

## ARTICLE V -- STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in the historical, New Testament Baptist belief that a Scriptural church is a democracy of believers meeting in some local place, sovereign and autonomous in deciding matters of church policy and affiliation, and composed only of persons who profess to have been immersed in water upon their confession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

1. BIBLE: We believe that the Bible, consisting of both the Old and New Testaments, is God's infallible Word, written by men who were uniquely moved by the Holy Spirit, and that it is our supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice. We affirm our belief in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in their original writings. II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21.
2. GOD: We believe in one God, creator of heaven and earth, eternally existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19.
  - A. GOD THE FATHER is perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power. We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Jude 24, 25.
  - B. GOD THE SON, Jesus Christ, is God's only begotten Son, born of a virgin, sinless in life; Who atoned for the sins of the world by His substitutionary death on the cross. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His high priestly intercession for His people, His Lordship, His personal, visible, premillennial return to the world according to His promise. Colossians 1:13-18; Matthew 1:18-25; Hebrews 4:14-16; I Thessalonians 4:13-18.
  - C. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. His works in the believer include but are not limited to: (1) salvation; (2) baptizing into the body of Christ, indwelling, sealing eternally; (3) progressive sanctification; filling, teaching, enabling; and (4) glorifying. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts as He wills to those in His church. We believe that the "sign gifts" have been suspended in the purposes of God and are not applicable today. John 16:8-13, Ephesians 1:13-14, I Corinthians 12-14.
3. MAN: We believe that man was created in the image of God and was originally without sin. Because of the sin of Adam and Eve, all men are now sinners both by nature and by choice. Man is unable to remedy his own lost condition. Every human being is capable, under God, of deciding for himself in the matters of faith and life. Each man is also free to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Genesis 1:26,27; Romans 3:10,23; Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 14:5,22.
4. SALVATION: We believe that salvation is God's gift to man in the person of Jesus Christ. Sinful man is saved from the eternal penalty of sin and from sin's power as a result of receiving Jesus Christ by faith, as the Savior and Lord of life. We believe that, at the point of salvation, each believer is given new life in Christ and a new nature which seeks God and grows in grace. II Corinthians 5:17; II Peter 1:4; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 3:16; Romans 6:23.
5. THE CHURCH: We believe that the Church is the body of Christ which is made up of every born-again believer since Pentecost regardless of race, sex or national origin, and will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The local church is an organized body of immersed believers voluntarily associated together for the worship of God, growth in godliness and sanctification, the fellowship of believers, the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ throughout the world, and the observance of the Biblical ordinances (believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper). The Scriptural officers of the church are described in I Timothy 3. The local church is independent and

autonomous and is free from all outside ecclesiastical or political interference. Acts 4:19; Ephesians 4:4-16; Acts 2:41; I Corinthians 11:23-32; I Timothy 3:1-13; Acts 15:13-20.

6. **ANGELS AND SATAN:** We believe that angels were created by God sometime before the creation of the material world, that they are personal beings possessing intellect, emotions, and volition. They are organized into various ranks and are capable of manifesting great power. Angels are distinct from human beings, but play an important though unseen role in the affairs of man. Angels serve and protect believers, rejoicing over their salvation and observing their worship. Angels also assist God in his dealings with the various nations and with the wicked. I Peter 1:2; Daniel 10:5-13; II Peter 2:11; Hebrews 1:11; Luke 15:10; Daniel 12:1; Acts 12:23. We believe that Satan is a fallen angel, the author of sin, and the cause of the fall. He is the open and declared enemy of God and man. We believe that demons are also fallen angels who followed Satan in his original rebellion against God and who help him oppose God's purposes in the lives of believers. Satan and his demons will be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. Isaiah 14:12-17; Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 12:9.
7. **CHRIST'S RETURN:** We believe in the premillennial return of Christ, an event which can occur at any moment, and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation. I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-54; Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 3:10. We believe that the Tribulation which follows the Rapture of the Church will be culminated by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the Throne of David and to establish the Millennial Kingdom. Daniel 9:25-27; Matthew 24:29-31; Luke 1:30-33; Isaiah 9:6,7; 11:1-9; Acts 2:29, 30; Revelation 20:1-4, 6.
8. **ETERNITY:** We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the believer and the non-believer. The saved will enjoy the wonders of God's presence forever, and the lost will be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:1-10.
9. **BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES:** We believe in the following doctrines and practices historically held by Baptists:
  - A. The Bible as the sole authority in all matters of faith and practice.
  - B. The deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - C. A saved church membership.
  - D. Congregational church government.
  - E. Progressive sanctification.
  - F. Two church ordinances: believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper of communion.
  - G. Priesthood of believers.
  - H. Separation of church and state.
  - I. Autonomy of the local church.
10. **STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY:** We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:23-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor.

6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of First Baptist Church of Brownsville (FBC) as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to FBC members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by FBC in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thes. 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of FBC.

We acknowledge that the above Articles of Faith and historic Baptist Distinctives in no way exhaust the content of our faith, which is the entire Word of God. We do believe that these articles are a true representation of the sound doctrine taught in the Scriptures.