

## **Doctrinal Statements of the Agape Baptist Church**

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The Agape Baptist Church (ABC) is a church based on the Baptist Faith. ABC embraces the following statements concerning the truth:

The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e., that we all speak the same thing; I Corinthians 1:10; Acts 2:42). No claim is made that it contains all biblical truth, only that it covers our need as to these fundamental doctrines. We do not presume to say the phraseology employed in this Statement of Fundamental Truths is inspired or that it is the final work on Bible truth. However, we are persuaded it is proper and consistent with the Holy Scriptures to “set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us” (Luke 1:1).

A Baptist church, according to the point of view traditionally held by Baptists, is a company of regenerate persons, baptized on profession of faith in Christ; united in covenant for worship, instruction, the observance of Baptist ordinances, and for such service as the gospel requires; recognizing and accepting Christ as their supreme lord and lawgiver, and taking the New Testament as a divinely inspired record and therefore a trustworthy, authoritative, and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.

# **Articles of Faith**

## **THE SCRIPTURES.**

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

(2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1Pet. 1:23-25; Heb. 4:12).

## **THE TRUE GOD.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

(Gen 1:2; Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29; Isa. 43:10, 11; Matt. 28:19, John 4:24)

## **THE FALL OF MAN.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgressions fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

(Gen. 1:26-31; Gen. 3:17; Rom. 5:12-21).

## **THE WAY OF SALVATION.**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the meditorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Saviour.

(1 Thess. 4:7; 2 Tim.1:9).

## **JUSTIFICATION.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in

consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.  
(Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; Rom. 10:13-15; Luke 24:47)

### **THE FREENESS OF SALVATION.**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own determined depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.  
(Romans 8:16)

### **REGENERATION**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith, and newness of life.  
(2 Cor. 5:17)

### **REPENTANCE AND FAITH**

We believe the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our prophet, priest and king, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.  
(Rom. 3:24)

### **GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.  
(Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; Rom. 10:13-15; Luke 24:47).

### **SANCTIFICATION.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means especially the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

(1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:10)

### **PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that such only are real believers as endure to the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

(John 10:28; Eph. 4:30; Philippians 1:6)

### **THE LAW AND GOSPEL.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arise entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the Means of Grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

(John 1:17; 2 Tim. 3:16)

### **A GOSPEL CHURCH.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its only scriptural officers are Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons whose Qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

(Matt 18:20; Acts 2:41)

### **BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

(Romans 6:4; Acts 8:37-39; 1 Corinthians 11:26 -27)

### **THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public, and by preparation for that rest that remained for the people of God.

(John 20:1; Acts 2:1-5,47; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Heb. 8:6-9)

### **CIVIL GOVERNMENT.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and the Prince of the Kings of the earth.

(Romans 13:1-7)

### **RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

(Rev. 14:11; Rev. 22:11)

### **THE WORLD TO COME.**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day, Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

(1 Pet 4:7; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 20:10-15; Rev. 21:1).

# Ordinances

## Baptism by Immersion

We, as Baptists believe that we should be baptized by being immersed in water. Matthew 3:16 says, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." Jesus went up straightway out of the water; he therefore had to have been immersed in the water.

## The Lord's Supper

**Symbolic and Emblematic** – We, as Baptists believe that the bread, partaken during The Lord's Supper, is **SYMBOLIC** of Jesus' body, while the wine is **SYMBOLIC** of Jesus' blood. The Roman Catholics believe in the concept of **Transubstantiation**; that one consumes Jesus' **ACTUAL** body and blood when partaking of the Lord's Supper.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:23-34 says,**

<sup>23</sup> For I have 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:

<sup>24</sup> And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

<sup>25</sup> After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

<sup>26</sup> For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

<sup>27</sup> Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

<sup>28</sup> But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

<sup>29</sup> For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

<sup>30</sup> For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

<sup>31</sup> For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

<sup>32</sup> But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

<sup>33</sup> Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

<sup>34</sup> And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation.

And the rest will I set in order when I come.

## **Church Covenant**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and on the profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to give it a place in our affections, prayers and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, towards its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.