

Calvary Christian Reformed Church

Orange City, IA

Statement of Belief

We believe it to be God's will for our local church to be an instrument of Biblical and confessional leadership, as well as preserving sound doctrine and life (**1 Timothy 4:16; Romans 16:17**).

We seek to affirm our belief in the Word of God and the historic Reformed faith as expressed in the three forms of unity in the CRC – Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort. We affirm and commit to this testimony as follows:



May 2022

I. THE WORD OF GOD

A. Foundation of Our Faith and Practice

WE AFFIRM:

1. That the foundation for all the church believes and teaches both in faith and practice is the infallible and inerrant written Word of God - the Holy Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments.
2. That the Scriptures possess absolute authority and that the Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian) and the Three Forms of Unity, our confessions, possess authority subordinate to the Scriptures in our churches.
3. That the Holy Spirit will lead, guide, and direct His church consistent with His Word (**John 17:17; Matthew 4:4; 5:17-20; II Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 119:103; Belgic Confession Articles 2, 3, 5, 7, 29**).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To preach and teach the whole counsel of the Word of God as our fundamental duty; to make, nurture, and equip disciples of Jesus Christ, and to joyfully obey the Great Commission.
2. To live according to the Word of God in all of life.
3. To submit to the final authority of the Word of God (**Belgic Confession-Article 29**).

B. The Inerrancy of Scripture

WE AFFIRM:

1. That the Scripture is the written Word of God. Since God does not lie nor does He make mistakes, His Word cannot contain error. Scripture is inerrant and authoritative. "Scripture in its whole extent and in all parts is the infallible and inerrant Word of God" (**Acts of Synod 1979, p. 127**).
2. That Scripture's primary subject is the glory of God whose central theme is the message of redemption. Since Scripture's authority extends to all that it actually teaches, all of Scripture's subject matter is God's Word and is always true. When Scripture speaks concerning matters of history, science, ethics, or anything else, it is true and authoritative, and it governs our thinking in these areas.

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To teach diligently and defend faithfully the Word of God as infallible and inerrant.
2. To vigorously defend the infallibility and inerrancy of the Word of God against the increasing acceptance of current day distortions of Biblical texts.
3. To believe and teach all that the Word of God teaches, accenting the primary message of Scripture that there is a redemption for us from sin only through Jesus Christ.
4. To preach the law as a teacher of sin and rule of gratitude (**Romans 7:7; John 14:15; I John 5:1-5**).

II. THE CHURCH OF GOD

A. Its Savior

WE AFFIRM:

1. That the redemptive work of Jesus Christ was unique and He remains the only way of salvation - our only comfort in life and death.
2. That we are made right with God by grace alone through faith alone on account of Christ alone (**Acts 4:12; I Timothy 2:5; John 14:6; II Timothy 1:8-12; Hebrews 10:11-14; Romans 3:1,2,9-11; 8:1-4; Ephesians 2:1-10; Belgic Confession Articles 20, 21, 22, 23, 26**).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To exalt the Son of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom the name above all names and all authority in heaven and earth has been given.
2. To proclaim this gospel of Christ to our world as the only answer to mankind's sin, rebellion, and separation from God.

B. Its Worship

WE AFFIRM:

The elements in the worship of the church and the content of these activities must be done for the glory of God as prescribed by the Word of God (**Exodus 20:4; Deuteronomy 5:8-10; Leviticus 10:1-7; I Samuel 15:22, 23; John 4:23, 24; Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 96; Belgic Confession Article 32**).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

To promote worship that brings glory to God and is consistent with His Word, as the author of Hebrews says, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe" (**Hebrews 12:28**).

C. Its Offices (Pastor, Elder, & Deacon)

WE AFFIRM:

1. That men and women equally bear the image of God and are to serve Him with all their gifts according to His specific callings to them in biblical, complementary roles and responsibilities.
2. That, from creation, men were given authority for leadership in the family and in the church.
3. That Christ does not call women to the authoritative offices in the church, and therefore the church may not ordain them to these offices.
4. That the purpose of the spiritual gifts given to men and women in Christ is not self-fulfillment but service to others – all to God's glory.
5. That Christ rules His church through the officers He calls to govern it according to the regulations of His Word (**I Timothy 2 & 3; Titus 1; I Corinthians 14; Belgic Confession Articles 30, 31; Acts of Synod 1994 pp. 505-508, 513-516**).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To develop and use the gifts and abilities of all of God's people - men, women, and youth - in accord with the Word of God and for the good of God's kingdom and people.
2. To repent of all pride, bigotry, or chauvinism, which has kept us from properly using people's gifts.

3. To preserve the holiness and authority of the offices of the church in accord with the Word of God.

D. Its Sacraments

WE AFFIRM:

1. That Christ has instituted two sacraments for His church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper so that by our faithful use of them He might make us understand more clearly the promise of the gospel and put His seal on that promise.
2. That Baptism should be given to believers and their children in keeping with God's gracious and covenantal dealings with sinners saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (**Genesis 17; Romans 4:9-11; Galatians 3:26-29; Isaiah 44:1-3; Acts 2:38, 39; Acts 10:47; Acts 16:31; Colossians 2: 11; I Corinthians 10:1, 2; I Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:18-21**).
3. That the Lord's Supper should be observed frequently by all those who have publicly professed their faith in Jesus Christ as the only One who can save them from their sins. That they are truly sorry for their sins and earnestly desire to lead a godly, holy life in Christ. Having properly examined themselves, their faith, hope, and love for God and neighbor as revealed in **I Corinthians 11:23-29**.

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To the faithful administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
2. To doing all that we can with the help of the Holy Spirit to teach covenant children, and others, the meaning of their baptism, the privileges, and responsibilities of covenant life with God, and the necessity of giving their lives to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
3. To encourage repentant sinners who trust in Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness and righteousness, to come gladly to the table of our Lord.
4. To warn any unrepentant sinner and those who willfully continue in sin, and/or unbelief, to keep themselves from the table of the Lord until they are first reconciled to God through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

E. Its Unity

WE AFFIRM:

1. That the church is the universal body of Christ. The basis of its unity is not a denominational name, ethnicity, or similarity of background, but solely unity of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. That God's people are accountable to admonish and encourage one another, according to the Word of God (**Matthew 18:15-19, Galatians 6:1**).
3. That each church seeks ecclesiastical fellowship and union with other churches who faithfully adhere to the Word of God.
4. That, though the local church comes primarily under the authority of the local elders, the rulers of each church are also accountable through broader assemblies to other elders who live and rule in accord with God's Word (**Ephesians 2:11-22; 4:1-16; Acts 15; I Corinthians 5-6:11; 11:17-34; 12:12-31; Belgic Confession Art. 27, 28,29**).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To demonstrate openly that we are part of the body of Christ by a pure and holy lifestyle, by our words and deeds, by being and sending missionaries of the gospel, and by seeking unity with believers everywhere who faithfully adhere to God's Word.

2. To submit ourselves to one another out of reverence to Christ and before His Word, and to hold one another accountable to live, act, teach and minister in accordance with that Word.
3. To seek, where possible, ecclesiastical fellowship and union with all who believe and faithfully adhere to the Word of God and Reformed Confessions.
4. To pray for the unity of the church and its faithfulness to the Word of God throughout the world.
5. To the principle expressed in Church Order Article 85, "No church shall in any way lord it over another church, and no office-bearer shall lord it over another office bearer." (**1 Corinthians 4:6 &7**).

III. THE LIFE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

A. The Great Commission

WE AFFIRM:

1. That it is a fundamental duty of God's people to strive to make and nurture disciples for Jesus Christ in joyful adherence to the Great Commission.
2. That the task of fulfilling the Great Commission can only be done effectively in our community and world if we stand firmly on the teachings of the Scripture and are engaged in being Christ's witnesses.
3. That faithfulness in fulfilling this Great Commission is not dependent on marketing methods or techniques which minimize Biblical standards for worship and evangelism (**Matthew 10:32, 33; 28:16-20; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; II Timothy 2:12; I Peter 2:1-12; 3:15; Acts 1:8; Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 54**).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To fulfill the Great Commission by repenting of our failure to adequately be Christ's witnesses and by making His Commission a priority in the life of the church and its members.
2. To fulfill this Great Commission by training and equipping ourselves and others to accomplish this task.
3. To pray fervently and compassionately for our lost world and neighbors.
4. To employ methods for outreach which conform to Scripture and the Reformed Confessions.

B. The Christian Life.

WE AFFIRM

1. That Jesus Christ is the Lord of all of life, not simply of a particular aspect of the Christian's life.
2. That every part of our hearts and lives must be brought into conformity to the Word of God.
3. That no part of life is spiritually neutral, but that Christ is the covenant Head and Lord of every Christian endeavor.
4. That the Christian life begins with Christ's gift of regeneration; that we embrace this life by repentance and faith as our response to the gospel; that this repentance and faith will characterize the Christian throughout this life, enabling us to submit our lives to Christ (**Ephesians 1:15-23; 4:1-6; I Corinthians 6:12-20; 10:31; Matthew 5; 6:10; John 3:1-21; Belgic Confession Art. 29**).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To acknowledge Christ's exalted position as Lord and to humble ourselves before Him by obeying His Word in every aspect of daily life.

2. To honor Christ as Lord, covenant head, and King by educating our children (whenever possible) from a specifically Christian perspective; by living as families and individuals, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, men and women, children, and young adults in obedience to God's Word; and by using our gifts and abilities to fulfill our callings in society—all to the glory of God.
3. To live a holy lifestyle of thanksgiving in accordance with God's Word.
4. To proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior from ongoing sin and the only enabler in our commitment to His lordship.

IV. CRITICAL MORAL/ETHICAL ISSUES AND CONTROVERSIES FACING THE CHURCH TODAY

A. Sexuality

WE AFFIRM:

1. That heterosexuality is God's revealed will for humankind and that such relationships must be chaste whether married or single.
2. That homosexual desires and actions in any context are a result of the fall, reflect the brokenness of our sinful world, and must be resisted.
3. Like all sinners, those who give into such desires and actions must be clearly called to repentance and faith.
4. That the church acts contrary to love for God and its neighbor when it declares morally good or neutral anything which God has declared sinful. Such actions only endanger people and dishonor God (**I Corinthians 6:9-11; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26, 27; Genesis 19, Isaiah 5:20-24**).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To provide loving support, patient encouragement, and care for those struggling against homosexual temptations, and to help them to seek forgiveness, grace, and healing to overcome these temptations.
2. To reach out in love to those touched by homosexuality and those who contend Biblically against their sexual temptations. They should be patiently assisted in their battle, not ostracized or disdained.
3. To make the church a source of help in the battle against all improper sexual thoughts and actions.
4. To discipline those who deny that the Bible condemns homosexual activity (**Acts of Synod 1973, P. 52**).

B. Language for God

WE AFFIRM:

1. That God alone has the sole right and authority to tell us how He ought to be addressed by His church.
2. That persons of the Trinity receive masculine reference in the Scriptures, not as a result of a cultural bias of a previous age, but because this is how God chooses to reveal and characterize Himself (**Matthew 6:9, Luke 1:34, 35; John 4:23, 24; Matthew 3:16-17**).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To uphold the full revelation of God, and to seek to understand carefully all that He has revealed about Himself in the Scriptures, including His character, His attributes, and His names.
2. To be mindful, honoring, and respectful of the way God has characterized Himself in His Word in our prayers, writings, speech, teaching, preaching, and educational material.

C. Sanctity of Life

WE AFFIRM:

1. That the unborn child, from conception, is a human being in the image of God (**Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5; Exodus 20:13; Acts of Synod 1972 P.63-64; Acts of Synod 1976 P. 64**).
2. That God's gift to us of human life is so precious in God's sight that He is the only one who may decide when human life shall end.
3. That a conceived life is an individual person, not merely an appendage or extension of his or her mother (Hadley Arkes, "On Overruling Roe", First Things, No. 321, March 20222, p 38).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

1. To uphold and honor life, which God created, in all stages from conception onward.
2. To minister to those suffering the effects of the evil of abortion, including abortive mothers, fathers, and medical staff.
3. To seek to provide support and encouragement for orphans and parents who choose life.
4. To honor the disabled, infirmed and elderly.

THE SPIRIT OF THIS AFFIRMATION

1. We do not believe that all things in this affirmation of faith are of equal weight, some being more essential, some less. We do not believe that every part of this affirmation must be believed in order for one to be saved.
2. Our aim is to embrace and teach the whole counsel of God and to encourage an adherence to Biblical truth. We believe Biblical truth stabilizes the church against every wind of doctrine and promotes God's glory.
3. We believe that the cause of unity in the church is best served not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, around which all can gather, but by elevating the value of truth, seeking the unity that comes from the truth, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other across boundaries rather than by removing boundaries.
4. We do not claim infallibility for this affirmation and are open to refinement and correction from Scripture. Yet we hold firmly to these truths as we see them and call on others to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so.
5. We hold that the serving officers of our congregation, with input from the congregation, are the sole and final authority in determining if certain practices or relationships are in keeping with these openly declared religious convictions.