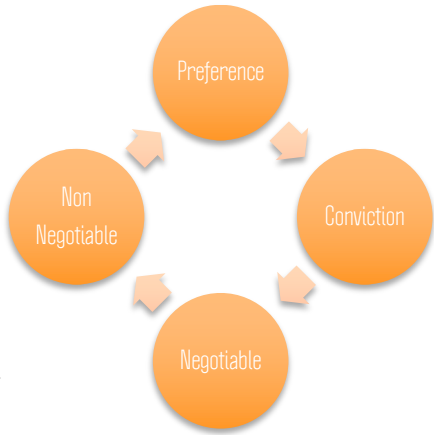


# STEP 2: WHAT WE BELIEVE

## RINGS OF TRUTH



**CIRCLE 1: Preference**

Individual's opinion influenced by background, culture, age, experience, gender, taste, etc.

**CIRCLE 2: Convictions**

Individual's beliefs derived from scripture and conscience, which often determines perspective and conduct regarding certain issues.

**CIRCLE 3: Negotiable**

Issues to which the bible addresses, yet leaves room for diversity among believers.

**CIRCLE 4: Non-Negotiable**

Issues to which the bible speaks plainly and which make up the core beliefs of Christianity.

	PREFERENCE	CONVICTIONS	NEGOTIABLE	NON-NEGOTIABLE
<b>EFFECTS</b>	+ Creativity - Disharmony	+ Liberty - Prideful and Condemning	+Diversity/Denomination - Division	+ Unity - Cults and Religions
<b>EXAMPLES</b>	Worship style, worship schedule, Instruments, Bible translation, Food, length of hair	Entertainment, food and drink, Holidays, Parenting, Finances, Dating, Habits, Sun Activities	End-Times, Spiritual Gifts, Church Govt., Election, Role of women, Divorce vs. Remarriage	The Trinity, Inerrancy of Scripture, Faith alone, Eternal security, Virgin birth, Christ's Resurrection, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Coming
<b>EXHORTATION</b>	Compromise	Counsel "when asked"	Communicate & Clarity	Correct

# STEP 2: WHAT WE BELIEVE

## 1. The Scriptures

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God and were given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, all Scripture is authoritative, infallible, and inerrant. The Scriptures are fully sufficient, and are the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. We do not believe that other books are inspired by God in the same way as the Bible.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Psalm 19:7-10, Mark 13:31, John 8:31-32, John 20:30-31, Acts 20:32, Psalm 119:9-11)

## 2. The Trinity

We believe that there is one living and true God who is without division of nature, essence, or being, but who eternally exists in three persons. These three persons are equal in every divine perfection, and they execute distinct but harmonious offices and roles in the work of creation, providence, and redemption.

(Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 3:16-17, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Ephesians 4:4-6, Genesis 1:1-2, 26, John 1:1-3, 14, Romans 8:11, John 14:8-17)

## 3. God the Father

We believe in God the Father, the head of the Triune Godhead. He is an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, hears and answers prayer, and saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

(Genesis 1:1, Revelation 22:13, John 4:24, Matthew 5:48, Hebrews 6:18, Hebrews 4:13, Isaiah 46:9-10, Psalm 139:7-16, Psalm 18:1-15, Job 38:1-18, 1 John 4:7, Matthew 6:8, Luke 10:21-22, Proverbs 21:1, John 3:16, 1 Peter 1:3)

## 4. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, who is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. He is fully God and fully man, and is the divinely appointed mediator between God and man. Having taken upon Himself human nature, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled the law, and suffered and died upon the cross for the salvation of sinners. He was buried, rose again the third day, and ascended to His Father, at whose right hand He ever lives to make intercession for His people. He will return again visibly and bodily in the Father's perfect time. He is the only Prophet, Priest, and King of the church, and Sovereign of the universe.

(John 3:16, John 1:1-14, Matthew 16:13-17, Isaiah 53, John 8:58, Hebrews 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15-20, Philippians 2:5-7, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, Galatians 3:13, Romans 3:21-26, Romans 8:31-34, Acts 1:9-11, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Hebrews 7:25, Acts 5:30-32)

## 5. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is fully God, and a person, not an "it." He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration. He baptizes all believers into the body of Christ, and indwells and seals them for day of redemption. The Holy Spirit is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide.

(Genesis 1:2, Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, John 14:26, John 16:8-11, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Romans 8:9, Galatians 5:16-25, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, Ephesians 4:4-6, John 14:16-17, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 1:13-14, John 15:26-27)

## 6. The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that through Adam's sin the entire human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. All people sin and are by nature children of wrath, totally depraved, and utterly unable to remedy our lost condition.

(Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 3, Romans 3:9-18, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12, Romans 5:18, Ephesians 2:1-3, Ephesians 2:12, Isaiah 64:6-7, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 7:18)

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# STEP 2: WHAT WE BELIEVE

## 7. Salvation

We believe that salvation is a gift brought to man by the free grace and pleasure of God. Salvation was accomplished through Christ's substitutionary life and death, and His resurrection from the grave. Salvation can be received only by repentance of sins and personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

(Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 3:23-26, Isaiah 43:25, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Romans 8:3-4, John 3:16, Acts 20:20-21, John 1:12, Romans 10:9-10)

## 8. Sanctification

We believe that all Christians are saved unto a life-long process of growth in holiness (i.e. a process of being made more and more like Christ). This includes a progressive growth in: the knowledge of God, understanding of God, good works, love of God, and love of others. Sanctification includes constant confession and repentance (which means not merely acknowledging sin, but turning from it). While all Christians are called to grow in Christ-likeness, no one will ever arrive at perfection before death.

(Philippians 1:6, Romans 8:1-17, Galatians 5:13-25, John 17:17, Ephesians 3:14-21, Philippians 2:12-13, Ephesians 2:10, 2 Peter 1:3-11, Colossians 3:1-17, Mark 12:30, Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 1 John 1:8-9, Luke 3:8, 1 Timothy 1:15, 1 Corinthians 13:12)

## 9. Eternal Security and the Assurance of Believers

We believe that those who are redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and secure in Christ forever. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation, while realizing that the Bible clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sin. Assurance is based upon the person and work of Christ, the testimony of the Spirit, and the evidence of conversion in the life of a believer.

(John 6:37-40, John 10:27-30, Romans 8:1-4, Ephesians 1:13-14, Romans 13:13-14, Galatians 5:13, Romans 8:16-17, Romans 8:38-39, 1 Corinthians 1:4-8, Colossians 1:21-23, James 2:14-26, Hebrews 3:5-6, Hebrews 4:14-16, 1 Peter 1:5, Titus 2:11-15)

## 10. The Church

We believe that the Lord Jesus is the Head of the church, which is composed of all His true disciples. Christians are to associate themselves into local bodies for the purpose of worship, growth as disciples, service, fellowship, and missions. To each local body, Christ has given the authority for administering order, discipline, and worship. The regular officers of a church are Elders (other names for Elders include: Pastors or Overseers) and Deacons. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

(Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 1:22, Ephesians 5:23, John 10:16, Matthew 18:20, Hebrews 10:25, Acts 2:42-47, Matthew 28:18-20, Galatians 3:10, Colossians 1:28-29, 1 Timothy 3:15, Acts 20:17, Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Acts 6:1-6, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 5:17-19)

## 11. Christian Conduct

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God, the well-being of their fellow man, and should seek the well-being of the cities and cultures in which they live. The conduct of Christians should be blameless before the world. Christians are called to be faithful stewards of their time, talents (spiritual gifts), and possessions.

(1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 12:1-3, Colossians 2:17, Hebrews 12:12, Mark 12:30-31, 1 Corinthians 13, Jeremiah 29:4-7, John 14:15, John 14:23-24, 1 John 2:3-6, 1 Corinthians 4:2, 1 Corinthians 14:26, Luke 12:42-48)

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# STEP 2: WHAT WE BELIEVE

## 12. The Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (i.e. Communion or the Eucharist). We believe that the only proper mode of Christian baptism is by the immersion of the believer into water. Baptism does not save an individual, but is necessary for obedience and is a picture of the believer's union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ as a commemoration of His death. Just like baptism, the Lord's Supper does not save individuals, but is necessary for our obedience. During Communion, Christ is not present in the wine and bread themselves, but inhabits the presence of His people as we remember his death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our only for believers. (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:41, Romans 6:3-5, 1 Corinthians 1:17, Matthew 3:13-17, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Matthew 26:20-29, Luke 22:14-23)

## 13. The Last Things

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal life and joy of the righteous in the new heaven and the new earth and the endless suffering of the wicked in hell.

(Mark 14:62, Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, John 14:3, Titus 2:11-13, 2 Corinthians 5:1-5, Philippians 3:21-22, Matthew 16:27, 2 Timothy 4:1, 1 Corinthians 4:5, 1 Corinthians 15, Philippians 3:20, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, Revelation 20:4-6, Revelation 21:1-8)

## 14. Open Hand and Close Hand

We believe that Christian doctrine can be divided into categories of "open-handed doctrine" and "closed-handed doctrine." Closed-handed doctrines are the core, essential beliefs that must be accepted by adherents of Christianity. If these doctrines are not believed, then the person denying them is not truly a Christ-follower because he/she has denied beliefs essential to the faith. Examples of closed-handed doctrines are: belief in the Trinity, the complete divinity of Jesus, the holiness of God, salvation only by grace through faith, and the inerrancy of the Bible. Open-handed doctrines are beliefs that are secondary to core, closed-handed doctrines. Christians may have different opinions about the Bible's teaching on open-handed doctrines. Open-handed doctrines are still extremely important, but Christians can differ on these issues and still claim a true, Christian faith. Examples of open-handed doctrines include: the Bible's teaching on the extent of man's will and God's will in regards to salvation, what the Bible teaches about issues of conscious such as the consumption of alcohol and which movies we choose to watch, and how we choose to raise our kids. We encourage Christians who disagree with each other on open-handed issues to live together harmoniously as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

(John 14:6, Galatians 1:6-9, Philippians 1:15-18, 1 Corinthians 3:5-15, Romans 14:12-23, Colossians 2:17, 1 Corinthians 4:1-5, Acts 10:9-16)

OUR DOCTRINAL STATEMENT WAS ADAPTED WITH OTHER LIKE MINDED STATEMENTS; HOWEVER WE MAINLY ADHERE TO:

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000: <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>

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