

The Doctrinal Basis from the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Victoria

1. The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
2. The existence of one God in three persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
3. The deity and incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity.
4. The fallen, sinful and lost estate of all people.
5. The salvation of men and women from the penal consequences and power of sin through the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, His atoning death, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His unchanging priesthood.
6. The immediate work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of men and women, in their sanctification, and in their preservation to the heavenly Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. The necessity, in order to know salvation, of repentance towards God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
8. The resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment of all people by the Lord Jesus Christ.
9. The two ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are of perpetual obligation: Baptism being the immersion of believers upon the profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a symbol of the fellowship of the regenerate in His death, burial and resurrection; the Lord's Supper being a memorial, until He comes, of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Principles and Ideals of the Baptist Faith from the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Victoria

Whilst holding many phases of Christian Truth in common with other denominations, Baptists place a distinctive emphasis upon the following fundamental principles of the Christian Faith, as revealed in the New Testament.

1. The Child in the Kingdom.
 - (a) Baptists believe that infants are God's little ones, whether children of Christian or non-Christian parents, and accept without modification the word of the Lord, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven". This Christian view of the child makes the external act of "Infant Baptism" unnecessary.

- (b) Baptists approve of the presentation of children to God by parents, if thereby they solemnly undertake to train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in the home and in the Church.

2. The Significance of Conversion.

- (a) To all who at the stage of personal responsibility, ignore God's law, and wander as prodigals from the Father's Home, Baptists preach the gospel of the Father's love, and the message of the cross, as the Way of Life. Conversion is acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.
- (b) This acceptance of Christ is a personal and deliberate act, involving the assent of the mind, the decision of the will, and the love of the heart.
- (c) This avowal of allegiance to Christ implies a constant endeavour to live a life worthy of, and well-pleasing to Him in all things.

3. The Church - a Spiritual Society.

Baptists hold that the Church, as established by the Lord Jesus Christ should consist of persons who have personally and intelligently accepted Him as Saviour and Lord, and pledged themselves to discipleship and service in the Kingdom of God.

4. The Lordship of Christ in the Church.

- (a) Baptists hold and teach that Jesus Christ alone is the Head of the Church, and that without any human intervention or ritualistic ceremony.
- (b) Therefore, He is the sole authority in all matters of faith and conduct, in the life both of the Church and of the individual.
- (c) This involves liberty of thought and conscience, and the rights of the Believer and the Church, freed from any ecclesiastical or other external authority, to interpret His mind.

5. The Standard of Belief.

- (a) Believing that the voice of the Church is subordinate to the voice of Christ, and that the mind of the Master is the Standard of Christian belief, Baptists do not subscribe to any formal Church Creed lest it hamper the development of Christian thought.
- (b) Further, in their interpretation of the Lord's farewell declaration, "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth", Baptists accept the principle that God has yet "more light and truth to break forth from His Word".
- (c) Therefore, Baptists claim the personal privilege, and accept the Christian responsibility of courageously thinking God's thoughts after Him, under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of Truth.

6. The Ministry of Leadership.

- (a) In adopting the Congregational Principles of Church government, with no formal creed, with no external authority, and no defined ecclesiastical policy, and each member having equal rights and responsibilities, the Baptist Church is largely dependent on the reality and vigour of the spiritual life of its individual members.

- (b) This spiritual life is generated by the understanding and inspiration of Christ's ideals, and by the creation and maintenance of a spiritual atmosphere, in which all that is unworthy dies, and in which christian life becomes healthy and aggressive.
- (c) Baptist ministers accept their office from the Lord of the Church, and while they are "servants of the Church" the Church is not master over them. They are the spiritual leaders in the life and ministry of the church.
- (d) Associated with the ministers in the spiritual oversight of the Church are men and women chosen for their Christian gifts and graces, who are called to be examples to the members of the Church, in conduct, zeal, self-denial and generosity.
- (e) Church officers are appointed as spiritual leaders to work in sympathetic cooperation with the minister and Church members.
- (f) The periodic Church Business Meeting is the centre of the Church's Christian activities, and is the seat of authority in the management of Church business.

7. The Christian significance of Baptism.

- (a) Christian Baptism, by which is meant the immersion of believers as instituted by our Lord, is a personal, public confession of the believer's identification with Christ, and also a means of grace to the Christian.
- (b) Baptism is an outward act which symbolises, but does not effect regeneration, and salvation is not dependent on it.
- (c) Baptism is a glorious privilege and a personal responsibility, and is a help to all believers in reminding them of their spiritual union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.

8. The Fellowship of the Lord's Supper.

- (a) To Baptists the Church is not so much an organisation as a fellowship, effective only as there is spiritual association with the Head of the Church.
- (b) The Lord's Supper is a service of spiritual fellowship whereby, through remembrance of His Life and Death believers may experience in supreme degree the reality and influence of His Presence.
- (c) It is an opportunity of entering into close fellowship with the Lord in the Holy of Holies, where there is a rekindling of love and a reconsecration of life to His service.

9. The Church and the Kingdom.

Baptists recognise their responsibility to strive for the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the world and teach that membership in the Church implies service and sacrifice. This involves a stewardship of time, talents and money which aims at being worthy of the Son of God who loved and served humankind, even unto death.