

# CONFESSION OF FAITH

What follows is a summary of the doctrinal position of the Anabaptist Discipleship Center. We would further generally endorse the teachings of The Schleithem Confession of 1527 and The Dordrecht Confession of 1632.

## Section I – The Word of God

We believe in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God; that it is authentic in its matter, authoritative in its counsels, inerrant in the original writings, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We reject any philosophy where the authority of the Word is rejected, questioned, or displaced by human reason.

1 Corinthians 2:5-7, 14; John 10:35; 2 Samuel 23:2; Psalm 12:6; 119:160; Jeremiah 1:9; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21

## Section II – The Existence and Nature of God

We believe that there is but one God, eternal, infinite, perfect, and unchangeable, who exists and reveals Himself in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Genesis 17:1; Isaiah 40:23; 57:15; Malachi 3:6; Genesis 1:2; Hebrews 1:8; 13:8; Matthew 28:19

## Section III – Creation

We believe that the Genesis account of creation is a historic fact and literally true; that the Bible is a Book of Redemption, yet it is scientifically accurate. We believe that all created things point to God and bring Him glory.

Genesis 1:1, 21, 27; Exodus 20:11; Mark 10:6; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:10; 11:3

## Section IV – Man

We believe that man was created by an immediate act of God, in His own image, and after His likeness; that his chief purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him; that, though man was created innocent, by one act of disobedience he became sinful in his nature and spiritually dead, subject to physical death and the power of the devil, and deserving eternal spiritual death separated from God and under His righteous judgment; that from this fallen condition he is unable to save himself; that this condition became the lot of all mankind.

Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7; Psalm 33:6-9, Genesis 2:16, 17; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12; John 6:44; Romans 5:6, 12; 1:18-32

## Section V – Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin—the perfect God-man; that He was without sin, the divinely appointed sacrifice, who, by His death on the cross, made the only atonement for sin by the shedding of His blood, thus reconciling man to

God; that He was resurrected bodily from the dead, ascended to glory, and “always lives to make intercession for [us]”; and He is the only head of the Church.

John 1:1-2; Hebrews 13:8; Luke 1:35; Matthew 1:20; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; 1 Timothy 2:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:22-24; Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Matthew 28:6; Acts 3:26; 10:40; 1:11; Ephesians 1:19-21; Revelation 1:18; Hebrews 6:20; 7:26, Colossians 1:18

## **Section VI – Salvation**

We believe that man is saved by grace alone through faith alone in the finished work of Christ alone on the ground of His atoning shed blood; that through the new birth he becomes a child of God, partaker of eternal life, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ.

We believe that man in his natural dead spiritual state does not and cannot desire God, and that God must intervene personally for anyone to be saved. We deny that this removes or weakens personal responsibility to believe the gospel and be saved. We recognize that the divine and human aspects of salvation are difficult to understand, and we reject any belief that denies God’s necessary involvement in every salvation experience or that denies the availability of the gospel to all who willingly believe in Christ for salvation. We believe that all who repent of their sins and trust in Christ for salvation are born again and will walk in newness of life.

We believe that Christ’s atonement was penal and substitutionary. He “bore our sins in His body on the tree,” enduring God’s wrath against our sin on our behalf. His atonement met the requirements of God’s just judgment against sin, and He bore the penalty for sin. He died our death, being cursed for our sins so we can be redeemed from sin and freed to serve the Living God.

We believe that salvation is wrought by justification through Christ; that the believer, on profession of faith, is accounted righteous before God through Christ; that works contribute nothing to his salvation; that faith is an absence of works and adds nothing meritorious to the believer’s standing before God; that sin interrupts a believer’s fellowship with God but does not discount his righteous standing before God; that those who persist in sin cannot be considered genuine believers. We deny that teaching justification apart from works encourages licentiousness and sin.

John 1:12-13; 3:4, 8, 16; 5:24; Acts 13:38-39; Romans 3:20-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:10-14; Ephesians 1:3, 2:8-10; Hebrews 10:10; 2 Peter 2:24

## **Section VII – Sanctification**

We believe that upon salvation, the believer begins the process of sanctification. Salvation is God declaring us righteous once-for-all through Christ; sanctification is God making us righteous through the ongoing work of the Spirit through the Word. As Scripture describes, every believer is being conformed into the image of Christ, growing up into Him who is the Head, Christ. While salvation is made possible by God’s grace alone, sanctification is accomplished by the joint efforts of both God and man. Believers are expected to exert effort in their personal sanctification, but their efforts are only profitable as empowered by the Spirit. We deny that believers will reach perfection on this side of eternity, or that the battle with their sinful flesh will fully cease before they are eternally glorified.

We believe that man’s primary opponent in the process of sanctification is his own flesh; that the world and the devil merely agitate his desire to sin and provide opportunities to express his sinful tendencies; that Satan’s power should not be underestimated, but that he cannot be ultimately blamed for a person’s sin;

that God so limits Satan's power that he can only work within God's prescribed boundaries; that Satan's spiritual warfare is primarily waged in the realm of the mind, in arguments and high things exalted against the knowledge of God; that the believer's primary focuses in sanctification must be the denial of the flesh and a continual dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6, 7:7-25, 8:29; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:1, 4:11-32; Philippians 1:27, 2:12-13; James 1:14-15; Job 1:6-12; 2 Corinthians 10:1-6

### **Section VIII – The Holy Spirit**

We believe in the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity; that He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that He exalts Christ and illuminates the Word of God; that He is received at the New Birth in Holy Spirit baptism and indwells and comforts the believer by a continuing work of grace in his heart; that He guides the believer into all truth, empowering him for service and enabling him to live a life of righteousness by His renewing and cleansing power. We believe in the gifts of Christ to His church; distributed and administered by the Holy Spirit. We warn against modern healing and tongues movements, and the second work of grace emphasis, which do not spring from the Spirit of God, but from the flesh, and are a reproach to the cause of Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:3, 17; John 16:7-8, 13-14; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Matthew 28:19; John 16:7-15; John 3:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; John 14:16-18; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:1-4; Ephesians 4:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:4, 11; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Corinthians 14:40

### **Section IX – Assurance**

We believe it is the privilege of all believers to know that they have passed from death unto Life, that God is able to keep them from falling, but that obedience of faith is an essential evidence of one's salvation and growth in grace.

1 John 3:14; 5:13; Romans 8:16; Jude 24; Galatians 3:11; John 8:31-32; 2 Peter 1:5-11; Romans 1:5; 16:26; Revelation 22:17; John 15:6

### **Section X – The Church**

We believe that the Church is the body of Christ, composed of all those who through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have been born again and baptized by one Spirit into one body. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and therefore the supreme and final authority in His church. He has vested in the local body of faithful believers the responsibility to form a congregation, set up standards, and administer discipline according to the principles established in His Word. We believe it is the Church's divinely appointed mission to preach the Gospel to every creature, teaching obedience to all His commandments.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:23; Matthew 16:18-19; 18:17-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 11-13; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 20:27-28

### **Section XI – Discipline**

We believe that in order to Scripturally observe the ordinances and to maintain true doctrine and consistent practice, the local body of believers has the God-given authority and responsibility according to Scriptural

teaching: (1) to choose officials; (2) to regulate the observances of the ordinances; (3) to exercise wholesome discipline; (4) to organize and conduct her work in a manner consistent with her high calling and essential to her greatest effectiveness.

We believe that a member who transgresses against another and refuses to be reconciled, or a member who is an unrepentant, or an open, sensual sinner, must, according to the Scripture, be excommunicated from the fellowship of the believers.

Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-4; 14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Corinthians 11; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Acts 20:28-32; Galatians 2:7-14; Ephesians 4:11-16; Matthew 18:15-18; Titus 3:10; 1 Corinthians 5

## **Section XII – Separation**

We believe that we are called with a holy calling to a life of separation from the world and its follies, sinful practices, and methods; further that it is the duty of the Church to keep herself aloof from all movements which seek the reformation of society independent of the merits of the death of Christ and the experiences of the new birth.

Matthew 28:19-20; 18:15-18; Acts 1:15-26; 14:21-23; Ephesians 4:11-16; Titus 2:11-14, 15; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:9

## **Section XIII – Ordinances**

We believe that Christian baptism should be administered upon confession of faith; that the Lord's Supper should be observed as a memorial of His death by those of like precious faith who have peace with God; that feet washing is an expression of mutual love and Christian service that should be literally observed as an ordinance by all believers; that Christian men praying or prophesying should have their heads uncovered and Christian women doing the same should have their heads covered, each signifying willing submission to their respective God-ordained roles; that the salutation of the holy kiss signifies the familial bond between those in the Church and should be consistently observed by all believers; that anointing with oil should be administered to the sick who call for it in faith; that marriage between one man and woman is a divine institution established primarily to demonstrate the love, service, and intimacy that exists between Christ and His Church.

Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28; Acts 2:39; 8:12; 18:8; John 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 16:20; James 5:14-16; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Ephesians 5:32

## **Section XIV – Marriage**

We believe that marriage is unique among the ordinances, being practiced both by those outside the Church as well as those within. We believe that marriage can only be between one man and one woman, and that any other marriage-type union (homosexual, polygamous, polyandrous, polyamorous) is unbiblical. Marriage is to be a lifelong commitment dissoluble only by death. Marriage on the part of a Christian should be “only in the Lord” and thus should be entered only with another of like precious faith.

We believe that God, through the gospel, can transform even the most inharmonious marriages, and every effort should be made to apply the all-encompassing transformative power of the gospel to such situations. If one or both individuals persists in unrepentance and rebellion, we accept separation as preferred to perpetual conflict. Divorce—a permanent severance of the marriage bond—is biblically unacceptable in

every case. The Bible does not permit remarriage after either separation or divorce, and such marriages must be considered adulterous.

Genesis 2:18-25; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 7:15, 39; Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12

### **Section XV – Gender**

We believe that God created only two genders: male and female. The Bible consistently describes people as either male or female, thus neither allowing nor endorsing variations on God's design. We affirm that the uniqueness of the genders is a good thing, worth celebrating, and we further affirm that men and women are best served when encouraged to operate within their given genders. We deny that encouraging an individual to change genders is ever helpful, loving, or good, and we deny that a counselor should ever seek to do so. We believe that a person's gender is inseparable from his/her anatomy, yet we deny that physical surgery or chemical treatment can change gender. We reject gender reassignments as unbiblical and see them as dishonoring to God.

Genesis 1:27, 2:8-25

### **Section XVI – Biblical Practices**

We believe that God has established unique roles of authority for man and woman and we accept the complementarian understanding as biblical. We believe that the personal appearance and lifestyle of Christian men and women should be modest, free from worldly fashion and adornment, maintaining simplicity in all areas of life, living as strangers and pilgrims in this world, seeking a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We believe that Christians should not take part in any destruction of human life, nor in any acts of retaliation. Instead, they should live a nonresistant lifestyle, demonstrating the love of Christ in their daily walk. We believe that the church and state are ordained of God as separate entities in His divine plan, and that believers should honor rulers and be subject to their authority and pray for them. We believe that the unrepentant, fallen brother or sister shall be excommunicated from the body of Christ in the spirit of love, and be received back into fellowship upon repentance and amendment of life.

Jeremiah 49:11; Matthew 5:34-46; 22:21; Mark 10:42-44; John 3:3, 5, 17; 18:20, 36; Acts 5:29; Romans 3:10-18, 23; 5:12; 6:1-7; 10:9-10; 12:1-2, 19-21; 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-17; I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Corinthians 6:14; 10:4; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:8-10; 5:11-12; I Timothy 2:1-2; 2:9-10; James 4:4; 5:12; I Peter 3:3-5; I John 2:15-17

### **Section XVII – The Propagation of the Faith**

We believe that every born-again child of God is an ambassador of Jesus Christ, therefore his responsibility as a Christian is to glorify God and to seek reconciliation of sinful men to Jesus Christ. This can be accomplished only by taking advantage of every opportunity to personally witness to the saving grace and glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, by word of mouth, and by living a consistent Christian life.

We further believe that biblical counseling is an act of evangelism toward unbelievers and an act of discipleship toward believers and is thus a good and proper application of Christ's command to make disciples. We deny that any lasting change can be affected by any means other than the saving and sanctifying power of the Scriptures as applied to the human heart by the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 2:9; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 5:16; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8, Romans 10:8-10, Titus 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Corinthians 2:13-14; Ephesians 2:1-10

### **Section XVIII – Apostasy**

We believe that the latter days will be characterized by general lawlessness and departure from the faith; that on the part of the world, “lawlessness will abound” and “evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived”; that on the part of the church, there will be a falling away and “the love of many will grow cold”; that false teachers shall abound, and further, that present conditions indicate that we are now living in these perilous times.

Matthew 24:12; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13; Mark 13:22; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; Matthew 24:11, 24; Acts 20:28-30; 2 Peter 2:1

### **Section XIX – The Resurrection**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the bodily resurrection of all men, both of the just and the unjust—of the just to the resurrection of life, and of the unjust to the resurrection of condemnation. We further believe that rejecting Christ’s bodily resurrection is equivalent with rejecting the faith.

John 20:20, 24-29; Luke 24:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

### **Section XX – The Coming of Christ**

We believe in the personal, imminent coming of our Lord as the blessed hope of the believer; that we who are alive and remain, together with the dead in Christ who will be raised, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and thus ever be with the Lord.

John 14:2-3; Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:44; Hebrews 10:37; Titus 2:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

### **Section XXI – The Intermediate State**

We believe that in the interval between death and resurrection, the righteous will be with Christ in a state of conscious bliss and comfort, but that the wicked will be in a place of torment, in a state of conscious suffering and despair.

Luke 16:19-31; 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:10; 2 Peter 2:9

### **Section XXII – The Final State**

We believe that hell is the place of torment, prepared for the devil and his angels, where with them the wicked will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire forever and ever, and that heaven is the final abode of the righteous where they will dwell in the fullness of joy forever and ever.

Matthew 25:41, 46; Jude 7; Revelation 14:8-11; 20:10, 15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Revelation 21:3-8; 22:1-5