

# **WBC STATEMENT OF BELIEFS<sup>1</sup>**

## **1. THE NATURE AND UNITY OF THE GODHEAD**

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (the Godhead<sup>2</sup>), who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, he perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

## **2. THE DEITY AND HUMANITY OF CHRIST**

Jesus Christ as the second Person of the Godhead<sup>2</sup> is eternally one with God the Father of whose person and glory Jesus is the accurate expression. To become human He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is truly God and truly human, existing in one person and without sin.

## **3. THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead<sup>2</sup>, is eternally one with the Father and the Son, yet He is sent by them to achieve the divine purpose in the world and in the Church.

## **4. THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES**

The Scriptures, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, written by the people of God inspired by the Holy Spirit, are the Word of God. These writings are utterly authoritative and without error in the original texts, complete in their revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in their authority over every domain of knowledge to which they speak.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Our Statement of Beliefs has been based on the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW and ACT Statement of Beliefs, as adopted by the 1979 Assembly, amended by the 2003 Assembly and further amended by Wollongong Baptist Church.

<sup>2</sup> Or Trinity

## **5. THE SINFULNESS OF PEOPLE**

People were made in the image of God and for fellowship with God. By transgression of God's command humankind fell from fellowship with God and their nature was corrupted. As a consequence all people are spiritually dead, under Satan's dominion and control, and subject to God's wrath and condemnation. Therefore, apart from God's grace, people are helpless and hopeless in every respect whether physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually.

## **6. CHRIST'S ATONEMENT FOR HUMAN SIN**

In order to redeem people from the guilt, penalty and power of sin, Jesus Christ became human and died a sacrificial death as our representative substitute. By His resurrection, God's acceptance of His atoning death was demonstrated. This atonement is sufficient and effective for God's people. The sinner is justified and reconciled to God, not through any personal merit, but solely on the basis of God's gracious gift of salvation in Jesus Christ received through repentance and faith.

## **7. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is necessary for the acceptance of God's provision of salvation. In bringing about spiritual re-birth as God's children, the Holy Spirit convicts sinners of their sinfulness, leads them to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, thereby bringing them to fellowship in Christ. Working within the life of believers the Holy Spirit witnesses to their relationship with God, leads into all truth, bestows gifts for effective service and produces growth in Christ-like character for holy living.

## **8. THE CHURCH**

The Church is the body of people whom God has separated from the world through faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. All regenerate persons are members of the universal Church of God which takes local form wherever groups of believers unite for worship, fellowship and service in accordance with scriptural principles. Through the priesthood of all believers Christ has equipped every local church to make disciples of all nations. God calls individuals to positions of oversight and leadership or to special ministries. The Church recognises such by ordaining pastors, commissioning missionaries, appointing elders, deacons and other leaders, following New Testament practice. The Church is distinguished by her gospel message, by her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her Great Commission, by her members' love for one another and for the people of the world and, above all, by her love for God.

## **9. THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS BY IMMERSION**

Baptism is a commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ but not a requirement for salvation. It is a public declaration of a person's faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In accordance with the New Testament it should be administered by total immersion which symbolises the believer's identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. Baptism also symbolises the washing away of sins and the believer living and walking in newness of life, having died to sin and having been made alive to God.

## **10. THE COMMUNION**

The observance of the Lord's Supper, instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, is to be practiced with the elements of bread and wine by believers in Christ until the end of the age. It commemorates and declares our thanks for the Lord's atoning and substitutionary death. The celebration of the Lord's Supper expresses our fellowship with and in the Lord Jesus Christ as members of the Body of which He is the Head.

## **11. THE RETURN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

At the end of this age, according to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally, bodily and visibly in His glory to the earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom of God awaits His return.

## **12. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**

At the end of the age, there is to be a resurrection both of the righteous and the unrighteous. After death people's bodies return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God - the righteous made perfect in holiness, received into paradise and taken consciously into the presence of Christ and the unrighteous to be reserved for the judgment.

## **13. REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS IN A FUTURE STATE**

God has appointed a day of final judgement for the world. On that day believers will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its corrupting effects forever banished. Those judged righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and will dwell forever in the new heaven and the new earth with the Lord. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment.