



Movement Seminary Statement of Faith

1. Prelude: Our Theological Heritage

We present this confession in the same spirit as of the confessions coming out of the Reformed tradition, for example: The 39 Articles, The Three Forms of Unity, The Westminster Confession of Faith, and The London Baptist Confession, among others. We also affirm The Gospel Coalition Foundation Documents, along with the Acts 29 Distinctives and Values.

2. Revelation: God's Inerrant and Authoritative Word

We believe that God has inspired the 66 books of the Protestant canon through the instrumentality of human authors.¹ He has done this in such a way as to include their human diversity while expressing his absolute divine authority, resulting in a divinely authoritative scripture that is completely without error in all that it means to assert, with regard to whatever topic it makes assertions about, both explicitly and by implication.² There is no other spiritual or human institution or communication on earth that has authority equal to or greater than these scriptures.³ These scriptures are sufficient to inform humanity of the way to be saved, without any additional teaching needing to be added.⁴ They are clear, in that any human being capable of reading them (in their original languages or good translations) can find in them the way of salvation through adequate study without the need for any intermediary teacher.⁵ They are necessary, in that the church's message of salvation finds its origin in the message of these books, and the church has no infallible knowledge of this way apart from them.⁶

¹ 2 Tim. 3:16.

² John 10:35; Rom. 3:31.

³ Deut. 13:1-5; Gal. 1:9.

⁴ John 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16.

⁵ Psa. 19:7-11.

⁶ 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1 Thess. 5:20-21.

3. God: Trinity, Attributes and Providence

We believe there is one true and living God, self-existent and the Creator of all things visible and invisible.⁷ This God eternally exists in Three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.⁸ He is infinite, incorporeal, unchanging, invisible, immortal, perfect, good, just, merciful, gracious, patient, holy, free, glorious, transcendent, and immanent.⁹ He is all powerful, all wise, all knowing (including of all things past, present, and future), and rules over everything that comes to pass, so that nothing happens without his will or permission.¹⁰

4. Creation: Humanity, Relationship, Dominion, Gender

We believe that this God created all things out of nothing by a powerful act of his will.¹¹ Among the things he made are the first human couple, Adam and Eve, and males and females both share in his image.¹² As such, they were both meant to exist in a close relationship with him, worshipping him and loving him in light of his goodness and greatness, and acting as his representative rulers on earth over the rest of creation.¹³ We affirm that God has appointed husbands and fathers to sacrificially, lovingly, and understandingly lead in their homes, and that he has appointed wives to wisely, lovingly, and respectfully cooperate with this leadership.¹⁴ We also affirm that God has ordained that elders be male, and that they are called to sacrificially, lovingly, and understandingly lead the local gathering of God's people that is the church.¹⁵ God's call in these regards is so that all gifts are fully deployed, that the church is fully built up, and that God is fully glorified by men and women working together.¹⁶

5. Fall: Origin, Consequence and Current State

We believe that this original couple decided to violate God's command, and so brought themselves and their descendents under the dominion of sin and the condemnation that follows from it.¹⁷ By nature and apart from Christ, they are spiritually dead and will die physically, unable morally and spiritually to obey God's law, and guilty because of this sinful condition.¹⁸ By their choices they inevitably confirm this sinful bent and increase their personal guilt.¹⁹

⁷ Exo. 3:14; Rev. 4:11; Heb. 11:3.

⁸ John 1:1; Acts 5:3-4.

⁹ Psa. 145:3; John 4:24; James 1:17; 1 Tim. 1:17; Deut. 32:4; Psa. 25:8; Deut. 4:31; Psa. 116:5; 2 Pet. 3:9; Isa. 6:3; Dan. 4:35; Isa. 42:8; 1 Kings 8:27; Isa. 57:15.

¹⁰ Rev. 11:17; Psa. 147:5; Isa. 146:10; Eph. 1:11.

¹¹ Gen. 1:1.

¹² Gen. 1:26-27.

¹³ Gen. 1:26; Rom. 1:21.

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:21-33.

¹⁵ 1 Tim. 2:11-15.

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:16.

¹⁷ Gen. 3:6; Rom 5:12-14, 18-19; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:3.

¹⁸ Rom. 8:6-8; Eph. 2:1-3.

¹⁹ Rom. 3:9-20.

6. Predestination: God's Foreordination to Salvation

We believe that God has, before the creation of the world, chosen to save some from among every tribe, tongue, and nation of the human race, not according to foreseen faith or merit, but in spite of their unbelief and merited condemnation, out of his mercy and great love.²⁰ He has elected to save these to everlasting glory.²¹

7. Christ: Two Natures, Sinlessness, Ministry, Death and Resurrection, Eternal Rule

We believe that the Second Person of the Trinity, called the Son or the Word, assumed a complete human nature to himself, resulting in a union (but not mixing) of two distinct natures, divine and human, in one person.²² He became human in Jesus of Nazareth through the conception of the Holy Spirit (and not any human male) in the virgin Mary.²³ Jesus lived a completely sinless life, and was the Messiah, the promised king to Israel.²⁴ He spent his ministry years teaching, performing miracles, and delivering people from demonic bondage, all of which proclaimed the advent of God's kingdom through Jesus.²⁵ He was crucified at the orders of Pontius Pilate, but this was according to the predetermined plan of God.²⁶ God willed for Jesus to be a substitute for the human race, bearing in himself the penalty that we deserved for our sin.²⁷ He died and was buried.²⁸ On the third day he physically rose from the dead, leaving the tomb, and then appeared to his disciples for a number of days.²⁹ He then ascended into the highest heaven, where he is seated at the right of God to this day, interceding for his people before God as our great High Priest, and ruling over all of created reality for the glory of God and the good of the church.³⁰

8. Holy Spirit: Deity, Gifting, Role in Salvation and Church,

We believe that the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is not a force or an impersonal reality, but is personal, and is equally divine with the Father and the Son.³¹ The Holy Spirit overcomes the spiritual death and inability of human beings to even want to please God by performing an effectual call, which moves the hearts of individuals to believe in, love, and want to obey God, even if not completely and perfectly in this life.³² Human beings can do nothing to

²⁰ Eph. 2:4-10; Rev. 5:9-10.

²¹ Rom. 8:29-30; John 6:44.

²² John 1:1, 14; Phil. 2:6-11.

²³ Luke 1:34-35.

²⁴ Heb. 4:15; Matt. 16:16-17.

²⁵ Acts 10:38; Matt. 4:23; Luke 11:20.

²⁶ John 19:16; Acts 4:28.

²⁷ Isa. 53:4-6; John 1:29.

²⁸ John 19:19, 38-42.

²⁹ 1 Cor. 15:4; Acts 1:1-3

³⁰ Acts 1:9; 1 Cor. 15:25-28; Acts 2:33; Heb. 7:25.

³¹ John 14:16-17; Acts 5:3-4.

³² 2 Cor. 3:6, 17-18; Eph. 2:4-10; Rom. 8:5-10; 1 John 2:1.

prepare for this call, it is a sovereign act of God, though he often uses other human instruments in the moment he accomplishes it.³³ The Spirit is the ultimate reason for the sanctification of the people of God, which is their growth in holiness and character according to God's will.³⁴ He will also be the one who ultimately resurrects and changes the bodies of the saints into the final immortal state, on the Last Day.³⁵ In the meantime, after the ascension of Jesus and the sending of the Spirit upon the church at Pentecost, he now empowers the church and every believer with some kind of supernaturally empowered gifting given for the building up of the church and the glory of God.³⁶

9. Gospel: Jesus' Death and Resurrection in History, Necessity of Personal Faith

We believe that the Gospel is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes.³⁷ The Gospel is fundamentally good news, an account of historical events that happened in space and time, centering around the penal substitutionary death of Jesus to take away the sins of the world, and the physical resurrection of Jesus to become the firstborn from the dead and Lord of all things.³⁸ God calls all people to personally believe in this gospel, and there is no other name given under heaven besides that of Jesus by which human beings may be saved.³⁹

10. Justification: Righteous in Christ through Faith, Bearing Good Fruit

We believe that the status of righteousness that Jesus possessed and attained through his perfect obedience to the Father's command is imputed to those who are united to Christ by faith alone at the moment of first belief, and this status will never be lost by those to whom it is given.⁴⁰ All those who are united to Christ by faith in this way will also inevitably produce good works, summed up primarily in the commands to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love their neighbours as themselves.⁴¹

11. Church: One, Holy, Apostolic

We believe that the people who are united to Christ in this way form a community, called the church, that is characterized by certain visible qualities.⁴² The first of these is belief in the Gospel, regular teaching of this gospel, and effort to proclaim this gospel to all nations either by

³³ Eph. 2:1-4; Rom. 10:13-15;

³⁴ 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:4-9.

³⁵ Rom. 8:11, 23-25; John 6:44.

³⁶ Acts 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:7.

³⁷ Rom. 1:16.

³⁸ 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Col. 1:8; Rev. 1:5; Matt. 28:18.

³⁹ Acts 4:12; 17:30-31.

⁴⁰ John 8:29; 1 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 4:25; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 4:22-24; Heb. 10:14; John 10:39.

⁴¹ Eph. 2:10; Matt. 22:34-40.

⁴² Eph. 2:18-22.

sending missionaries or by supporting those who go.⁴³ This community is united across the globe by this faith, but also exists in local communities, which sometimes are scattered in the world, and at other times gather to fulfill the Lord's commands and build each other up.⁴⁴ This church is also characterized by being indwelt corporately and individually by the Holy Spirit, and by the love for other members in the community that flows from that indwelling.⁴⁵ Mixed in with these qualities will be imperfections both within individuals, due to indwelling sin, and within communities, due to individuals being identified outwardly as Christians who do not have saving faith inwardly.⁴⁶ This church will be completely purified at the return of Christ.⁴⁷

12. Sacraments/Ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper Commanded by Jesus

We believe that before he ascended into heaven, the Lord Jesus commanded the church to carry out Baptism and the Lord's Supper.⁴⁸ Among other possible conceptions of these practices held by various churches in the Reformed traditions, Baptism is an act marking initiation into the community of God's people who have died and risen with Christ, and the Lord's Supper marks renewal of membership in that community, proclaiming the death of Jesus until he comes again.⁴⁹ Within broadly Reformed traditions, we recognize differences of viewpoints on these subjects: regarding appropriate recipients, some of us might say only professing believers can rightly receive Baptism and the Lord's Supper, others might say the children of believers can also rightly partake of Baptism but not the Lord's Supper, and still others might say those children can rightly partake of both Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Further, in terms of what happens during these practices, within a broadly Reformed tradition we would deny the Roman Catholic doctrines of *ex opere operato* conferral of grace and of Transubstantiation, as well as the Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's human nature, but we would recognize that different churches may differently articulate the way in which Christ and the Spirit graciously act or are present or absent in Baptism and the Lord's Supper.⁵⁰

12. Eschatology: Christ's Return, the Resurrection of the Saints, The Eternal Fate of the Believer and Unbeliever

We believe that one day in the future, Christ will come again visibly and gloriously to earth.⁵¹ He will raise all people who have ever lived from the dead, and give every human being immortal bodies.⁵² He will also judge everyone who has ever lived based on their response to God's

⁴³ Eph. 2:1-10; Acts 20:18-32; Matt. 28:18-20; Matt. 10:40-42.

⁴⁴ Col. 1:5-6; Col. 4:5-6; 2 Thess. 3:10-12; Heb. 10:24-25.

⁴⁵ 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19; Gal. 5:22; 1 John 2:10.

⁴⁶ Rom. 7:24, 8:10; Matt. 7:21-23.

⁴⁷ 1 Thess. 5:23; Jude 1:24.

⁴⁸ Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-25.

⁴⁹ Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 11:26.

⁵⁰ Eph. 2:8; Gal. 3:5; Luke 24:6.

⁵¹ Acts 1:11; 2 Thess. 1:7-8.

⁵² John 5:25-29; 1 Cor. 15:53.

self-revelation, and assign them either to a consciously experienced eternal condemnation, or to everlasting life, joy, and peace.⁵³ He will also renew the entire universe, and those who have been appointed to everlasting life through Christ will spend forever enjoying God and this renewed creation, where there will be no more sorrow or death.⁵⁴

⁵³ Rev. 20:11-15, 21:1-8.

⁵⁴ Rev. 21:1-5; 22:1-4; Eph. 1:10, 22-23.