



# **Statement of Beliefs and Biblical Principles of the Association of Bible-Driven Churches in South Africa (ABCSA/ABKSA)**

## **Overview:**

This document contains the basic fundamental Biblical principles of what we believe.

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## Introduction:

With growing questions about challenges such as the secular worldview of the modern Woke agenda, it is clear that our traditional Biblical orthodoxy is being blatantly attacked. It is an attack on the authority, inspiration, infallibility, and reliability of Scripture.

Today's secular worldview requires a more detailed definition of our Biblical convictions.

Amid a modern and secular worldview, considering historical confessions (for which we have great appreciation, and which provide us with Biblical guidelines), the ABCSA commits itself to articulating its principles of faith.

## Motivation:

The ABCSA exists as a diverse association of Bible-driven churches spanning a large geographical area. The association is made up of a rich variety of languages, ethnicities, cultures, ministry contexts, and theological convictions. This variety is an asset and holds immense potential for spreading the gospel. If not properly controlled, managed, and defined, there is the potential for division and even apostasy. We must firmly establish the foundations of our unity. We need to celebrate the non-negotiable core values we have in common.

Finally, we need to celebrate the basis of our unity within our diversity without having to become uniform. We need a Statement of Beliefs that can be defined Biblically, one that can unite us without conscientious objection. The stronger and more clearly defined our shared belief is, the stronger our unity will be too. In a Biblical Association of Christian congregations that want to maintain, empower, and celebrate our diversity, it is imperative that we spell out very clearly what it means to be a Biblical Christian.

To equip pastors to lead their congregations to spiritual maturity. Colossians 1:28–29 (NKJV) *“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labour, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.”*

## Revision of Statement of Beliefs:

Reviewed by the work group as appointed by the ABK Annual General Meeting at Kroonstad on 4-6 March 2024. The work group hereby shares the fruit of our work over the past months in the form of a proposed new statement of faith for the ASSOCIATION OF BIBLE-DRIVEN CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA (ABCSA). It was a privilege to be a part of such a worthy cause. Looking to establish a new Association, we trust that the proposed Statement of Beliefs will be of significant help to our congregations.

The church is *“the pillar and ground of the truth.”* 1 Timothy 3:15 (NKJV)

The church is *“the pillar and support of the truth.”* 1 Timothy 3:15 (LSB)

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# What we believe about

## 1. The Holy Scriptures: (Bibliology)

### We believe:

- 1) that Scripture in its original form is composed of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments;
- 2) that the Holy Spirit of God inspired and influenced the writers, so that these writings are the Word of God;
- 3) that Scripture, by virtue of the Divine origin and inspiration of its words, is credible and inerrant in all that it states and confirms;
- 4) that these parts of Scripture (the Old and New Testaments) are the final revelation of God to His people;
- 5) that every direct translation is faithful to the original writings, and that has been declared with responsibility, clearly revealing the truths necessary for our salvation, a God-fearing lifestyle and maturity in Christ;
- 6) that Scripture alone is our sufficient, final, and supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice;
- 7) that so-called contradictions between translations and Bible books are defended and explained by Scripture itself;
- 8) and that no other writings, visions, dreams, and so-called prophecies may be substituted for the Holy Scriptures in the preaching and revelation to the congregation.

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- 1) Rom. 3:2; Matt. 5:18; Luke 24:27; Rev. 22:18-19; Deut. 4:1-2; Prov. 30:5-6;
  - 2) 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 3:18; Eph. 6:17; Hebr. 3:7;
  - 3) John 10:35; John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 14:26;
  - 4) Matt. 24:35; Rom. 3:2; Acts 7:38; 1 Cor. 9:8-10; 4:6; Deut. 4:1-2; Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19;
  - 5) 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:16; Acts. 17:11; 2 Pet. 1:3-4; Ps. 19:8-15;
  - 6) Jude 3; Luke 16:29-31; Matt. 4:1-4; Mark 7:9-13; Rom. 15:4;
  - 7) 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 1:20-21;
  - 8) Jer. 23:28; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3; 2 Cor. 4:2-5.

## 2. God the Father: (Theology Proper)

### We believe:

- 1) in one God who exists from eternity in three equal Persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;
- 2) each Person of the Trinity is fully and equal to God, while they are unique in their Person and work;
- 3) that this triune God is perfect, eternal, and Sovereign in His essence;
- 4) that God had already decided before creation to save sinners through the sacrifice of His Son. According to His sovereign plan, He appointed Christ to rule over history and unite everything under one Head, namely Christ;
- 5) that all that consists of Him, through Him, and unto Him, is created to manifest the glory of His wonderful Name;
- 6) that God's sovereign rule extends over all world rulers, powers, and principalities, including Satan and his fallen angels;
- 7) and that God does not share His honour with others.

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- 1) Deut. 6:4; Is. 46:9; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Matt. 3:16-17; Matt. 28:19; Matt. 14:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; Rev. 1:4-6;
  - 2) John 1:1-3, John 3:16; 1 Cor. 8:6, 1 Cor. 12:4-5; Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-2;
  - 3) 1 Tim. 6:15-16; Is. 6:3; 1 Pet. 1:15; Deut. 7:9; Ps. 86:15; Ps. 89:15; Ps. 117; Rom. 8:37-39; 1 John 4:16; Rom. 11:33-36; 1 Tim. 1:17; Is. 55:9; Rom. 16:27;



- 4) John 3:16; Eph. 1:4-5, 11, 13; 1 Tim. 1:15; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rev. 13:8; Gen. 50:20; Is.9:7; 46:8-11; Dan. 4:35; Acts 17:26; Eph. 1:10
- 5) Is. 48:11; Rom. 11:36; Eph. 1:5, 6, 14; 2:7; Rev. 5:13
- 6) Job 1-2, Eph. 1: 20-22; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:22
- 7) Is. 42:8; 48:11; John 5:23.

### 3. Creation:

**We believe:**

- 1) that God in the beginning created all things, visible and invisible in six days, sovereign, and took delight in them;
- 2) that He made man exclusively male and female to be His image bearers. He created them with an equality and called them to rule over and care for His creation;
- 3) that man's life is sacred to God, that it begins at conception and must not be terminated by a man at any time, because only God gives life and takes life;
- 4) that God created marriage as an exclusive, lifelong unit of mutual submission between a man and a woman that is grounded on the principle of complementarianism. The man as head must responsibly and lovingly take the lead and as her husband's helper, the wife should support him and submit to him;
- 5) and that the first man, Adam, sinned and thereby incurred himself - and all men - the penalty of physical and spiritual death. Because of Adam's sin, all people are guilty and punishable before God by nature and by choice.

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- 1) Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11; Gen. 1:1, 31
  - 2) Gen. 1:26-31; Mark 10:6; Jak. 3:9
  - 3) Gen. 9:6; Ps. 119:73; Ps. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5; Is. 42:5; Zech. 12:1 12:1; Luke 1:41; 1 Sam. 2:6; Job 1:21; Ex. 4:11
  - 4) Gen. 2:24; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:5-6; Eph. 5:22-31; Hebr. 13:4; Lev.18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26- 27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11
  - 5) Gen. 3:6-8, 16-19; Gen. 6:5; Rom. 3:10-19, 23; Rom. 5:12,17; Rom. 7:9; 1 Cor.15:22; Eph. 2:3.

### 4. The Son of God: (Christology)

**We believe:**

- 1) that the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, and who is Himself fully God;
- 2) He became fully human in the fullness of time. The fullness of God dwells in Him bodily, and He was like us in every way, but without sin;
- 3) that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and that His name was called Jesus (meaning "God saves");
- 4) that He is therefore the perfect and only Mediator between God and man;
- 5) that Jesus Christ is the complete and exclusive manifestation of God's essence.

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- 1) Ps. 2:7; John 1:1; 1 John 1:1-2
  - 2) John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:5-8; Hebr. 2:14; 4:15; Col.1:15-19; 2:9
  - 3) Luke 1:31, 35; Matt. 1:21; Rom. 1:3-4; 1 Cor. 15:47-48; Col.1:19; Col. 2:9
  - 4) John 14:6; Eph. 2:18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Hebr. 9:15; 12:24; 1 John 2:1;
  - 5) John 1:18; 14:9.

## 5. The Life and Death of Jesus Christ: (Doctrine of Atonement)

### We believe:

- 1) that the Lord Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, that He was perfectly obedient to His Father in every way, and that He ushered in the promised Kingdom of God in all His words and deeds;
- 2) that for the joy that was set before Him, He offered Himself as the perfect, substitute, and atoning sacrifice for sinners who believe in Him;
- 3) that He triumphed over sin, death, and all the powers of evil, and thus redeemed for Himself a people from every tribe, language, and nation;
- 4) that the Son of God on the cross had to endure God's wrath over our sins;
- 5) that His shed blood (as the proof of His death) is the only basis for our salvation, as well as the greatest revelation of God's glorious grace to us.

1) Is. 53:7-9; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; Hebr. 4:15; 1 John 3:5;

2) Is. 53:5-12; Rom. 3:23-25; 2 Cor. 5:21; Hebr. 9:14; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2:2;

3) John 12:31; 1 Cor. 15:54-57; Hebr. 2:14; 9:26; Eph. 1:11-14; Col. 2:14; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 5:9; 7:9;

4) Is. 53:5-6; Matt. 27:45-46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Rom. 5:9; Hebr. 9:14, 22; 1 John 4:10;

5) Rom. 8:32; Eph. 1:5-7; Col. 1:14, 20; Hebr. 9:22; Rev. 5:9.

## 6. Jesus Christ's Resurrection, Ascension and Second Coming: (Eschatology)

### We believe:

- 1) that the Lord Jesus was crucified, buried, and physically raised from the dead on the third day with a glorified body;
- 2) that He was glorified as the First Fruit of God's new creation; that He ascended to Heaven where, as Ruler of all things, He sits at the right hand of the Father;
- 3) that He currently intercedes as eternal High Priest and Advocate for all who are drawn to God by Him;
- 4) that He Himself will return visibly, bodily, and triumphantly in glory to judge those who are still alive and those who are already dead.

1) Acts 2:32; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:17, 23

2) 1 Cor. 15:20; Acts 1:9-11; Eph. 1:20-22; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:22

3) John 1:12-13; John 14:16; 1 John 2:1; Rom. 8:34; Hebr. 7:25

4) Matt. 24:29-30; Luke 17:24; Acts 1:10-11; 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 John 2:28; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5; Rev. 1:7.

## 7. The Holy Spirit: (Pneumatology)

### We believe:

- 1) that the Holy Spirit is God; the third Person in the Holy Trinity who gives eternal life, shaped the world, and validated specific individuals for His purpose. He is speaking through the Holy Scriptures;
- 2) that God anointed Jesus Christ with the Spirit for His ministry; that at Pentecost He gave the Spirit to the Church to dwell in us, to guide us, and to unite us. We believe that every believer has received a gift for various works of service;
- 3) that all believers receive the Holy Spirit in His fullness when born again;



- 4) that the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, helps believers understand the Word, and convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Spirit unites us with Jesus and transforms the Christian into conformity to His image through the process of sanctification;
- 5) that the Holy Spirit pours out God's love into believers' hearts, enabling them to pray and witness to Him. God sealed His children with the Holy Spirit for the day He will redeem their bodies;
- 6) that the Holy Spirit will give gifts to all believers in Christ as He wills. He does this for the orderly edification of the church, which is characterized by the fruits of the Spirit;
- 7) that any gift/s that manifests and or is practiced in such a way as to move beyond the scope of God's final and complete revelation in Christ, or to affect the absolute authority of Scripture, must be rejected.

- 1) Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:6, 17-18; John 6:63; Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps. 33:6; Ex. 35:30-31; Num. 24:2; 1 Sam. 10:10; 2 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16; Hebr. 3:7; 2 Tim. 3:16
- 2) Is. 61:1; Matt. 3:16; Luke 4:18; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 10:38; Rom. 8:11, 14; Eph. 4:3-4, 11, 12; Rom. 12:4-7; 1 Cor. 12:7-11
- 3) 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:15; Gal 4:6
- 4) John 16:8, 13-14; 1 Cor. 2:9-16; Eph. 1:17-18; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Gal. 5:2-23
- 5) Rom. 5:5; 8:26-27; Eph. 6:18; Acts 1:8; 2 Kor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30
- 6) 1 Cor. 12:4-6; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:12-16; 1 Pet. 4:10; 1 Cor. 14:40
- 7) 1 Cor. 12-14.

## 8. Sin and Man:

### 8.1. Anthropology: (The Doctrine of Man)

#### We believe:

- 1) in the literal version of creation, that man was created by God as the crown of God's creation;
- 2) that man was created in the image of God and was commissioned to rule over creation;
- 3) that the image of God in man is expressed and lived through relationships, creative action and accountability to God and man;
- 4) that man, through his disobedience, has fallen from his state of perfect creation into a state of radical/total depravity;
- 5) that by his act of sin, by one man, death came into the world. Through this one act of sin, sin was passed on to all men and that all men are spiritually dead from birth;
- 6) that man falls into two categories, namely, those who are saved and those who are lost.

- 1) Gen.1:26-27;
- 2) Gen. 1:28-30, 2:7;
- 3) Gen. 2:15-17; 2: 21-25;
- 4) Gen. 3:6,19, 4:8, Psalm 51:7;
- 5) Gen. 3:23-24; Rom. 5:6, 12; Eph. 2:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5;
- 6) Rom. 8:1-14; Joh. 3:18, 36; 1 John 3:10, 5:11-13.

### 8.2. Hamartiology: (The Doctrine of Sin)

#### We believe:

- 1) that sin is the failure of any attempt to meet God's moral standards of perfection, in essence, action and attitude;
- 2) that through the deception of Satan in the Garden of Eden, man, through his disobedience and thoughtless actions, has come to a fall of utter depravity;
- 3) that the basis of ultimate and complete victory over sin can only be found in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;



- 4) that those who believe in Jesus Christ are declared righteous, based on Christ's perfect work on the Cross;
- 5) that the ultimate completion of our salvation will be accomplished at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

- 1) Gen. 6:5; Is. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 7:23; Rom. 3:23-24;
- 2) Gen. 3:1-7; 6:5; Psalm 14:1-4; 51:7; 53:1-3; Rom. 3:9-18; 5:20-21, 7:17-18; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:14;
- 3) Rom. 5:1,9, 15-17; 6:1-2, 6-7, 23; 1 Cor. 15:3,17;
- 4) John 1:29; Rom. 8:2; 4: 20-25; Eph. 2:8-9; Gal 3:6;
- 5) Rom. 7:24-25; 1 Cor.13:10-12; 15:50-53; 1 John 3:2.

## 9. Salvation: (Soteriology)

### We believe:

- 1) by virtue of Jesus' finished work on the cross and through the persuasive work of the Holy Spirit, every born-again person, who believes in Jesus and accepts the Gospel message, becomes a new creature;
- 2) on this basis, sinners receive forgiveness of sin and eternal justification through Jesus' shed blood;
- 3) this justification and forgiveness leads to repentance as a condition of salvation and the first sign of sanctification without which no one will see God (the Lord);
- 4) that the believer, from his union with Christ, shares in all the benefits of grace that are in Him. These benefits include, amongst others the adoption as children, and the gift and eternal sealing of the Holy Spirit;
- 5) that everyone who turns away from his sin by the persuasive work of the Holy Spirit by trusting in Christ has the assurance that he will be accepted and kept by Him.

- 1) John 1:12-13; John 3:3, 18; 2 Cor. 5:17; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23-25;
- 2) Luke 18:14; Rom. 3:26; 4:5; 5:1-2; Eph. 2:13; Phil. 3:8;
- 3) Luke 19:8-10; Acts 2:38; 17:30; Mark 1:15; 2 Cor. 7:10-11; 1 John 1:8-9; Hebr. 12:14;
- 4) John 1:16; Eph. 1:3, 5, 13-14; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 4:4-6; Phil. 1:19;
- 5) John. :39, 10:27-29; Rom. 8:13-17; Col. 3:1-17; Phil. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:3.

## 10. The Church: (Ecclesiology I)

### We believe:

- 1) the Church is made up of all those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ, are restored by the Holy Spirit, and are reconciled to the Father (and thus to each other);
- 2) the church is God's people, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit through whom He makes known His purpose in history;
- 3) the local congregation is the proclamation of the universal church, a community of believers in a specific place where God's Word is preached and lived, where the two institutions (ordinances) – the Baptism of the believer and the Lord's Supper – are celebrated;
- 4) that both men and women in the local congregation were called to serve, and that male headship should be visible;
- 5) that every local congregation is under the rule of Jesus Christ. The Office of the elder is Biblically reserved for men. The congregation is led by the elders, in such a way that it does not alienate the members of their authority, as Biblically defined. Both members and elders perform practical service (diaconal work);

- 6) in New Testament God appointed only two offices to His church, namely those of Elder and Deacon.

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- 1) Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23; Col. 1:18; Hebr. 12:23;  
 2) 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 1:23; 3:9-10; 1 Pet. 2:9-10;  
 3) Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 2:18-21; 1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim 4:1-5; 1 Pet 2:5, 9-10; Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23- 32;  
 Rom. 6:1-4; Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1-5; Tit. 3:10;  
 4) Acts. 2:17-18; 1 Cor. 11:3; 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 1 Pet. 3:7; 4:10-11;  
 5) Acts. 6:1-7; 14:23; 15:3-4, 22-28; 20:28; Matt. 18:17; Eph. 5:23; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9;  
 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Pet. 5:1-3;  
 6) 1 Tim. 3:1-13.

## 11. The Institutions: (Ecclesiology II)

### We believe:

- 1) that the Lord Jesus Christ gave to the Church two institutions (ordinances), namely, the Baptism of the believer and the Lord's Supper. The Church must uphold these institutions in obedience. It serves as a testimony to the most vital facts of the Christian faith, while neither Baptism nor Communion brings salvation;
- 2) that Baptism is by singular immersion of the professing believer in water: a confession of identifying himself with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection;
- 3) that the believer, in partaking of the Lord's Supper, shares in our Saviour's body (the bread) and in His blood (the wine/grape juice) in remembrance of His death, until He comes again.

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- 1) Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 6:1-4; Gal. 3:27; Luke 22:14-20; Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-32;  
 2) Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27;  
 3) Mark 14:22-28; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-34.

## 12. The Mission of God: (Missiology)

### We believe:

- 1) The mission of the Church (every born-again child of God) is to make disciples of all peoples, tongues, and nations through the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in all the world. This is done through Church planting and the establishment of believers to obey all that Jesus taught His disciples;
- 2) that by loving our neighbour as ourselves - with compassion, in practice, and with wisdom - we show the love of God to all;
- 3) that we should do all this according to the Scriptures, in the shadow of the Cross and the power of Jesus' resurrection.

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- 1) Ps. 22:27; 67:1-7; Matt. 16:8; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 14:22; Eph. 4:11-16; Titus 1:5;  
 2) Luke 10:25-27; John 13:35; 2 Cor. 5:14; Gal. 6:9-10;  
 3) Mark 8:34-35; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 1:18-23; Eph. 1:19-20; Phil. 3:10; James 2:8.

## 13. The End Times: (Eschatology)

Amid acknowledging that there are various viewpoints regarding the end times, we acknowledge the following non-negotiables.

### We believe:

- 1) that Jesus will return visibly, bodily, and triumphantly in glory to judge those who are still alive and those who are already dead;
- 2) in the bodily resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous;
- 3) that all believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged for what they have done in the body and that the unbelievers will appear before the Great White Throne judgment to be condemned;
- 4) that those whose names are written in the Book of Life shall enter eternal life, but the wicked shall enter eternal damnation;
- 5) that according to God's promises, we look forward to a new heaven and earth in which righteousness dwells, where we will be with the Lord forever and He with us: **Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!**

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- 1) Matt. 24:29-30; Luke 17:24; Acts 1:10-11; 1 Thess. 4:16-18, 5:1-11; 1 Joh. 2:28; 2 Tim.4:1; 1 Pet.4:5; Rev. 1:7;
  - 2) Job 19:25-27; Ps. 16:10; Is. 26:19; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; Rom. 6:5; 1 Thess. 4:16-17;
  - 3) John 5:22, 27-29; Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; Rom. 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:10; Hebr. 9:27; Rev. 20:11;
  - 4) Matt. 7:21-23; 13:49-50; 25:31-46; Mark 9:45-49; Rev.13:8; 20:11-15; 21:27;
  - 5) 1 Thess. 4:17; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1; 22:20.
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## Appendix 1: Statement of Biblical Principles

The following Biblical Principles were prayerfully considered and unanimously approved during the ABK Executive Committee Workshop at Kempton Park on 15 November 2023. It is hereby proposed that the following Biblical Principles be submitted for approval at the next Annual General Meeting in Kroonstad on 4-6 March 2024.

### INTRODUCTION:

As Bible-driven Christians, we share many areas of faith with other members of the Christian Church. This includes believing in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe in the Supremacy of Jesus Christ as Head of the Church. We believe in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, the final authority for all matters of faith and practice. Yet there are areas of principle and practice that we as Bible-driven Christians emphasize; truths that flow from our understanding of Scripture.

As Bible-driven Christians, we believe in:

1. The *DIRECT RULERSHIP OF CHRIST* (Lordship of Christ) over every believer and the congregation (local church). Without transferring His rulership to anyone else, Christ exercises His authority directly over the believer and the congregation.
2. The *CHURCH* as the gathering of those who have been saved by Jesus Christ and restored by the Holy Spirit. As a revelation of the universal church, the local congregation is a community of believers in a specific place where the Word of God is preached and upheld. The congregation is autonomous and remains so regardless of responsibilities they assume through voluntary commitment.
3. The *BAPTISM OF THE BELIEVER* as an act of obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ; as a public testimony of repentance to God, faith in Jesus Christ, and rebirth by the Holy Spirit. It involves the singular immersion in water – in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
4. The *CONGREGATIONAL PRINCIPLE* that each member has the privilege and responsibility to share fully in the life of the congregation through his gifts and abilities. By the authority of Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the privilege and responsibility of every church member (including the leaders) is subject to the Lordship of Christ. We recognize that God gives His Church the gift of (i) Plurality of Elders. Their primary function is to lead in a spirit of servanthood, as overseers to equip the congregation and to oversee the spiritual affairs of the Church. (ii) God also gave Deacons the primary function of ensuring that the practical affairs of the congregation function in an orderly manner.
5. The *PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS* through which every Christian through Christ, our High Priest, has direct access to God and shares in His work of reconciliation. It involves intercession, worship, faithful service, and bearing our witness of Jesus Christ to the end of the world.
6. *FREEDOM OF RELIGION*, namely, that no individual may be coerced by the State or any secular, clergy, or religious group in matters of faith. The right of the individual's conscience must be respected. Every believer has the right to declare Scripture responsibly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
7. *THE SEPARATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE*. By the providence of God, these two institutions differ in their nature and function. The State is responsible for law and justice, for an orderly society and to ensure the welfare of its citizens. The Church is responsible for preaching the Gospel, for proclaiming



God's will and living it out, for caring for the faithful, as well as for calling the State to order through her prophetic voice.

8. *MARRIAGE* as an exclusive, lifelong union between a man and a woman as God instituted it from the beginning. We believe in principal of complementarianism in which the husband as head takes loving guidance in a responsible manner, and the wife supports and submits to her husband.

## Appendix 2: Nashville Statement – A Coalition for Biblical Sexuality

*“Know that the LORD Himself is God;  
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves...”  
Psalm 100:3*

### Preamble

Evangelical Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century find themselves living in a period of historic transition. As Western culture has become increasingly post-Christian, it has embarked upon a massive revision of what it means to be a human being. By and large the spirit of our age no longer discerns or delights in the beauty of God’s design for human life. Many deny that God created human beings for his glory, and that his good purposes for us include our personal and physical design as male and female. It is common to think that human identity as male and female is not part of God’s beautiful plan, but is, rather, an expression of an individual’s autonomous preferences. The pathway to full and lasting joy through God’s superior design for his creatures is thus replaced by the path of shortsighted alternatives that, eventually, ruin human life and dishonour God.

This secular spirit of our age presents a great challenge to the Christian church. Will the church of the Lord Jesus Christ lose her biblical conviction, clarity, and courage, and blend into the spirit of the age? Or will she hold fast to the word of life, draw courage from Jesus, and unashamedly proclaim his way as the way of life? Will she maintain her clear, counter-cultural witness to a world that seems bent on ruin?

We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it - particularly as male and female. Christian Scripture teaches that there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all. To him alone, every person owes thanksgiving, heart-felt praise, and total allegiance. This is the path not only of glorifying God, but of knowing ourselves. To forget our Creator is to forget who we are, for he made us for himself. And we cannot know ourselves truly without truly knowing him who made us. We did not make ourselves. We are not our own. Our true identity, as male and female persons, is given by God. It is not only foolish, but hopeless, to try to make ourselves what God did not create us to be.

We believe that God’s design for his creation and his way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God’s good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in abundance. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ’s church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

### **Article 1**

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.

WE DENY that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract rather than a covenant made before God.

### **Article 2**

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage.

WE DENY that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any form of sexual immorality.

### **Article 3**

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female.

WE DENY that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

### **Article 4**

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing.

WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

### **Article 5**

WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God's design for self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

### **Article 6**

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about *"eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb."* With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known.

WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person's biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

### **Article 7**

WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God's holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture.

WE DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God's holy purposes in creation and redemption.

#### **Article 8**

WE AFFIRM that people who experience sexual attraction for the same sex may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as they, like all Christians, walk in purity of life.

WE DENY that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God's original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

#### **Article 9**

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality - a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality.

WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behaviour.

#### **Article 10**

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness.

WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.

#### **Article 11**

WE AFFIRM our duty to always speak the truth in love, including when we speak to or about one another as male or female.

WE DENY any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonour God's design of his image bearers as male and female.

#### **Article 12**

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

#### **Article 13**

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender self-conceptions and by divine forbearance to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions that are at odds with God's revealed will.

#### **Article 14**

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ's death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are available to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as Saviour, Lord, and supreme treasure.



WE DENY that the Lord's arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond His reach.

**Scripture References\***

Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-24; Ex. 20:14; 20:17; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Dt. 5:18, 21; 22:5; Jdg. 19:22; 2 Sam. 11:1-12:15; Job 31:1; Ps. 51:1-19; Prov. 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; Isa. 59:1; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 5:27-30; 19:4-6, 8-9, 12; Acts 15:20, 29; Rom. 1:26-27; 1:32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 18-20; 7:1-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 4:15, 20-24; 5:31-32; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; 1 Tim. 1:9-10, 15; 2 Tim. 2:22; Titus 2:11-12; Heb. 13:4; Jas. 1:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:11; Jude 7.

*\* Scripture texts are not a part of the original document but have been added subsequently for reference.*

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