



Fellowship National Affirmation of Faith

Please note:

1. Changes in **blue** indicate the changes presented to the churches in September 2024
2. Changes in **red** indicate the changes made in February 2025 following feedback from our constituency
3. There is an additional section in the Explanation/Details for each Article to explain changes made in February 2025

- **Final Draft of AoF (rev 5)**
- **As presented by the Affirmation of Faith (AoF) Team and National Council**

Article on “The Bible”

Existing Version

The Bible

We believe the Bible to be the complete Word of God; that the sixty-six books, as originally written, comprising the Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired by the Spirit of God and were entirely free from error; that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice and the true basis of Christian union.

Proposed Version (with markup)

The Bible

We believe the Bible to be the complete wWord of God²; that the sixty-six books¹, ~~as originally written~~, comprising the Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired by the Spirit of God and were entirely free from error as originally written in the original texts; that God has superintended the transmission of Scripture throughout the ages; and that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice and is the true basis of Christian union.

Proposed Version (without markup)

The Bible

We believe the Bible to be the complete word of God, that the sixty-six books comprising the Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired by the Spirit of God and were entirely free from error as originally written, that God has superintended the transmission of Scripture throughout the ages, and that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice and is the true basis of Christian union.

Scripture Support:

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:17-18; Isaiah 40:8; 2 Peter 3:15-16; Psalm 19:7-10

Explanation

The AoF Team felt that the foundation of our document, which is our belief in the authority, inerrancy, sufficiency, and goodness of the Scriptures, should receive only a couple small modifications.

Details

Changes made prior to September 2024

- The capitalized “W” in “Word” changed to small case “w”, due to capitalized “Word” referring to Christ, not the Bible

- From the AoF Survey comments (April 2023), the AoF Team added: “... that God has superintended the transmission of Scripture throughout the ages”

Changes made February 2025

- Removed the term “texts” and reverted to the existing phrasing to stay more consistent with the original Articles from 1953
- Added Isaiah 40:8 for further Scriptural support

Articles on “God”, “Christ”, and “The Holy Spirit”

Existing Version

God

We believe in one God, creator of all, holy, sovereign, eternal, existing in three equal Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Christ

We believe in the absolute and essential deity of Jesus Christ, in His eternal existence with the Father in pre-incarnate glory, in His virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, triumphant ascension, mediatorial ministry and personal return.

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the absolute and essential deity and personality of the Holy Spirit Who convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; Who regenerates, sanctifies, illuminates and comforts those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Proposed Version (with markup)

The Triune God

We believe in one God, creator of all, holy, sovereign, immutable, eternal, and existing eternally in three equal Persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each being truly and essentially God.

The Father

We believe in God the Father, neither begotten nor proceeding, who, in his perfect love, reigns with providential care over all creation, accomplishes his will, and protects and preserves his children whom he redeems and adopts into his family as co-heirs with Christ.

ChristThe Son

We believe in the absolute and essential deity of Lord Jesus Christ, the promised MessiahSaviour of the world, eternally begotten of the Father, who is truly and fully God and truly and fully human; we believe in His eternal existence with the Father in pre-incarnate glory, in hHis virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, triumphant ascension, mediatorial ministry, and personal return.

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is truly and fully God, the Lord and giver of life, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son; absolute and essential deity and personality of the Holy Spirit ~~Who~~ convicts ~~us~~ of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; with whom believers are baptized into Christ's body and by whom they are ~~Who~~ regenerated, ~~us,~~ baptizes, indwells, seals, and indwells; ~~who~~ and sanctifies; ~~who~~ illuminates, equips, empowers, assists in prayer, and comforts those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Proposed Version (without markup)

The Triune God

We believe in one God, creator of all, holy, sovereign, immutable, and existing eternally in three equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each being truly and essentially God.

Scripture Support:

- Genesis 1:1-2; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:18-20; Psalm 102:25-28; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 15:26

The Father

We believe in God the Father, neither begotten nor proceeding, who, in his perfect love, reigns with providential care over all creation, accomplishes his will, and protects and preserves his children whom he redeems and adopts into his family as co-heirs with Christ.

Scripture Support:

- Matthew 6:9; Exodus 3:14; Ephesians 1:3-14; Matthew 5:45, 6:25-32; Galatians 4:3-5; John 10:29-30; Romans 8:15-17

The Son

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Saviour of the world, eternally begotten of the Father, fully God and fully human; we believe in his virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, triumphant ascension, mediatorial ministry, and personal return.

Scripture Support:

- John 4:25-26; Luke 2:11; John 4:42; John 1:1, 14; Colossians 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5; Colossians 1:16-17; Matthew 1:18-23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:2; Matthew 28:2-7; Acts 1:9-11

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is fully God, the Lord and giver of life, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son; who convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; with whom believers are baptized into Christ's body and by whom they are regenerated, sealed, and indwelt; who sanctifies, illuminates, equips, empowers, assists in prayer, and comforts those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Scripture Support:

- 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; John 14:16-26; John 16:7-14; Matthew 3:11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Titus 3:4-5; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:11, 19, 2:9-15, 12:4-14; Acts 1:8, 4:31; Romans 8:26-27; Acts 9:31

Explanation

The AoF Team believed that this article needed a preamble that clarified The Fellowship's view on the Trinity. The team further believed that adding a statement on "The Father" would properly balance with the existing statements on "The Son" (or "Christ") and "The Spirit". This reflects the pattern of most other Baptist confessions that we consulted. The wording for these expansions was drawn from Scripture and from other Baptist confessions, in an effort to speak in harmony with the wider Body of Christ.

Details

Changes made prior to September 2024

- Added "The Triune" to the heading "God" to provide a preamble section on the Trinity
- (The Triune God) Added "each being truly and essentially God"
- (The Triune God) Added "existing eternally" as a defense for the co-equal, co-eternal uncreated existence, without beginning, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Added an entire section on "The Father" – it was noted many times in the April 2023 survey responses and the FNC 2023 workshop that there is no section on God the Father in the 1953 AoF
- (The Son) Replaced "Christ" with "The Son" to maintain consistent Trinitarian formatting around the terminology of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit

- (The Son) Replaced the phrase “absolute and essential deity of Jesus Christ” with “who is truly and fully God and truly and fully human” for added clarity and consistency with historic Christian confessions. Further, it was repeatedly noted by the AoF Team, the April 2023 survey, and the FNC 2023 workshop that there is no mention of Christ’s humanity in the 1953 AoF.
- Added “eternally begotten” (The Son) and “eternally proceeding” (The Holy Spirit) as confirmation of the Son and Spirit of God both being ontologically equal to the Father, but subordinate in role
- (The Son) Added “the promised Messiah” as confirmation of fulfilled prophetic Scripture
- (The Holy Spirit) Removed “absolute and essential” as per the previous section on The Son
- (The Holy Spirit) Replaced “Who” with “who” in accordance with current style guidelines
- (The Holy Spirit) Replaced “convinces” with “convicts” to align with most modern translations of the Bible
- (The Holy Spirit) Added “baptizes”, “indwells”, “seals” and “equips” to add further scriptural teaching on the Holy Spirit
- (The Holy Spirit) Added “assists in prayer” to emphasize the intercessory role of the Spirit of God with believers as well as to align with other historic Baptist confessions

Changes made February 2025

- (The Triune God) Added “immutable” to strengthen the statement against open theism
- (The Triune God) Added Psalm 102:25-28 for further Scriptural support
- (The Father) Added a phrase from the original Baptist confession (1689) to describe the relationship within the Trinity
- (The Father) Added Matthew 6:9, Exodus 3:14, Matthew 5:45, and Matthew 6:25-32 for further Scriptural support
- (The Father) Adjusted punctuation for clarity
- Added “neither begotten nor proceeding” (The Father), “eternally begotten” (The Son), and “eternally proceeding” (The Holy Spirit) to describe intra-Trinitarian relationships
- (The Son) Substituted the word “Saviour” for “Messiah” to avoid redundancy while retaining a strong connection between New Testament fulfillment and Old Testament anticipation
- (The Son) Removed “who is” for stylistic purposes
- (The Son) Removed “truly” as it is already included in the preamble to the Triune God Article
- (The Son) Added Luke 2:11, John 4:42, and John 1:1, 14 for further Scriptural support
- (The Holy Spirit) Removed the phrase “truly and” to harmonize with the wording in the Article on The Son

- (The Holy Spirit) Reworked the third section (which addresses the Spirit's work at the moment of salvation) to more accurately reflect that the Spirit is not named as the agent in baptism (the Scriptures say, "He [Christ] will baptize you..."), but rather is the agent in our regeneration, sealing, and indwelling. The past tense in this section, therefore, reflects the settled nature of these works. The article returns to the present tense in the fourth section to reflect the ongoing work of the Spirit in the believer's life.
- (The Holy Spirit) Added "into Christ's body" to correct the omission of fellowship in the Spirit's ministry
- (The Holy Spirit) Added 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 as a citation showing support for referring to the Spirit as the Lord; added Matthew 3:11 to indicate it is Jesus who baptizes us into or with the Holy Spirit; added Acts 1:8 and Acts 4:31 to support the continuing empowering by the Holy Spirit

Article on “Satan”

Existing Version

Satan

We believe that Satan exists as an evil personality, the originator of sin, the archenemy of God and man.

Proposed Version (with markup)

Satan

We believe that Satan ~~exists as is~~ a fallen angelic being~~evil, personal spirit-being; personality,~~ the originator of sin~~;~~ the ~~archenemy of God and man~~deceiver of the world and the accuser of believers; who uses his real but limited power, and presence, and permission to oppose the work of God; and who, along with all fallen spiritual powers, will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity.

Proposed Version (without markup)

Satan

We believe that Satan is a fallen angelic being; the originator of sin; the deceiver of the world and the accuser of believers; who uses his real but limited power and presence to oppose the work of God; and who, along with all fallen spiritual powers, will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity.

Scripture Support:

- Revelation 12:10-12; 1 John 3:8; Genesis 3:1-5; John 8:44; Ephesians 2:1-4; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Job 1:10-12; Luke 22:31-32; Revelation 12:7-9; Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 20:10

Explanation

Survey respondents (April 2023 survey), FNC 2023 workshop comments, and AoF Team discussions considered whether to remove this article in its entirety. Yet, in a culture ignorant of evil spiritual powers, it seems wise to expand this article by giving special emphasis to Satan’s actions, limited power, and final defeat.

Details

Changes made prior to September 2024

- Changed “personality” to “personal” to update language
- Added “spirit-being” to provide teaching that Satan is a spirit and a being, not merely a force or bad energy

- Removed “archenemy” as it elevates Satan’s status too highly, is a term not used in the Bible, and can insinuate a false dualistic thinking that God and Satan are equal powers locked in combat
- Added “deceiver of the world and the accuser of believers” to provide further biblical teaching on what Satan does
- Added “who uses his real but limited power, presence, and permission to oppose the work of God” to clarify that his power is great but “limited”, to avoid any false dualist thinking of God and Satan as equal powers
- Added “along with all fallen spiritual powers” to confirm the existence of fallen angels and other spiritual powers, principalities and rulers (Ephesians 6:12)
- Added “will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity” to clearly state his total and final defeat

Changes made February 2025

- Changed “personal spirit-being” to “fallen angelic being” given that this latter phrase is more biblical and recognizable
- Removed “and permission” in recognition of the fact that limited permission is already implied under “limited power” and in response to constituent concerns
- Added Ephesians 6:12 and reordered references to designate Revelation 12:10-12 as Scriptural support for “fallen angelic being” and “fallen spiritual powers”

Article on “Man”

Existing Version

Man

We believe that man was divinely created in the image of God; that he sinned, becoming guilty before God, resulting in total depravity, thereby incurring physical and spiritual death.

Proposed Version (with markup)

~~Man~~ Humanity

We believe that ~~man was~~ human beings were ~~divinely~~ created by God for his own glory, male and female, in ~~his~~ the image ~~of God;~~ male and female, for his own glory, thus possessing ~~having~~ immeasurable value and worth; that ~~they~~ he sinned, becoming guilty before God, resulting in a state of total depravity, ~~thereby~~ and incurring physical and spiritual death.

Proposed Version (without markup)

Humanity

We believe that human beings were created by God for his own glory, male and female, in his image, thus possessing immeasurable worth; that they sinned, becoming guilty before God, resulting in a state of total depravity and incurring physical and spiritual death.

Scripture Support:

- Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 8:4-6; Matthew 6:26, 16:26; Genesis 3:1-24; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Romans 3:10-12, 1:18-32, 5:12-21

Explanation

This article received the second-most calls for change in the April 2023 survey results, primarily relating to modernizing the language of “man”.

Details

Changes made prior to September 2024

- Changed the article title from “Man” to “Humanity” as “man” is no longer understood as a collective term for all human beings but as referring only to males, whereas “humanity” is understood to refer to all human beings

- Added “male and female” immediately after the statement on being created in the image of God to stress the creation teaching of Genesis 1-2 and to give a foundation for Christian teaching on marriage, gender, and sexuality
- Added “for his own glory, thus having immeasurable value and worth” to balance the positive and negative aspects of humanity. (This statement provides the theological unpinning for our teaching on the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.)
- Added “a state of” to the phrase, “total depravity” to clarify that depravity refers to the corruption and deformity of our nature and our inability to change our fallen state; it is not a reference to the common belief that bad (depraved) people go to hell and good people go to heaven
- Changed “thereby” to “and” to clarify that physical and spiritual death are not the result of total depravity alone but are the consequences of sin, guilt, and depravity before God

Changes made February 2025

- Reordered the clauses for greater clarity
- Edited for efficiency
- Added Matthew 16:26 as Scriptural support for “immeasurable worth”

Article on “Salvation”

Existing Version

Salvation

We believe that salvation is by the sovereign, electing grace of God; that by the appointment of the Father, Christ voluntarily suffered a vicarious, expiatory and propitiatory death; that justification is by faith alone in the all-sufficient sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and that those whom God has effectually called shall be divinely preserved and finally perfected in the image of the Lord.

Proposed Version (with markup)

Salvation

We believe ~~that~~ salvation encompasses the renewal of all things, the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise of the kingdom of God, and his ruling over all things in the new heavens and the new earth. We believe that the salvation of believers is by the sovereign, electing grace of God; that by the appointment of the Father, Christ voluntarily suffered a vicarious, substitutionary, expiatory, and propitiatory death; that justification is by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, in his all-sufficient sacrifice and resurrection; ~~of the Lord Jesus Christ and~~ that those whom God has effectually called shall repent, believe, and follow Jesus, and will~~shall~~ be divinely preserved and finally perfected by the Spirit into the image of the Lord.

Proposed Version (without markup)

Salvation

We believe salvation encompasses the renewal of all things, the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise of the kingdom of God, and his ruling over all things in the new heavens and the new earth. We believe that the salvation of believers is by the sovereign, electing grace of God; that by the appointment of the Father, Christ voluntarily suffered a vicarious, substitutionary, expiatory, and propitiatory death; that justification is by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, in his all-sufficient sacrifice and resurrection; that those whom God has effectually called shall repent, believe, and follow Jesus, and will be divinely preserved and finally perfected by the Spirit into the image of the Lord.

Scripture Support:

- Revelation 21:1-5; Romans 8:18-30; Ephesians 1:4-7; John 3:16-17; Isaiah 53:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Timothy 2:4-6; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 6:35-40; Colossians 1:22, 28; Matthew 10:22; John 10:28-29; 1 John 3:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18

Explanation

Respondents to the April 2023 survey, comments from the FNC 2023 workshop, and the AoF Team all suggested few modifications to this article.

Details

Changes made prior to September 2024

- Added reference to “the kingdom” and “renewal of all things” at the start of the article
- Added “repent, believe, and follow” after “effectually called” to stress our human responsibility in responding to the gospel
- Added “Jesus” after “repent, believe, and follow” because of the grammatical need of an object for “follow”
- Added “by the Spirit” to ensure the AoF statement on salvation is thoroughly trinitarian (1953 AoF only refers to the Father and the Son), particularly in the Spirit’s role of conforming believers into the image of Christ
- The necessity of the word “finally” to underscore that salvation is a process that ends with glorification and precludes the idea that sinless perfection can be achieved during our lives on earth

Changes made February 2025

- Added “the new heavens and the new earth” to more closely align with the wording of Scripture
- Changed “shall” to “will” to communicate more clearly the certainty of God’s effectual calling
- Added Matthew 10:22, John 10:28-29, 1 John 3:2, 2 Corinthians 3:18 as Scriptural support for statements related to perseverance

Article on “The Local Church”

Existing Version

The Local Church

We believe that a church is a company of immersed believers, called out from the world, separated unto the Lord Jesus, voluntarily associated for the ministry of the Word, the mutual edification of its members, the propagation of the faith and the observance of the ordinances. We believe it is a sovereign, independent body, exercising its own divinely awarded gifts, precepts and privileges under the Lordship of Christ, the Great Head of the church. We believe that its Officers are pastors and deacons.

Proposed Version (with markup)

The ~~Local~~ Church

We believe that the universal church, the Body of Christ, comprised of all true believers in heaven and on earth, is expressed on earth in local churches. We believe a properly ordered local church consists of believers, baptized by immersion, who have been ~~a church is a company of immersed believers,~~ called out from the world, separated ~~un~~to the Lord Jesus; ~~and~~ voluntarily associated for the ministry of the ~~w~~Word, the mutual edification of its members, the propagation of the faith, ~~and~~ the observance of the ordinances, and the doing of good works. We believe it is a self-governing sovereign, independent body, responsible for exercising its own divinely awarded gifts, precepts, and privileges under the Lordship of Christ, the Great Head and Chief Shepherd of the church. We believe that its ~~o~~fficers are biblically qualified elders, who shepherd and oversee God’s flock, ~~pastors~~ and deacons, who serve and support.

Proposed Version (without markup)

The Church

We believe that the universal church, the Body of Christ, comprised of all true believers in heaven and on earth, is expressed on earth in local churches. We believe a properly ordered local church consists of believers, baptized by immersion, who have been called out from the world, separated to the Lord Jesus; and voluntarily associated for the ministry of the word, the mutual edification of its members, the propagation of the faith, the observance of the ordinances, and the doing of good works. We believe it is a self-governing body responsible for exercising its own divinely awarded gifts, precepts, and privileges under the lordship of Christ, the Head and Chief Shepherd of the church. We believe that its officers are biblically qualified elders, who shepherd and oversee God’s flock, and deacons, who serve and support.

Scripture Support:

- Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:41-43; Ephesians 4:3-6; Titus 2:14; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-13; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 6:1-7

Explanation

Responses to the April 2023 survey and comments from the FNC 2023 workshop identified this article as the one in greatest need of change. It was also repeatedly noted that the existing AoF does not have a statement on the universal church.

Details

Changes made prior to September 2024

- Removed “a church is a company of immersed believers” and replaced it with “the universal church, the Body of Christ, comprised of all true believers in heaven and on earth, is expressed on earth in local churches. We believe a properly ordered local church consists of believers, baptized by immersion, who have been...”. Reasons for changes:
 - Added a statement on the universal church to make up for its absence in the current AoF
 - Began with the universal church and then moved to the local church to set the local church in its context
 - Removed “company” as this term is no longer used to refer to a group of believers who make up a local church
 - Following the language of historic Baptist confessions, added “properly ordered” to stress what we believe to be a properly ordered local church and avoid using language that insinuates other churches are false because they differ from our beliefs about the local church
- Replaced “unto” with “to” for the purpose of updating language
- Replaced “sovereign, independent” with “self-governing” as the latter explains what is meant by Baptist views on local church autonomy and avoids misunderstanding “independent” to mean operating alone
- Added “Chief Shepherd” to contextualize church “offices” being the “under-shepherds”
- Changed “Officers” to “offices” to better align with historic Baptist confessions
- Added “elder/” to “pastor” to clarify the office of elder

Changes made February 2025

- Added the “doing of good works” in recognition that the church is a community of the saved that has been called to do good works to adorn the gospel and to bring glory to God
- Reverted to “officers” (in the 1953 version) to emphasize the qualifications of those serving in these roles rather than the roles themselves. Retained lowercase “officers” for consistency with other stylistic choices.
- Changed “elders/pastors and deacons” to “biblically qualified elders, who shepherd and oversee God’s flock, and deacons, who serve and support” in order to provide connection between office and role
- Added Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 5:1-3, and Acts 6:1-7 for further Scriptural support

Article on “Ordinances”

Existing Version

Ordinances

We believe that there are only two ordinances for the church regularly observed in the New Testament in the following order:

Baptism which is the immersion of the believer in water, whereby he obeys Christ’s command and sets forth his identification with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection.

The Lord’s Supper which is the memorial wherein the believer partakes of the two elements, bread and wine, which symbolize the Lord’s body and shed blood, proclaiming His death until He comes.

Proposed Version (with markup)

Ordinances

We believe that there are only two ordinances, or visible symbols of the gospel, for the church regularly observed in the New Testament ~~in the following order~~:

Baptism ~~which~~ is the immersion of the believer in water, whereby ~~he the~~ believer obeys Christ’s command and ~~sets forth his identification~~ identifies with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.

The Lord’s Supper, or Communion, ~~which~~ is the memorial wherein ~~the gathered~~ believers partakes of the two elements, the bread and the cup wine, which symbolize the Lord’s body and shed blood, proclaiming hHis death until hHe comes, and is a continuing means for strengthening the faith of the believer.

Proposed Version (without markup)

Ordinances

We believe that there are only two ordinances, or visible symbols of the gospel, for the church regularly observed in the New Testament:

Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water whereby the believer obeys Christ’s command and identifies with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.

The Lord’s Supper, or Communion, is the memorial wherein gathered believers partake of the two elements, the bread and the cup, which symbolize the Lord’s body and shed blood, proclaiming his death until he comes, and is a continuing means for strengthening the faith of the believer.

Scripture Support:

Acts 2:41-42

- Baptism:
 - Matthew 3:13-17; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 8:35-39; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12
- The Lord's Supper:
 - Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 10:16-17

Explanation:

Responses to the April 2023 survey, along with ongoing feedback over many years, indicated a desire to modify this article, particularly the phrase “in the following order”, to ensure that open or closed communion positions not be the cause of division.

Details*Changes made prior to September 2024*

- Added “or visible symbols of the Gospel” to strengthen the AoF by underscoring our belief that the ordinances signify our redemption in Christ and present the gospel in picture. Immersion of a believer in water beautifully illustrates the central truth of the gospel that Christ died, was buried, and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). In the Lord's Supper we visually proclaim the good news that the Lord's death establishes the new covenant in his blood (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).
- Removed “in the following order”. One of the reasons National Council recommended that our AoF be revised was because this phrase, “in the following order”, does not reflect the practice of all Fellowship churches. By removing this phrase, we leave the decision to our local churches as to whether or not believers can partake of the Lord's Supper before they have been baptized. We believe this is in keeping with the intent of the founders of our Fellowship who composed the original AoF in that they desired that open or closed communion positions would not be a cause of division.
- Replaced “sets forth his identification” with “identifies” for clarity and readability
- Added the word “Communion” as this is the term typically used by our local churches in reference to the “Lord's Supper”
- Changed the word “wine” to “cup” as this is the typical Biblical reference and affirms the general practice of local churches' use of grape juice, while also not constraining churches from the use of wine
- Added “and a continuing means for strengthening the faith of the believer” to indicate that in our act of remembrance a true communion with Christ takes place and this is a wonderful means by which we are drawn close to him and strengthened by him

Changes made February 2025

- Added “gathered” to highlight the corporate nature of communion

Article on “The Lord’s Day”

Existing Version

The Lord’s Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord’s day and that, in a special sense, it is the divinely appointed day for worship and spiritual exercise.

Proposed Version (with markup)

The Lord’s Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord’s day ~~and that, in a special sense, it is the divinely~~ in honour of his glorious resurrection and is a particularly appropriate day for corporate worship ~~and spiritual exercise~~.

Proposed Version (without markup)

The Lord’s Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord’s day in honour of his glorious resurrection and is a particularly appropriate day for corporate worship.

Scripture Support:

- Luke 24:1-3; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Romans 14:5-6; Colossians 2:16

Explanation

By adding the words “in honour of His glorious resurrection” we give the biblical basis for why the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day and should be understood as “a particularly appropriate day for corporate worship.” This is also in keeping with the long history and tradition of Christian churches, beginning in the apostolic era, to worship and engage in spiritual activities on the first day of the week.

Details

Changes made prior to September 2024

- Added “in honour of his glorious resurrection” as the biblical reason for why the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day
- Added “corporate” to recognize that worship is to be an experience of the gathered church

Changes made February 2025

- We recognized that while the Lord's Day is a particularly appropriate day for corporate worship, the added verses (1 Corinthians 16:2, Romans 14:5-6, and Colossians 2:16) affirm the biblical freedom to gather for worship on other days

Article on “Religious Liberty”

Existing Version

Religious Liberty

We believe in religious liberty; that every man has the right to practice and propagate his beliefs.

Proposed Version (with markup)

Religious Liberty

We believe in religious liberty; that ~~every man~~ all people ~~have~~ has the right to practice and propagate ~~his~~ their beliefs without undue interference by the civil authority.

Proposed Version (without markup)

Religious Liberty

We believe in religious liberty, that all people have the right to practice and propagate their beliefs without undue interference by the civil authority.

Scripture Support:

- Romans 14:10-13; Galatians 5:1, 13-15; Romans 13:1-7; Acts 5:29

Explanation:

The founders of our Fellowship, like the early Baptists of the 17th century, were committed to religious freedom for all people and this is reflected through the various historic Baptist confessions of faith, including our own. Because religious freedom is not some ancillary or abstract concept, but a key distinctive of our faith, practice, and history, the AoF Team decided that this article should be retained and stand separate from but connected to the article on Church and State.

The first and second changes made reflect the desire of the constituency to adopt gender-neutral language wherever possible to do so. The addition of the phrase “without undue interference by the civil authority” was added to commend a qualified submission to civil authority. There is an appropriate submission of the church to civil authority, in such matters as building codes, safety standards, etc., and a submission that would not be appropriate, such as the case wherein the civil authority attempted to forbid the preaching of the gospel. Discernment will need to be exercised by churches when facing the possible overreach of civil authority.

Details:

Changes made prior to September 2024

- Changed “men” to “all people” to update language
- Changed “his” to “their” to adjust to plural, gender-neutral language
- Added “without undue interference by the civil authority” for reasons stated above

Changes made February 2025

- Added Romans 13:1-7 to indicate that the state does have legitimate authority and added Acts 5:29 to indicate that this authority is not ultimate or without limitation with respect to the responsibility of the Christian

Articles on “The Church and State” and “Civil Government”

Existing Versions

The Church and State

We believe in the entire separation of church and state.

Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed, except only in the things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and Prince of the kings of the earth.

Proposed Version (with markup) (Majority agreed to combine Church and State with Civil Government)

The Church and State

We believe in the ~~entire~~ separation of church and state. The church should not resort to the ~~civil power~~state or worldly means to carry on its work. –We believe that ~~civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of society; that magistrates~~ government is divinely appointed for the interest and good order of society, and its leaders are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured, and obeyed, except only in the things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and Prince-Ruler of the kings of the earth.

Proposed Version (without markup)

The Church and State

We believe in the separation of church and state. The church should not resort to the state or worldly means to carry on its work. We believe that government is divinely appointed for the interest and good order of society, and its leaders are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed, except only in the things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and Ruler of the kings of the earth.

Scripture Support:

- Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:11-17; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Acts 5:27-29; Philippians 3:20; Matthew 22:15-22

Explanation:

We felt it appropriate to consolidate these two articles into one largely because the main focus of our Affirmation of Faith is to state what we believe the Bible teaches, and our main focus with this article ought to be to clarify what we believe the Bible teaches about the relation of the church to the state, and not to pontificate on the nature of the state itself. The Bible does not espouse or commend a particular version of civil government and Christians throughout the ages, and indeed across the globe today, operate under and endorse various forms of civil government.

We removed the word “entire” because it may have unintentionally communicated that there is no appropriate overlap between the proper sphere of authority given to the church and the proper sphere of authority given to the state, which is untrue. Both the church and the state, for example, have appropriate interest in the safety of women. Should a husband assault his wife it would be appropriate for both church and state officials to become involved. Further, as stated in the section on religious liberty, we recognize that there is legitimate and illegitimate submission to the civil magistrate. Removing the word “entire” makes that clearer.

The addition of the phrase “The church should not resort to the civil power or worldly means to carry on its work” reflects a desire to discourage churches from looking at the government to do the work of the church. It is our job to witness to our friends and neighbours; we do not look to the government to enforce Christianity via legislation or sanction.

Details:

Changes made prior to September 2024

- Consolidated two articles into one
- Removed statement about the correct focus of civil government, as it is beyond the scope of this document
- When we say “separation of church and state” we mean that neither one as an entity should control the other
- Removed “entire” to avoid suggesting that the civil authority has no legitimate overlap with the church
- As to the word “resort”, it has the sense of turning towards and adopting as a strategy. Christians are not to rely upon the government as a strategy. The word “resort” allows us to take advantage of government funds and programs that do not impinge upon our convictions or determined strategies.

Changes made February 2025

- Changed “resort to the civil power” to “resort to the state” for clarity
- Added “for the interest and good order of society” in deference to the 1953 AoF
- Changed “Prince” to “Ruler” in regard for the fact that the ESV and NIV use “Ruler” and “Prince” comes from the KJV which is becoming less familiar to our people. The term “Prince” sounds like a diminutive in some modern ears.

Article on “Future Things”

Existing Version

Future Things

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ; in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust; in the eternal blessedness of the redeemed and in the judgment and conscious, eternal punishment of the wicked.

Proposed Version (with markup)

Future Things

We believe in the personal and, bodily, ~~and glorious~~-return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory; in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust to stand before God in the final judgement; in the ~~conscious~~, eternal, conscious ~~blessedness of the redeemed and in the judgment and conscious, eternal~~ punishment of the unregenerate in hell; and in the eternal blessedness of the redeemed in the new heavens and the new earth.~~wicked.~~

Proposed Version (without markup)

Future Things

We believe in the personal and bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory; in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust to stand before God in the final judgment; in the eternal, conscious punishment of the unregenerate in hell; and in the eternal blessedness of the redeemed in the new heavens and the new earth.

Scripture Support:

- Daniel 12:1-4; Matthew 25:31-46; 1 Corinthians 15:50-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Peter 3:3-13; John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:1-8

Details

Changes made prior to September 2024

- The AoF Team along with the AoF Survey (April 2023) respondents desire to move this Article to the end of the AoF
- Added “to stand before God in the final judgment” to emphasize that all people will stand before God at the final judgment, not just the “unregenerate” as the existing AoF statement implies
- Switched the order of “the eternal blessedness of the redeemed” and “the conscious, eternal punishment of the unregenerate” so that the AoF, like the Bible, ends on a note of triumph and joy

Changes made February 2025

- Added “in power and glory” to distinguish from the first coming of Christ
- Changed order of “eternal” and “conscious” to indicate that the conscious experience of punishment is everlasting
- Considered changing the term “unregenerate” but found that Revelation 20:15 establishes the term well
- Added “in hell” and “in the new heavens and the new earth” to add specificity and to strengthen the statement against annihilationism