned violence.</p> <p>Christian Allegiance in Society</p> <p>The primary allegiance of all Christians is to Christ's kingdom, not the state or society. Because their citizenship is in heaven, Christians are called to resist the idolatrous temptation to give to the state the devotion that is owed to God. As ambassadors for Christ, Christians act as agents of reconciliation, and seek the well-being of all peoples.</p> <p>Because Christ forbids the swearing of oaths, we simply affirm the truth in legal transactions. Believers do not participate in secret societies which</p>

duties and taxes according to the teaching and example of the Savior: Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's (Matthew 17:24-27; 22:15-21) ; and according to the words of the apostle Peter: Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. Likewise is it our duty to pray for these according to command of Paul: 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. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of our God and Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Daniel 2:21, 37, 38; Proverbs 8:16; Romans 13:1-7; Acts 4:19; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14.

May the Almighty give them wisdom and grace to rule their lands, cities and subjects in righteousness and peace and to inherit eternal salvation hereafter.

Now, unto the King eternal, imperishable, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and

that do not conflict with the Word of God.

Matthew 22:17-21; Acts 4:19; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2: 1-6; 1 Peter 2:13-14

Love and Nonresistance

We believe that Christians should live by the law of love and practice the forgiveness of enemies as taught and exemplified by the Lord Jesus. The church, as the body of Christ, is a fellowship of redeemed, separated people, controlled by redemptive love. Its evangelistic responsibility is to present Christ, the Prince of Peace, as the answer to human need, enmity and violence. The evil, brutal and inhuman nature of war stands in contradiction to the new nature of the Christian. The Christian seeks to practice Christ's law of love in all relationships, and in all situations, including those involving personal injustice, social upheaval and international tensions. We believe that it is not God's will that Christians take up arms in military service but that, where possible, they perform alternate service to reduce strife, alleviate suffering and bear witness to the love of Christ.

Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5:17-18, 38-45; Romans 12:19-21; Romans 13:8-10; 1 Peter 2:19-23

demand the swearing of oaths or which otherwise conflict with a Christian's allegiance to Christ and the church. At all times believers are called to live as faithful witnesses in the world, rejecting pressures which threaten to compromise Christian integrity.

Exodus 20:13, 16; Leviticus 19:11; Psalm 82:3-4; Jeremiah 29:7; Daniel 2:21; Daniel 3:17-18; Daniel 4:17; Matthew 5:13-16, 33-37; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 17:24-27; Matthew 22:17-21; John 15:19; John 17:14-18; Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; I Corinthians 5:9-13; II Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:6-13; Philippians 1:27; Philippians 3:20; I Timothy 2:1-4; Titus 3:1-2; James 5:12; I Peter 2:13-17.

Article 13: Love, Peacemaking and Reconciliation

God's Community of Peace

We believe that God in Christ reconciles people to Himself and to one another, making peace through the cross. The church is the fellowship of redeemed people living by love. The bond between followers of Jesus transcends all racial, social and national barriers.

Christian Peacemaking

We actively pursue peace and reconciliation in all relationships by following Christ's example and His command to love God, neighbors and even enemies. We strive to be peacemakers and agents of reconciliation in families, churches,

glory for ever and ever.
Amen Thy Kingdom come!"

Concerning the Taking of an Oath.

65. We believe and confess, that to the fathers under the old covenant it was permitted to take a true oath by the name of God. But the Lord Jesus, the Son of the living God, the King and Founder of the new covenant, has in the following words forbidden believers to swear with an oath: Again, ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne, etc.... But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Also the apostle James exhorts: But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation. But our words must be true and your "yea" and "nay" must stand for as complete truth as the highest oath. Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12; Matthew 12:36; Colossians 3:9.

Concerning Revenge,
Non-resistance and Love of
Enemies.

communities, in our nation, and throughout the world.

As peacemakers we alleviate suffering, reduce strife, promote justice, and work to end violence and war, that others may see a demonstration of Christ's love. As in other Peace Churches many of us choose not to participate in the military, but rather in alternative forms of service.

Because Jesus is Lord, His example and teaching take priority over nationalism and the demands of human authorities.

Exodus 20:1-17; Jeremiah 29:7; Matthew 5:9, 17-26, 38-48; Romans 12:9-21, 13:8-10; II Corinthians 5:15-20; Ephesians 2:14-18; I Peter 2:19-23

Article 14: The Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life belongs to God. Each person is created in the image of God and ought to be celebrated and nurtured. Because God is creator, the author and giver of life, we oppose all actions and attitudes which devalue human life. The unborn, disabled, poor, aging and dying are particularly vulnerable to such injustices. Christ calls the people of all nations to care for the defenseless.

God values human life highly. Ultimate decisions regarding life and death belong to God. Therefore, we hold that procedures designed to take life, including abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide, are an affront to God's sovereignty. We esteem the life-sustaining findings of

66. We believe and confess, according to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil. 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; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. No one may practice revenge against his enemies. We also do not feel justified to carry the sword. The apostle Paul teaches thus. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written: Vengeance is mine; I will repay, the Lord. Therefore, thine enemy saith 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. The apostle Peter also says: For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us,

medical science, but recognize that there are limits to the value of seeking to sustain life indefinitely. In all complex ethical decisions regarding life and death, we seek to offer hope and healing, support and counsel in the context of the Christian community.

Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:7; Exodus 20:13; Job 31:15; Psalm 139:13-16; Amos 1-2; Matthew 6:25-27; Matthew 25:31-46; John 10:11.

Article 15: Stewardship

God's Creation Mandate

We believe the universe and everything in it belong to God the Creator. God has entrusted the care of the earth to all people, who are responsible for managing its resources. Good stewardship uses the earth's abundance to meet human need, but resists the unjust exploitation of the earth and its peoples. All God's gifts are to be received with thanksgiving and used responsibly.

Responsible Living

To confess Jesus as Lord transforms values. Jesus warns that we cannot serve both God and wealth. Preoccupation with money and possessions, self-indulgent living and eagerness to accumulate wealth for personal advantage are not in keeping with the teaching of Scripture.

Generous Giving

The Bible teaches cheerful, sacrificial, and proportional giving through the church in grateful

<p>leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps: who did no Sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Matthew 5:21, 25, 38, 40, 48; 26:52-53; John 18:11; Romans 12:19-21; 1 Peter 2:19-23; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8.</p> <p>67. But our longing, prayer and effort shall be more and more directed toward the Kingdom foretold by the prophets and by Christ and His apostles, which God from heaven shall establish through His Son Jesus Christ, in whom He has resolved it, where none shall do harm nor learn to war, where righteousness, love and peace shall reign. Daniel 2:44; 7:27; Isaiah 2:4; 9:4-7; 11:1-9; 57:15-19; 61:1-11; 65:17-25; 66:10-14; Luke 4:18-19; Matthew 6:10:13; 13:43; 24:17 etc.; 26:29; Luke 22:29-30; Acts 1:6-7; 17:31; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 11:15; 12:10; Revelation ch. 20; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation ch. 21-22.</p>		<p>response to God’s goodness. Christians do not claim any of their possessions as their own, but manage all their resources, including money, time, abilities and influence, in generous ways that give glory to God. They do not despise the poor but practice mutual aid within the church and share what they have with others in need. God’s people seek to embrace a lifestyle of simplicity and contentment.</p> <p><i>Genesis 1:28; Leviticus 25; Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Psalm 24:1; Psalm 115:16; Proverbs 14:31; Amos 6:4-7; Malachi 3:6-10; Matthew 6:19-34; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 6:38; Luke 12:13-21; Acts 2:42-47; Acts 4:32-37; I Corinthians 4:7; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 6:7; Ephesians 4:28; I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19; James 2:1-7, 15-16; James 5:1-6; I John 3:16-18; Jude 11.</i></p>
		<p>Article 17: Christianity and Other Faiths</p> <p>Jesus Is the Only Way</p> <p>We believe that the saving grace of God in Jesus is the only means of reconciling humanity with God. Although salvation is available to all,</p>

only those who put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have the assurance of eternal life.

God's Universal Witness

God has not left anyone without a witness to the Creator's goodness and power. Due to human rebellion, people have chosen to suppress the truth. While elements of truth may be found in other religions, Scripture warns against false teaching. Christians treat people of other faiths and philosophies with respect, but lovingly and urgently proclaim Christ as the only way of salvation for all peoples.

Sovereignty of God

God loves the world and does not want anyone to perish. In sovereign grace God may communicate with people in ways that are beyond human comprehension. The Bible teaches that those who reject the gospel are under divine judgment; the eternal destiny of those who have never heard the gospel is in God's hands. Our task is to proclaim Christ as the only way of salvation to all people in all cultures. The Judge of all the earth will do what is just.

Genesis 18:25; Psalm 19:2-4; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Isaiah 46:1-10; Isaiah 55:8-9; Ezekiel 33:1-20; Jonah 1-4; Matthew 8:5-13; Matthew 25:31-46; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 7:24-30; Luke 9:51-56; Luke 12:47-48; John 1:12; John 3:16, 36; John 4:8-42; John 12:12-26; John 14:6; Acts 1:8; Acts 4:12; Acts 10:1-8, 34-36; Acts 14:16-17; Acts 17:22-31; Romans 1:18-24; Romans 2:1-16; Romans 10:9-21; Romans 11:33-35; I Corinthians 3:11; I

		<p><i>Corinthians 12:3; I Timothy 2:4-5; II Peter 3:9; Revelation 20:15.</i></p>
<p>X. Concerning the Second Coming of Christ, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Last Judgment and its Execution</p> <p>68. We believe and confess, that the Lord Jesus Christ, our King, in like manner as He visibly ascended into heaven shall come down again from heaven. Psalms 2:-6; Hebrews 7:2-3; Revelation 17:14; Acts 1:11.</p> <p>69. The hour is coming, saith the Lord, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God 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. John 5:25-29.</p> <p>70. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God, that every one receive the thing done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10.</p> <p>71. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead</p>	<p>Christ's Final Triumph</p> <p>We believe that God who acts in history will bring His purposes to a final consummation. At death the righteous enter a state of rest in the presence of God, in fellowship with Christ. The unrighteous suffer the torment of separation from God while awaiting final judgment.</p> <p>When the Lord returns, living believers will be raptured and the dead in Christ will be resurrected to be with Him forever. Christ will judge all men. The righteous will inherit the kingdom of God and the unrighteous shall suffer the anguish of eternal hell. In the end, death will be destroyed, Antichrist will be defeated and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire. Christ will create a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness reigns, and God shall be all in all. This is the blessed hope of the church.</p> <p>"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Matthew 25:13). He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon! Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:30).</p> <p>Isaiah 2:4; Isaiah 61:1-11; Matthew 25:13, 31-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:22-23; John 5:25-29; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:21-58; Philippians 1:21-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17;</p>	<p>Article 18: Christ's Final Triumph</p> <p>We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ will return visibly and triumphantly at the end of the present age. The church must always be prepared to meet the Lord, living in expectation of His imminent return.</p> <p>The Last Days</p> <p>In these last days, between the first and second coming of Christ, the church carries out its mission in the world. Believers often endure suffering and persecution because of their witness to Christ. In spite of opposition by evil powers, the church is assured of the final victory of Christ's kingdom. These last days come to an end with Christ's return.</p> <p>Death</p> <p>Since Christ destroyed the power of death by His resurrection, believers need not be afraid of death, the last enemy. Christ's followers go to be with the Lord when they die. When Christ returns they will be raised and receive new bodies. Believers who are alive at Christ's coming will be transformed and will also receive new and glorious bodies, fit for life in God's eternal kingdom.</p> <p>Judgment</p> <p>When Christ returns He will destroy all evil powers, including the Antichrist. Satan and all those who have rejected Christ will be</p>

<p>in Christ shall rise first, incorruptable and in glory. Then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation ch. 19-20:6; cf Paragraph 67 "Kingdom".</p> <p>72. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end. 1 Corinthians 15:21-24, 42, 43, 51-57; Jeremiah 31:1-14; Zechariah 12:10-11; Luke 13:28-30. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection etc. Revelation 20:6.</p> <p>73. But when the Son of Man shall come with great power and glory with His saints and to be admired in all the ages of His power with Him (Matthew 25:31 ff ; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10) then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the</p>	<p>Titus 2:11-14; 2 Peter 3:3-13; Revelation 1:15, 20-22</p>	<p>condemned to eternal punishment in hell, forever separated from the presence of God. Believers must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to have their lives examined and their labors rewarded. By God's grace they will enter into the joy of God's eternal reign.</p> <p>The New Creation</p> <p>All God's children will be united with Christ when He appears, and they will reign with Him in glory. Pain, sorrow and death will be abolished, and the redeemed will be gathered into the new heaven and new earth where together with the angels they will worship God forever. God will make all things new, and God will be all in all. This is the blessed hope of all believers.</p> <p><i>Matthew 24:29-31; Matthew 25:13; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 16:9; Luke 23:43; John 14:1-3; Acts 2:17; Romans 8:18-22; I Corinthians 3:13-15; I Corinthians 15:26; II Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 1:23; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Thessalonians 5:1-11; II Thessalonians 1:5-12; II Thessalonians 2:1-12; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:2; Hebrews 9:26-28; I Peter 1:20; I Peter 4:7; I John 2:18; I John 3:2-3; Revelation 19:17-21; Revelation 20:7-15; Revelation 21-22.</i></p>
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foundation of the world, etc. Those that here on earth practiced faith, righteousness, love and mercy shall have praise -and glory and immortality with the Lord, in whose presence is fullness Of joy; at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angles, etc. These are the unfaithful, the unmerciful, the unrighteous that have not been obedient to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, but have obeyed unrighteousness. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. Revelation 20 7-15; Romans 2:4-16; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 9:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Matthew 18:34; Revelation ch. 21; ch. 22:1-5; Psalms 16:11; Psalms 103.

74. The Lord Jesus saith, Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh. Matthew 25:13.

75. He which testifieth these things saith, **Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

Conclusion

76. Every confession of faith, as every other teaching and exposition Of Scripture is subject at all times to

<p>examination and estimation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, according to the Holy Scriptures (the inspired,* canonical* books of the Old and New Testament as a whole) the only infallible written preserved resource of the necessary and sufficient revelation of God to humanity for our salvation. Acts ch. 15; John 10:35; Psalms 119:96; Luke 24:27, 44; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Deuteronomy 18:15, 19; Acts 3:22; John 12:49-50; 2 Peter 1:16-18; Matthew 10:40; Luke 10:16; John 14:26; John 15:15; cf. III. "Regel und Richtschnur"; Psalms 119:105; 1 John 2:27.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "Inspired" means prompted by the Holy Spirit. ● "Canonical" means serving as rule and standard. 		
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Commentary on the Text</u></p> <p>Mennonite Brethren have their roots in the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement of sixteenth century Europe. Anabaptists regarded their confessional statements simply as a public testimony of what they believed, based on the Word of God. Confessions were used as an outline for instruction, church polity and discipline. When the Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in southern Russia in 1860, the 1853</p>	

edition of the West Prussian Mennonite Church Confession, first published in Holland in 1660, was officially adopted. In 1873 several congregations adopted the 1847 Hamburg Baptist Confession to establish their separate identity. However, this confession was never accepted by the entire brotherhood. As the need for a uniform confession of faith grew, the 1898 Mennonite Brethren General Conference appointed a commission to revise the earlier confession. However, an entirely new draft was formulated in the process, approved by Mennonite Brethren in Russia and North America in 1900 and printed at Halbstadt in 1902. It was reprinted in Hillsboro, Kansas, in 1916 and 1927, and at Gronau, Germany, in 1947. An English translation was published in 1940 and reprinted in 1951 and again in 1965. The recommendation to prepare a revised Confession of Faith in contemporary language was adopted by the 1966 General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. In 1967 this task was assigned to the Board of Christian Literature who appointed a committee to prepare the revision. Intermediate drafts were studied by the Board of Reference and Counsel, faculty of conference schools, study groups in various congregations, as well as the Canadian and U.S. Conferences. The seventh revised draft was unanimously adopted by the General Conference meeting in Winnipeg, August 1975. This Confession of Faith has been carefully designed and prayerfully prepared to be an effective instrument in the mission of the church. Just as a personal confession of faith is significant for personal salvation

	<p>(Rom. 10:9-10), so a corporate confession of faith can be significant for the corporate preservation and growth of a body of believers. Although historically and theologically Mennonite Brethren have emphasized biblicism rather than creedalism, a Confession of Faith can serve several useful purposes.</p>	