

# Confession of Common Faith and Practice

## Of the Cimarron Christian Brotherhood

### Perkins, Oklahoma

#### Our Common Faith--What We Believe

Many people look at Christianity as a set of beliefs. We see Christianity as much more than that. To us it is a living relationship with Jesus Christ, a relationship that produces a new life. We enter into this relationship by: (1) hearing the call of God through His word and His Spirit working in our hearts, (2) repenting of our sins and turning from our selfish life and the world, (3) yielding all to Jesus Christ as Lord of our life, and (4) receiving the gift of a new life offered us through Jesus Christ. In short, we become Christians by choosing to surrender to Jesus as our Savior and Lord. And we live the Christian life in exactly the same way--by a living faith that moves us to a daily commitment to Christ. As Christians, we follow Jesus, we learn from Jesus, we try to do each day what Jesus would do if He were in our world--through the power of the Holy Spirit. That is true Christianity.

Even so, as Christians we hold to certain beliefs--and correct beliefs *are* important. We derive our beliefs from the Bible, believing all that it teaches. But the Bible is a big book--a book of history, poetry, exhortation, prophecy. It is not a systematic statement of doctrine. Since even sincere people differ in what they understand it to teach, we find it helpful to summarize key points that we believe. Christians have done this since the beginning of the church.

The earliest known summary of key Christian doctrines is known as the Apostles' Creed. It was very likely written while some of the apostles were still alive, or shortly after. Because we want to emulate apostolic Christianity, and anchor ourselves solidly in apostolic doctrine, we give it here as a concise statement of what we believe:

We believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth:  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was  
conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary;  
who suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead and buried;  
who descended into Hades,  
on the third day rose again from the dead,  
ascended into heaven,  
and sits on the right hand of God the Father almighty,  
from where He will come to judge the living and the dead.  
We believe in the Holy Ghost,  
in the holy catholic [universal] church,  
in the communion of saints,  
in the forgiveness of sins,  
in the resurrection of the body,  
and in the life everlasting.

Many Christians since then have also written confessions of faith. We present here an abridged form of the "Schleitheim Confession" adopted by the Swiss Brethren on February 24, 1527.<sup>1</sup> We share this "Confession" not only to affirm our own belief, but also to express our appreciation for the earnest attempt to restore apostolic Christianity that became known as the Anabaptist movement. The zeal of this restitution movement inspires us, and we ask God to bless us with the purity of heart and the power that we see there.

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<sup>1</sup>. The full text of the "Schleitheim Confession" can be found in the [Mennonite Confession of Faith](#), sold by Rod and Staff Publishers.

## The Schleithem Confession

### **1. Baptism**

Baptism shall be given to all who have demonstrated repentance and a changed life, to all who truly believe that their sins are taken away by Christ, to all who wish to be buried with Him into death so that they may be resurrected with Him. We baptize only those who understand baptism to mean these things, and who request it for themselves.

### **2. Excommunication**

If those who have given themselves to the Lord, to walk in His commandments, should inadvertently fall into sin, they shall be admonished. If after two private admonitions they do not repent, they shall be openly disciplined or excommunicated according to the command of Christ. This shall be done according to the Spirit of Christ before the breaking of bread, so that we may break bread with one heart and in one love.

### **3. The breaking of bread**

Those who wish to break one bread and drink one cup in remembrance of the broken body and shed blood of our Lord shall first be united by baptism into the one body of Christ, which is the church of God, whose head is Christ Himself. For as Paul teaches us, we cannot drink the cup of devils and the cup of the Lord at the same time. That is, if we have fellowship with the works of darkness, we have no part in the light of the Gospel. If we follow the devil and the world, we have no part with those who are called out of the world to serve God. So those who break bread together must have been called by God into one faith, to one baptism, to one Spirit, to one body.

### **4. Separation**

All men are divided into two classes: the good and bad, the believing and unbelieving, the world and those who have come out of the world, the followers of Christ and followers of Belial. And no one can find fellowship in both classes of people.

To us, the command of the Lord is clear. He calls us to be separate from all evil, that He may be our God, and we, His sons and daughters. He calls us to come out of "Babylon" and "Egypt," that we do not come under their judgments.

From this we learn to flee from all that is not united to our God and Christ. This includes separation from all apostate religious programs and services, from drunkenness, from civic affairs, from oaths, from whatever is contrary to God's commandments. Our separation causes us to be hated by the world. But our Lord Jesus has set us free from our former slavery to our flesh, fitting us to serve God through the Spirit that He has given us.

### **5. Pastors**

A pastor in the church of God shall have a good report of those outside the faith. His office shall be to read, to admonish and teach, to warn, to discipline, to excommunicate, to lead out in worship, to lift up the bread when it is broken, to do all that is necessary to care for the church, in order that it may be built up.

A pastor shall be supported by the church that has chosen

"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" (Mt. 28:19-20).

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Ac. 2:38)

"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. . . . 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 an heathen man and a publican" (Mt. 18:15-17).

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Co. 12:13).

"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Co. 10:21).

"There is one body, and one Spirit . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).

"He hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Co. 1:13).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Co. 6:14-18).

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (Jn. 15:18-19).

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well

him, according to need, so that he who serves in the Gospel may live of the Gospel as the Lord has ordained.

If a pastor should do anything requiring discipline, he shall not be dealt with except on the testimony of two or three witnesses. When he sins, he shall be disciplined before all that others also may fear.

## 6. The sword

The sword is ordained of God outside the perfection of Christ. It punishes and puts to death the wicked, and guards and protects the good. Under the Mosaic law, the sword was given for the punishment of the wicked. This sword is now given to worldly officers of law. But in the church of Christ, the only punishment used against sinners is excommunication and the warning to sin no more.

Some will ask, "May the Christian use the sword to defend or to protect the good, or those he loves?" Our answer is unanimously, "No. Christ teaches and commands us to learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly in heart, and in this way we find rest for our souls."

Others may ask, "May a Christian be a judge to settle the quarrels that unbelievers have." Our answer is: "Christ did not wish to pass judgment in the case of a dispute about an inheritance. We also should refuse such things."

## 7. Oaths

Under the Mosaic law, God ordained that oaths be used only in His name, and only in truth, not falsely. But Christ, who teaches the perfection of the law, prohibits all swearing to His followers, whether true or false. We do not swear at all because, as Jesus says, we cannot change even the smallest thing about ourselves. We cannot always fulfill what we have promised. A simple "yes" or "no" binds us to our word.

It would be impractical to put in this writing a full confession of every aspect of the Christian faith. But in addition to the above, we would like to briefly affirm key elements of our faith that often come under attack today.

### 1. Creation

We believe that God created all things in six days of creation, followed by a day of rest (Gen. 1, 2).

### 2. The Holy Scriptures

We believe that the whole Bible is inspired of God, both the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament is the necessary foundation of the New, but we accept the New Testament as the primary guide for the Christian life (Mt. 5; Heb. 8:6-13). (As a rule we use the KJV or NKJV in public services.)

### 3. Sin

We believe that Adam was created innocent and pure, but through disobedience to God, he became sinful. All of us have also rebelled against the Holy God of heaven; all are sinners and have a sinful nature (Gn. 3; Ro. 3; Eph. 2:3).

### 4. Jesus, the only Savior

his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1 Ti. 3:2-7).

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. . . . For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Ro. 13:1-4).

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Mt. 11:29).

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (Jn. 18:36).

"But I say unto you, Swear not at all . . . Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Mt. 5:34-37).

"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is" (Ex. 20:11).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Ti. 3:16).

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17).

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Ro. 5:12).

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we

We believe that we can be saved from sin, death and eternal hell only through Jesus' atoning death and shed blood and bodily resurrection.

### **5. The gift of salvation**

We believe that we receive God's gift of salvation through true repentance (turning from our sins to God) and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving faith leads us to confess our sins, to be baptized, to confess Christ and receive Him as our only Savior and Lord—into a life of full surrender and commitment.

### **6. Discipleship**

We believe that we cannot be Jesus' disciples unless we deny ourselves and take up our cross daily and follow Him.

### **7. Perseverance and assurance**

We believe that God is fully able to keep us, but that we will be saved only if, by the grace of God, we endure to the end. All who continue to hear Jesus' voice and to follow Him have eternal life and can rest in the knowledge that they are eternally secure. Outside of Jesus Christ, apart from continuing obedient faith to Him, we are lost (1 Jn 5:12-13).

### **8. Christian fruit**

We believe that the primary test of our Christianity is the fruit of the Spirit in our lives: holiness, righteousness, love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. This is reflected in loving our neighbor as ourselves. (Gal. 5:13-26; Eph. 4:17 - 5:21)

### **9. The Holy Spirit in us**

We believe that God gives His Spirit to all His children. The Holy Spirit lives not only in each of us, but also in the church, His temple. We must walk in the Spirit and work in harmony with fellow disciples if we would reap the rewards of the Spirit.

### **10. Spiritual gifts**

We believe that the Spirit gives each believer spiritual gifts for the edification of the church, as listed in the Scriptures, according His sovereign will.

### **11. The congregation**

We believe God calls believers to function as members of a local congregation, in submission to other brethren, for mutual exhortation and edification. We see the example of a plural eldership in the New Testament congregations, and of deacons called to minister to temporal needs.

### **12. Feet washing**

We believe that we should wash one another's feet as an expression of humility and mutual service.

### **13. The Christian greeting**

We believe that we should greet one another with a holy kiss of sincere love, brothers with brothers and sisters with sisters.

must be saved" (Ac. 4:12).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Ac. 2:38).

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Ro. 10:9).

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Lu. 9:23).

"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Mt. 24:13).

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (Jn. 10:27-18).

"By their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 7:20-21).

"The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. 5:9).

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Ro. 8:9).

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. 5:25-26).

"The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. ... The same Spirit [distributes gifts] to each one individually as He wills" (1 Co. 12:7-11).

"The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Ac. 2:47).

"The elders who are among you I exhort ... shepherd the flock of God ... being examples to the flock..... All of you be submissive to one another" (1 Pe. 5:1-5).

"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. (Jn. 13:14-15).

"Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss" (1 Th. 5:26).

"Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity" (1 Pe. 5:14).

#### **14. Headship and the veiling**

We believe that God calls men to headship and women to submission. As God's representatives, men have unveiled heads that remind all of us to live to God's glory. Women's veiled heads not only remind us to veil our own glory; her veiling also contributes to feminine modesty.

#### **15. Anointing with oil**

We believe that God has ordained anointing with oil for the healing of the sick.

#### **16. Marriage**

We believe that marriage is designed by God to be a holy, life-long union of one man and one woman; that marriage of divorced persons whose former companions are living constitutes adultery; that believers are not to marry unbelievers; that Christians should marry only those who are committed to living as Christ's disciples in His Kingdom.

#### **17. Relationship to civil authorities**

We believe that God calls us to pray for those in authority, to obey them for conscience' sake, and to pay our just taxes.

#### **18. Our enemy and the spirit world**

We believe that we have a real enemy, Satan, a spirit being who tries to turn us from God and damn our souls. We also believe that through God's Holy Spirit, His word, and His angelic ministering spirits, we can overcome him.

#### **19. Christ's return**

We believe that Christ will return at the end of the age to judge the living and the dead, the righteous and the unrighteous.

#### **20. Eternal rewards**

We believe in the reality of Heaven and Hell. The wicked, disobedient and unbelieving will "be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thes. 1:9). The righteous, obedient and faithful will enjoy the bliss of eternity in God's presence.

"Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head.... If it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered (1 Co. 11:4-6).

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (Jas. 5:14).

"But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Mt. 5:32).

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Pe. 2:13).

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Mt. 22:1).

"Be strong in the Lord ... Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:10-11).

"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12).

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Mt. 25:46).

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### **Our Common Practice--How We Live**

The Christian church not only believes sound doctrine, but also upholds sound practice. What we believe cannot be divorced from how we live. We do not really believe in our Lord Jesus unless we follow and obey Him.

Under the New Covenant, God writes His laws in our hearts, teaching us to fear Him and giving us a heart to obey Him. We develop personal conviction to obey Him. However, our obedience to God is not just a personal matter. God has designed that we serve Him in a local church. The example, exhortation and admonition of others help us apply God's laws to our lives. In our understanding, New Testament Christianity can be lived out fully only when Christians walk with fellow disciples of Christ in meaningful accountability in a church that is led by leaders called of God. This is what we mean by "church membership." We expect that those who are part of our congregation live up to the "Common Practice" that we outline here.

We understand that membership in any church is voluntary—but such membership should not be seen as optional. In Acts, when new Christians were baptized, they were "added to the church" (Acts 2:47). The apostolic church had members that could be counted and leaders that led.

In our time, there are many church options. We are not the only church or the best fit for all. We invite born-again Christians to contact our leaders if they wish pursue membership with us. If attending seekers, or even members with us, see that they cannot support CCB, we expect open communication and urge such persons to choose a church that they can support. We recommend membership in a church that embraces the historic Anabaptist faith as expressed in our Confession of Faith and the "Dortrecht Confession of Faith."<sup>2</sup> We bless those who make such a choice.

Jesus said that His laws can be summed up in two great commandments, or principles: loving God with all our hearts, and loving our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). The following points of "Common Practice" all grow out of these two commandments. We live as we do because we love God and our neighbor. If we do any of these things for any other reason--apart from serving, sacrificing love--our practice becomes empty and meaningless.

### **1. Life in Jesus**

Because we love God, we worship Him for who He is and strive to maintain a living relationship with the Lord Jesus. This relationship begins with conversion and is maintained by taking up the cross daily, by the power of the Spirit, to die to our selfish desires. It is nurtured by a meaningful devotional life: Scripture reading, meditation, prayer and fasting.

### **2. Life together**

Because we love one another, we purpose to share in close fellowship with each other. Following apostolic example, all of us participate as much as we are able in our regular and special fellowship meetings. We work together in both spiritual and natural endeavors, for mutual help and encouragement. We also work to strengthen a brotherly relationship with like-minded churches beyond our local fellowship.

### **3. Christian service**

Because we love our neighbors, we take responsibility to preach the Gospel of Christ and His Kingdom. We work together to make our church a picture of what the world would be like if everyone obeyed the King. This vision directs our personal lives and our homes, and is worked out in our congregational life and its various ministries. We also encourage voluntary service and support world-wide Kingdom ministries in ways we can.

### **4. Family life**

Because we love God who planned the family unit, we take our family responsibilities seriously. We promote family unity and togetherness--in worship, in service, in work, in daily routines. Fathers lead their families in worship and prayer, and teach sound doctrine and God's principles for holy living. We honor Christian motherhood. We expect all, including our youth, to be sober-minded and Kingdom-focused.

### **5. Christ's rule**

Because we love God, we accept our calling to love one another, to serve one another, to honor others before ourselves, to share with those in need, to do all things for edification. Knowing that some of the greatest tests of Christianity are found in our brotherhood relationships, we make no place for gossip and evil speaking. Where conflicts occur in the church, we

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (Jn. 15:4).

"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Lu. 14:27).

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Joh. 12:24-25).

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

"Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Ga. 6:10).

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel" (Mr. 16:15).

"They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Ac. 8:4).

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Mt 24:14).

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Col. 3:18-21).

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Mt. 6:33).

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Joh. 13:35).

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.... But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more.... And

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<sup>2</sup> The full text of the "Dortrecht Confession" can be found in the [Mennonite Confession of Faith](#), sold by Rod and Staff Publishers.

commit ourselves to examine our own lives and to prayer. If the conflict continues after we have given God opportunity to work in our own hearts, we will go directly to the person involved in the spirit of meekness.

## 6. Living in the light

Because we love God, we renounce all the works of darkness and separate ourselves from all demonic practices and activities (for example, the celebration of Halloween). We avoid all forms of divination (like "water witching"), of mystical meditation (such as yoga), and even the "gray areas" where mysterious powers seem to work apart from natural principles.

## 7. Living in freedom

Because we love God and have made Jesus Lord of our lives, we reject anything that is addictive and enslaves the body or mind. This includes tobacco, alcohol and other addictive drugs, as well as addictive behaviors like pornography and self-abuse—and even addiction to our device screens and social media. (We urge caution with prescription drugs and openness to counsel.) We do not allow even legitimate pleasures or business pursuits to rule our lives. We live to serve Christ and others, not ourselves.

## 8. Christian stewardship

Because we love God and our brothers, we consciously dedicate all our earthly possessions to the Lord. What we have is not our own, but a stewardship of the Lord. Directed by the Spirit, we freely share with those in need, especially with Christian brothers. We view the love of money and the accumulation of treasures on earth as dangerous to our souls. At the same time, God calls us to work with our hands that we may provide for our own (not just our immediate families, but our parents and others) and have to give to those in need. This implies careful management, with a view to living with less that we might share more generously (Acts 4:34-35; 1 Jn. 3:16-19).

## 9. Christian values

Because we love God, we choose our possessions for practicality, not show. Our purchases reflect our values and reveal our sense of stewardship. We choose to identify with the humble and purpose to lay up our treasures in heaven. We live in simple houses with simple furnishings; we avoid luxury or sporty vehicles; and we open ourselves to brotherly counsel in these areas. We also seek brotherhood counsel in large purchases and business investments, especially when debt is incurred.

## 10. Living by faith

Because we love God and know that He loves us, we purpose to learn to trust Him in every area of life. In the religious world, relying on man's institutions and traditions can undermine our focus on Christ and on following Him in simple faith. Similarly, in the economic world, an affluent life style and leaning on insurances or the social assistance programs of the government can undermine our faith in Christ. We refuse life insurance in particular. We choose a life style that encourages us to trust

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 an heathen man and a publican" (Mt. 18:15-17).

"Those who had practiced magic brought their books together, and burned them in the sight of all" (Ac. 19:19).

"Sorcerers ... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Re. 21:8).

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 Jo. 5:21).

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Co. 6:12).

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life" (2 Ti. 2:4).

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other" (Mt. 6:24).

"Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 Jn. 3:17).

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom" (Mt. 19:24).

"Let him labor, working with his hands ... that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28).

"Charge them that are rich in this world, ... that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ... laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Ti. 6:17-19).

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also...." (Mt. 6:19-20).

"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (Lu. 16:11).

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Ps. 118:8-9).

"That ... your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also

God and not man. Because we love our brothers, we commit ourselves to help meet each other's needs, remembering the words of our Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Where insurance is required by law, if possible we choose brotherhood sharing plans.

### 11. Electronic media

Because we love God, we strive to maintain an atmosphere of reverence in our homes, we encourage influences that promote holiness and sobriety, and we purpose to shelter our families from the corruptions and perversions of society. Because we do not want the world's media to shape our thinking, we reject radio, television and the electronic entertainment world that promotes immorality, violence and covetousness. (Even most religious programs are deceptive and entertainment-oriented.) We recognize that the internet has great potential for the Kingdom, but we also see it as a great danger and snare. We expect our members to be open and voluntarily accountable to the brethren, with filters and/or accountability plans in place for all devices. The technology world keeps changing. We purpose to regularly review our practices and are committed to work together in the church to set limits and give guidelines in every area, including social media.

### 12. Reading material

Because we love God, we guard our reading habits. Knowing that what we read molds our thinking, we promote, first of all, the reading of the Scriptures, as well as other wholesome literature. We carefully guard against anything that takes our hearts away from God. Most of what the world produces has no place at all in our homes. And even much of today's "Christian" literature undercuts sound doctrine, godly morals and values, and sound church and family life.

### 13. Music

Because we love God and want to keep our hearts in tune with Him, we choose our music carefully. Music communicates with our inner being and shapes our thinking and attitudes. It can take us away from God, or toward God. In this light and in harmony with apostolic practice, we promote a capella singing for worship and praise, as well as for mutual encouragement. Recorded music, if carefully chosen and discreetly used, can promote godly singing and edification. We avoid contemporary Christian music, country, rap, rock and other musical genres that the world uses for entertainment and profit. We choose music that rings with a clear Scriptural message welded to a prominent melody, a simple and supportive harmony, and a subdued rhythm. We expect members to be open and accountable with their music choices.

### 14. Modesty

Because we love God and His righteousness, we choose modest, simple, serviceable dress, as the Scriptures teach. Because we love our neighbor, we refuse anything designed to foster lustful looks or thoughts. In view of these principles, we reject the world's fashions and fads. We seek to glorify God in our bodies as well as in our spirits, for both belong to God. We

may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality. ... Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Co. 8:14, 9:7).

"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pe. 1:15).

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: ... proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:8-11).

"For there are many ... deceivers ... whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households ... for the sake of dishonest gain" (Tit. 1:10-11).

"Do not be deceived: Evil communication [company] corrupts good manners [habits]" (1 Co. 15:33).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable . . . that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Ti. 3:16-17).

"Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.... Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Ti. 4:13, 15).

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (Jas 4:8).

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1Co 6:20).

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1Co 10:31)

"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but . . . with good works" (1 Ti. 2:8-10).



choose dress that reflects humility and godly virtues. Specifically, we avoid form-fitting clothing, loud colors, and eye-catching styles. The brothers choose simple footwear, and loose-fitting trousers and shirts. ("Polo" shirts with at least 3 buttons are acceptable, but not tee shirts). The sisters wear unadorned dresses with long skirts, modest sleeves, concealing necklines. The Greek *katastolee* (translated "modest apparel" in 1 Timothy 2:9) suggests a long, double-layered garment. To apply this we ask our sisters to wear a simple cape dress, vest dress, or a jumper and blouse (not a skirt and blouse). Both brothers and sisters choose fabrics and patterns that conceal body forms and undergarments, including sleeves that cover most of the upper arm. Dress identifies us; we reject styles that identify us with the world and its various subcultures, whether overtly with pictures and slogans, or subtly through styles and patterns.

## 15. Men and women

Because we love God who made us as men and women, we uphold gender distinction in dress and grooming. In harmony with the Scriptures, the brothers keep their heads uncovered and their hair neatly cut and off their eyebrows, ears and collars. Headgear worn for necessary weather protection should not promote a worldly agenda or worldly values. The sisters have long hair, simply combed and faithfully veiled with an unadorned opaque hanging veil, either black or white, fastened together at the back. Men's uncovered heads and women's veiled heads testify to our acceptance of God's creation order and His redeeming grace. Men's uncovered heads also remind all of us to display God's glory in our lives. One way men do this is by being godly, loving leaders; women do it by accepting their supportive role. The woman's veiled head reminds all of us to veil our own glory. The veiling also promotes modesty by covering what the Scriptures call a woman's glory, her long hair.

## 16. Simplicity

Because we love the God who calls us to humility, we avoid display and ostentation, whether in our possessions or on our bodies. To put to death our pride and to literally obey the Scriptures, we do not wear jewelry or cosmetics of any kind, or use sensual perfumes. Since even watches are jewelry for many, those who need a watch choose one that does not resemble a bracelet. We cannot address every question related to dress and appearance, but we do promote working together and being open to counsel, especially of the elders and mature members. The old Anabaptist rule, "nothing for pride's sake," should guide us still.

## 17. Recreation

Because we love God, we avoid the pursuits of a pleasure-mad society. As followers of our Lord Jesus, we want to live as He did, by serving God and others. We reject the world's amusement parks, sport events, movie theaters, rodeos, and such like. We find godly recreation in family and church activities and in Christian service and fellowship.

## 18. Kingdom allegiance

Because we love God and pledge undivided allegiance to

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart . . . the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands" (1 Pe. 3:3-5).

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Ge 1:27).

"If the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. . . . Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (1 Co. 11:6-15).

"All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pe. 5:5).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, . . . and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Co. 6:19-20).

"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (1 Pe. 4:3).

"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mt. 20:27-28).

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world,

His Kingdom, we do not pledge allegiance to the flag, nor do we vote or take sides in political matters. Civil rulers keep order and restrain evil. Jesus calls us as citizens of His Kingdom to a higher calling: to be lights in a dark world, to call all men to repent and turn from the world and allegiance to its kingdoms. We honor those whom God has raised up to rule in civil affairs. But like Christ, we are not of this world. We cannot serve in any capacity that requires an oath, or on a trial jury. We are forbidden to judge those outside the church or rule over others. Nor can we serve in the military. Jesus calls us to do His work. He came not to destroy life and property, but to save. Like Him, we do not enter into unequal yokes with unbelievers, that is, into any contract or union that compromises our freedom to act in harmony with Christian principles. This rules out membership in fraternal orders, secret societies and labor unions.

### 19. Courtship and marriage

Because we love our Creator, we serve Him with joy in the calling He gives us. Those who are called to serve unmarried have a special freedom to focus on Christ and His Kingdom. Christian courtship is not casual dating, but is designed to lead into a holy marriage, and is conducted in integrity and purity ("hands off"). Faithful youth honor their parents by seeking their guidance in courtship. Since marriage joins a man and a woman to serve together in Christ's Kingdom, we marry only those who uphold foundational Kingdom principles, including these: life-long marriage; respect for the creation order expressed in women's veiled heads; commitment to redeeming love and the rejection of all violence. We do not allow engagement or wedding rings. (See No. 16.) We expect all wedding and reception plans to be approved by the pastors of the congregation(s).

### 20. Harmony and peace

Because we love God and His people, we commit ourselves to work in harmony for the edification of this brotherhood. If any of us persists in failure to do so, we recognize that we forfeit our membership in this congregation. If we leave the congregation to find fellowship elsewhere with faithful disciples of Christ, we will leave peacefully and continue to work to build God's Kingdom.

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We have not tried to address every area of faith and practice in this writing. Others will need to be addressed as we face the questions that come up in congregational life. In every question, we will prefer others above ourselves and submit ourselves to one another in humility (Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 5:5). We will respect the congregation we are a part of, submitting to those who watch for our souls that they may give account with joy (Hebrews 13:17). We will promote "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). We will work for the "edifying of the church," not for self glory (1 Corinthians 14:12, 26). We will resist being conformed to this world, and by the transformation of our minds we will seek to know and do the will of God (Romans 12:2).

Scriptures like these show us plainly that "none of us lives to himself" (Romans 14:7). We live as members of Christ and thus members one of another (Romans 12:5). Our Lord says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). May He be exalted over every area of our lives.

then would my servants fight" (Joh. 18:36).

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. ... For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God" (Ro. 13:1)

"And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Lu. 12:14).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for . . . what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Co. 6:14-16).

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. ... He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord. ... The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. (1 Co. 7:1-3, 32, 39).

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Am 3:3).

"Be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Php. 2:2-3).

"Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition" (Tit. 3:10).

"Let all that you do be done with love" (1 Co. 16:14).

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