

Biblecia Statement of Faith

(Updated in 2021)

Christianity cannot be accurately reduced to just a few basic things. Nonetheless, it's in no way devoid of propositional truths. The first eight of the truths below reflect doctrinal essentials as I believe they've been codified by Christ in his church in our history. They must therefore serve as division when division is necessary. They stand alone and yet they stand together. They are required. The rest are positions I take on things often rightly called *secondary matters*. I cherish much from many diverse written Christian creeds and confessions throughout history, but principally uphold the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 and the Baptist Faith and Message of 2000. I believe this faith statement to be agreeable to both of these documents as well as many others throughout history.

On Essentials

1. **Scripture.** The Bible is perfect. God inspired it, gave it to his people, later collected it and has graciously preserved it. Heaven and earth are not as sure as it. It's all-sufficient, inerrant, and absolute over those in Christ equipping the saints for every good work. It's how God speaks to his people, and is entirely without contradiction. The Canon of Scripture is one grand volume containing sixty-six books. Thirty-Nine Old Covenant letters and twenty-seven New Covenant letters. It is a trans-national, tri-lingual and bi-millennial symphony with God as its evident composer. The book I have in my hand today should be fully trusted as that which God held men like pens in his hand to write. God superintended their writing with the times and personalities of the writers remaining intact. The Bible rightly understood and applied is the only ultimate authority on this planet in the Christian Faith. All established church authorities find their authority only as proper stewards of the Bible directly under Christ.

2. **God.** God is triune. Christian theology is trinitarian theology. In the being of God there are three absolutely co-equal persons. The Father is truly God, the Son is truly God and the Holy Spirit is truly God. All eternal, all equal, individual yet indivisible, united yet distinct, one in essence and three in person. In a sound monotheistic framework, the Bible's writers clearly call the Father God, the Son God and the Holy Spirit God. The Father sent the Son. The Son was submitted to him on earth. The Holy Spirit is also omnipresent, speaks on Jesus' authority, enlightens, empowers and sends his saints. Jesus received worship and forgave sin. Jesus referred to himself as God. Both Old and New Covenant writers identify Jesus as God. Jesus himself, now glorified, was and is both truly God and truly man. Yahweh, being triune, is the only God who has ever or will ever exist, and is the unfathomably brilliant creator and sustainer of everything both seen and unseen.

3. **The Resurrection.** I affirm the physical and historical Resurrection of Jesus the Christ. It was not possible that any grave could hold him as death had no claim to him. His physical body did not remain in the grave. He was crucified, dead and buried. As both he and his Old Covenant prophets said he would many times, he rose again to life three days later by the power of the Father, the power of the Holy Spirit and by his own power. And all this prior to

his glorified Ascension into heaven soon after. If Jesus did not physically rise again from the dead there would be no salvation in his name.

4. Salvation. I affirm that salvation is given by God to sinners everywhere as a gift of his free grace alone through faith alone and not because of a recipient's goodness or religious works at all. Christians will never have individual merit to boast of in salvation. From start to finish, salvation is by God's grace alone. No ceremonies, ordinances or acts of repentance can forgive a single sin, or ever justify the forgiveness of all of one's sin. A person's entire sin debt (all past, present and future sin) is either removed in full by the single application of Jesus' perfect righteousness to them, or nowhere at all. The merits of Jesus' own person and works, being now lawfully dispensed since his Ascension by union with him, and being based upon his atonement on the Cross, is applied to willfully repentant sinners in every generation. Believers can cling only to God's promises in Christ and in this become children of God by faith like Abraham. All who desire to come to Jesus may come. Our righteousness is an alien righteousness. It's a perfect righteousness. It's an unmerited righteousness. It's an imputed righteousness. Jesus' own intrinsic and Cross-bought righteousness. A perfect righteousness alone will prevail at the judgment of a holy God. There is presently now no condemnation for one justified by Christ. Christianity is knowing how one presently has peace with God at the Cross.

5. The Virgin Birth. A virgin gave birth to Jesus in Bethlehem, Israel. An honorable young girl named Mary who lived in Nazareth was chosen by God to bear Jesus' earthly body around 5 BC. Only because of the necessity of the doctrine of Jesus being truly God is she appropriately called the *God-bearer*. She was betrothed to a virtuous man named Joseph. God the Son, by a work of God the Spirit, miraculously entered Mary's womb with her consent to the angel's message. The eternal Son then became a fully gestated and delivered baby in her through otherwise natural processes. It was without intercourse. Mary was Jewish. Jesus was thus a Jewish boy born under the Law. Jesus, being a man, a genealogical descendent of King David through the Tribe of Judah, is thus established as a descendant of Abraham through David by his natural birth through Mary. This fulfills much of what was spoken of him by the Old Covenant writings. The virgin birth both unites him to and separates him from the fallen race of Adam.

6. Jesus' sinlessness. I affirm Jesus' perfect sinlessness. The salvation of God's elect was accomplished by both Jesus' death and by his impeccable life. He lived a perfect life, growing up into true manhood. His parents raised him in accordance with the faith of the Hebrews. He was himself circumcised on the eighth day, etc. In every way, he fulfilled the Law for the church both in his life and by his death. He never sinned. Not once in thought, word or deed. If he had then he too would need a savior. The fact that all but one have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God is why Christians can have hope. Jesus is the last Adam and in his perfection now represents redeemed humanity.

7. Exclusivity. Christianity is ultimately the only true religion. While many religions surely contain some truth, as they deny God or Gospel, in total they are all false. There is only one God. Even the practitioner of Judaism, if they reject the Messiah, is not truly practicing Judaism and their religion is as false as any other. I affirm that Jesus is the only way to heaven for all mankind since all are proven dead at the judgment, as affirmed by the Ten Commandments, in trespasses and sins. Sin may be demonstrated by more, but not less than

breaking God's moral law. SIN is therefore a universal problem. We inherited a nature from the Fall of Adam, and we have all since proven that we are indeed children of God's wrath by our actions. Sin is our problem, and that problem is chiefly with God himself. God has made one way for that problem to be dealt with. That one way is through the Cross of Jesus the Christ. To have the Son is to have eternal life. Without him there is no life. No one goes to heaven but by faith in Jesus.

8. **Conversion.** I deny what's sometimes called *non-Lordship salvation*. This is no salvation. Salvation is being literally born again from above. Without exception, it brings about repentance and faith. It will change us progressively and place us willingly at war with the known sin in our lives. People who are saved are spiritually adopted by God. The nature of their heavenly Father will then become an evident part of their daily lives. The love of God and the surety of their salvation motivate them, insomuch as they grow to understand it through the Spirit's biblical instruction, to a life of increasing holiness. The idea that a man can long have Jesus as Savior, but not have him as Lord, is utterly absurd. Salvation is following Jesus by the power of the Spirit. A Christian's life, though riddled with fading sin, is nonetheless marked by holiness. By godliness and godly works. Such fruit is the result of genuine connection to Jesus the vine. Those who are saved from hell will live like it. This is the truth of the doctrine which says that we are saved by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone.

On Secondary Matters

9. I affirm that the Bible teaches us to have a right faith in the right God. One needn't go down a checklist and affirm every point of even essential theology to be forgiven by God. All things being equal, it's a truism that God always redeems first and then teaches. We all grow in our knowledge of God and of ourselves by his word. A person's individual profession of faith may not necessarily therefore be the same as a Christian teacher's, a church's, or an educational institution's, and while it should grow in maturity over time, may be much simpler, contain error or even great error. This truth isn't meant to in any way encourage or excuse false doctrine, but reminds us of the necessities of grace, patience and instruction in the life of the church. Teachers incur stricter judgments, and are to be approved by doctrine. Entities claiming to accurately represent the Faith are to be both detailed and expansive. The Christian church's depth of doctrinal specificity is required by the unending disputations of her antagonists, but the faith alive in anyone remains ultimately only the result of God's mercy in our fragile hearts.

10. I affirm that the Canon of Scripture is closed. Since roughly AD 90, God has not inspired another writing. The Bible informs the church of everything God desired from creation to consummation regarding faith. Its teachings are able to completely equip every believer in every generation for everything. There is therefore no discernible need that God provide to us a single other syllable. The amazing privilege of a redeemed life post-Pentecost, and indeed as the Bible became successively collected and available in history, is that each reader has God fully revealed to them directly as students both of the Lord himself and his Apostles.

11. I deny that biblical fidelity necessarily fosters a departure from the natural sciences or modern medicine. Faith and science are not opposed to each other. Understanding the Bible's role as the book for faith and life provides a foundation for men to employ every other means in the natural sciences or human wisdom for the advancement of any good or necessary cause. Theology is the queen of all the sciences, and is only complimented by any legitimate scientific discipline.

12. I deny tongues as a private prayer language. No one ever prays in Scripture in anything but an intelligible language. I affirm the true former miraculous gift of tongues as an intelligible language gift, and as a sign of judgment against Israel itself. I affirm it in its biblically demonstrated context alone— an interpretable language blessing given in an orderly fashion, selectively only to some, as a sign for unbelievers in the spread of the Gospel as it was required. Christians may err and believe they pray in a private language. This is not an issue over which I believe most levels of fellowship should be broken. Christianity is about growing up into maturity in what we believe and say.

13. I deny that the Holy Ghost gets any Christian “drunk” in his Spirit. There are some today who teach that God intoxicates men in uncontrollable fits of stupor, laughter, or other such outward demonstrations of delirium. These spirits need to be met with firm correction. This is not now and never has been the work of God.

14. I affirm that all forms of sexual immorality to include fornication, adultery, polygamy, homosexuality, paedophilia and bestiality are sin. Transgenderism is also a sin. Such are all entirely incompatible with the Christian life. Those who persist in such sin without repentance will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. All of us sin. Christians sin. While temptation to sin is not necessarily itself sin, if people take any form of clearly condemned sin in the Bible, make a practice of it, declare it to be non-sinful, celebrate it, excuse it or declare it good they show themselves condemned in it. This is rebellion. It is a terrible sin to call darkness light or light darkness. God designed family from the beginning. When done right it is a perfect expression of life, is full of pleasures, and gives to mankind a joyous role in life's propagation. Saints throughout the history of the Bible, and their manifold failures in it, serve to highlight the certainty of Jesus' own words on why he made them male and female in the beginning to be one husband and one wife with children.

15. I affirm that God is the omnipotent sovereign over all things. A deistic view of God is not biblically conceivable. The world exists today exactly as he ordained. The world as it is today is no mistake. It is no plan b. In both the bad times and the good times, God is God. His purposes are good in everything. This will be seen in the future in a way that cannot be yet understood. Nothing can exist without not only his ordination, but also his sustainment. Even the devil is God's devil. The problem of evil is almost untouchable. Because God is omnipotent, we can be certain that one-day God will put an end to all evil, sin and suffering. All things are done in his timing, not ours.

16. I affirm that water baptism should be performed only with those who profess faith in Jesus Christ. Water baptism is a regenerate person's profession of what they trust Christ has already done in their death to sin, a conscience-strengthening work identifying the life they've been given to both live and be judged by, and a work of righteousness in the confident expectation of what Christ will do in their future glorification. This is a disciple's work. It is a personal confession, not merely a matter of public identity. I do concern myself

with modes of baptism, but not nearly as much as the theology behind them. Immersion is the proper model. Symbolism matters. Water baptism in no way regenerates. Those who administer it to infants do not necessarily violate this certainty. In the end, after all of the worthy debates on the subject, my position is oddly pragmatic. Because salvation is of the Lord alone I believe there is only gain in waiting until a person is in a position to receive it.

17. I deny the health, wealth and prosperity gospel. The god of the prosperity gospel is merely an exchange of the love of money for the love of a false god who vainly promises it. The Christian Faith is itself no guarantee of health or prosperity in this life.

18. I affirm the existence of one universal worldwide church of Jesus Christ. This body is fundamentally comprised of those baptized in the Son of God by the Spirit of God. It is made up of greatly diverse groups from all four corners of the earth. Its expressions of faith are as diverse as they are. Inside them all, if they are valid, is the regenerate heart identified by the humble fact that the Spirit of God, by Scripture, has taught them the same Gospel that unites every member directly to Christ. This body, often called the *church militant*, is not in communication in any way with believers who have died, or the *church triumphant*. Christians are never to implore the intercession of the dead.

19. I affirm a literal six-day creation of the material universe. This matter is subject to debate between a very small group of viable biblical options. Darwinianism or macroevolution is absent from all reasonable cosmological positions. Evolution is not compatible with the Bible, any legitimate science or plain reason. The credibility of the Scriptures, or of the Christian Religion does not hang on our ability to date the creation of earth.

20. I affirm the existence of both an eternal hell and an eternal heaven. Hell is not the absence of God; it is instead the presence of God to punish. Heaven, earth, and even hell will one day join in an eternal immutable state far more glorious than has ever yet been seen by man. It is a literal reality yet to come in God's perfect time. There will be a physical resurrection of both the just and the unjust.

21. I affirm the blessedness of church discipline. A submitted Christian and a loving church leader is a powerful tool for sanctification in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Iron sharpens iron. Jesus affirmed that he himself is in the midst of any two or more believers gathered in his name for disciplining other Christians. A church that does not practice discipline is simply not a church.

22. I affirm God's Biblical order in ordaining only men to the pastorate. Women are not called by God to serve authoritatively in the local assembly over men. This biblical truth has numerous cultural expressions in Scripture. The roles of pastor or elder are an exclusively male calling. Women may do many things and be recognized in roles of leadership throughout the church in various roles, but not as pastors or elders over men.

23. I affirm Christ's imminent return in glory. There are several viable eschatological systems, and all have honorable defense. Common to them all is the reality that if you're not now looking for Jesus in his Second Coming then he is not coming for you. Christ's Second Advent could occur before I finish writing this paragraph. I'm an *amillennialist*.

24. I affirm the commanded responsibility of every Christian to share the Gospel. We are all to be ambassadors for Christ, and are all called to be theologians. Some Christians may be

called to be fulltime evangelists, but every Christian is called to perform evangelistic works. We should be purposeful, disciplined and learned in conversing with people in our lives while modeling holiness in our own lives. The best place for evangelism is in, or in connection to, our local churches.

25. I deny the notion that salvation occurs whenever a person prays a prayer. Human decision is no sure confirmation of salvation. I do not like altar calls at all, but they can be done without offending grace. Altar calls that end in a pronouncement of salvation from a minister when prayers are prayed should be avoided at all costs, and are terrible. We are not the Holy Spirit. We don't know what happens in a person's heart as a result of any prayer. Period. We should invite all to faith, deliver the Gospel in full confidence and let fruit and time evidence the genuine nature of anyone's faith.

26. I deny that Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus, was sinless. Mary, as a sinner, needed the salvation of Christ as much as any other human being ever born of Adam. She is not the mother of the Christian church, and she has absolutely nothing to do with the salvation of anyone alive today. She was a blessed and redeemed saint. She was a member of the Apostolic Church, is worthy of honor, and she should be blessed in the remembrance of every generation for her faithfulness.

27. I deny that men, even Christians, are little gods. Even a believer's eventual glorification is only becoming more like God. It is not becoming God. No human being, no created thing, will ever be a god.

28. I affirm all five points of theology developed in the faith tradition of Calvinism. Namely: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints (TULIP). As a Reformed (Southern) Baptist, you'll not meet a man more committed to these truths. One cannot affirm only some of these points. In my study, affirming total depravity correctly will inevitably lead to an appropriation of the other four points. These beliefs are the historical systematic theology position of the Baptist faith, and the Southern Baptist denomination as well.

29. I affirm the existence of Satan, a created and now fallen angel. Like mutable man, angels were first created sinless. One of them, a non-elect angel named Lucifer, in an as yet inconceivable act, and in concert with many other non-elect angels, sinned against God. They too, like men after them, were then cursed. There aren't demons behind every tree, but external evil is an ever-present reality in this life.

30. I deny abortion as anyone's choice or right. It is pre-meditated homicide with almost no exceptions. It should be made illegal everywhere today as a matter of civil principle alone. It is not, however, the unpardonable sin. As with all sin, there is grace and mercy for those who repent. Abortion is a worldwide holocaust. It is an American holocaust. Its acceptance is an evidence of the judgment of God on our nation. I believe it's a sexual immorality issue at its core. Because people want sex with anyone at any time without "consequence" they'll massacre their own family members to get it.

31. I affirm that God is omniscient. The triune God knows everything, about everything and everyone, from all eternity, into all eternity, perfectly, exhaustively and without contingency. The beauty and balance of Scripture is that despite this communicated veracity, God would not have his people operate as fatalists. He condescends. We are to be wise and to trust God. I

am entirely opposed to any ideas associated with the views of what's commonly called *open theism*, *process theology* or *molinism*.

32. I affirm the doctrine of original sin. Properly understanding, this doctrine leads to a proper view of a salvation by grace alone itself. The truth of it comes with the reality that all of the posterity of Adam are not only born under the reality of mankind's curse as a result of Adam's sin, but that they also inherit a disposition and environment utterly bent towards sinfulness. In short, we aren't sinners because we violate God's Law; we violate God's Law because we are sinners.

33. I affirm all *five solas* that developed throughout the multi-faceted *Protestant Reformation*. Namely: grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone, to the glory of God alone. A summary motto of the Reformation was the phrase *Post Tenebras Lux* which means *after darkness, light*. In God's timing, the sixteenth century saw perhaps a stronger focus placed upon Scripture than ever before. Certainly, the Doctrine of the Atonement. The light of the Gospel, as it always has from various falsehoods throughout history, liberated many from the shackles of paganism. That era's focus on Scripture resulted not in a reinvention, but in molded reaffirmations and aggressive stances on the truths at the very core of the Gospel itself. The Reformation worked. It did not fail. The true church was edified. The false church was identified. The solas represent the heart of the message of the Cross. They briefly and summarily represent the very finest in systematic theology.

34. I deny that gender is a journey or fluid concept. Gender and/or one's sex is a beautiful and sacred gift of a wise and gracious God. To seek to superficially alter one's human identity in any such way is an unacceptable travesty. It is a sinful act of rebellion against God. The acceptance of this perversion is another evidence of the curse of God upon many nations today. I can hardly think of anything more depraved than a medical entity who would prescribe drugs and perform surgeries to foster such a detestable thing. Like nearly all sin, there is grace for those who repent of transgenderism.

35. I affirm a monergistic regeneration. As a result of the extent of the Fall, the new birth necessarily precedes a person's capacity to at all truly grasp or invite it. Scripture does not paint mankind merely as darkened, neutral or ignorant. It presents man as actively hostile against God by nature. Salvation is therefore necessarily a gift of God's unmerited and uninvited mercy, not God's response to one's self-induced faith. Monergism is listed here as a non-essential instead of above in reference to a salvation by grace alone through faith alone because it's a truth I feel is only essential to maturity in Christ, not necessarily to a belief in salvation by grace alone. Synergism is sub-biblical yet Christians can disagree on this.

36. I deny free will as some define it today. On the other hand, I totally affirm it. Men make choices freely in accordance with their nature. For anyone today to love God their nature must be fixed. There are only three humans who've ever lived that could be said to have ever had a free will- Adam, Eve and Jesus. Mankind lost freedom in the Fall of Adam. We all demonstrate this in our lives. A sinner enslaved to sin by nature and thus in the words of Jesus to be counted as condemned already simply cannot be called *free* in any meaningful spiritual sense. Men make accountable choices, but their choices are not naturally free regarding righteousness. Sin has made us averse to righteousness. Opposed to God. Unless God frees a person from sin, everything they choose will remain unprofitable before God. Christians are freed to love God.

37. I affirm the doctrine of *penal substitutionary atonement*. What Jesus principally delivers his saints from is the wrath of almighty God. Satan, sin, death, hell and self are all also things that could be said as what Jesus delivers his own from, but they're all subordinate. The Cross is the justification of the outrageous idea that God actually forgives sinners. The Father made the Son an offering for sin. As with all high priests in the Old Covenant, the sacrifice of Jesus in the New Covenant was directed toward God himself. Jesus became a curse in the place of his people. That curse was God the Father's This was his descent into hell.

38. I affirm the position of *cessationism*. There are no Apostles alive today. Hence the apostolic gifts have ceased. It's not a matter of what God *could* do, but a matter of why God *would* do something that ultimately leads me to this position. Signs and wonders are to occupy an extraordinary position in our minds. They served and still serve to authenticate the inspired words of God's messengers in those very few times in history when God performed such wonderful acts. When Christians today claim miracles as an everyday thing it reduces the high esteem of those acts that affirmed God's inspired messengers. Not all spiritual gifts have ceased. Only some with the Apostles themselves.

39. I affirm the doctrine often identified as *good and necessary consequences*. This truth should not be feared. In fact, I'd argue that every major doctrine of the Christian Religion is almost exclusively the result of good and necessary consequences. For example, the cardinal doctrine of the Christian religion, the Trinity, is not a matter of the exegetical treatment of a single text, but is instead a combination of textual exegesis and sound deductions from all streams of biblical evidence. Traditional interpretations based soundly upon clear passages of Scripture and/or necessary deductions from Scripture may be considered necessary affirmations of interpretation, and yet still always maintained humbly in the heart as secondary to Scripture itself.

40. I deny that doctrinal specificity is the enemy of a simple childlike faith. The church of Jesus Christ must be confessional to live out the Christian Faith well together. Every generation is only one generation from apostasy.