



birkdale baptist church

# Our Beliefs

Our Church's objectives are to advance God's kingdom and glorify God's name through our love of God, our love of each other and our love of the world.

Whilst it is recognised that the Scriptures are the only sufficient rule of faith and practice, this Church accepts the following statement of faith as a summary of Biblical beliefs for the guidance of its Members.

## **1 About God**

There is one true living God, who is Spirit, light and love. The creator and ruler of the universe, including everyone and everything in it, who is absolutely holy, infinitely good and great, all-powerful, all-present, all-knowing, eternal and unchanging yet personal and intimately interested in us. He has eternally existed in three persons, the Holy Trinity i.e. the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These are co-equal and are one God. (Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:5; 4:8, 16).

## **2 About Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is God, the Son, the second person in the Trinity and the one through whom the Father manages His affairs. He came to earth and took on humanity. He was fully God and also fully human. This incarnation was achieved through a miraculous conception and virgin birth. Jesus lived a sinless human life in perfect obedience to the Father and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin and a substitution in our place at His death on the cross. By the Holy Spirit's

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power, God the Father raised Him bodily from the dead, conquering Satan, sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and is seated at God's right hand where He intercedes on our behalf. He will return to Earth bodily to claim His own and visibly reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:22,23; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 1:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13, 3:4-7; Hebrews 4:14-15).

### **3 About the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is God with the Father and the Son. He is personally present in power to fulfil all of God's program purposed in love. He is present in the world to convince people of their sin and need for Jesus Christ. Upon a person's repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the individual. He is the gift of eternal life, the promise of the Father. The Holy Spirit provides believers with power for living a godly life, understanding spiritual truth and guidance in doing what pleases the Father. In Him reside all the spiritual gifts necessary to build up the Church. He exercises these gifts through believers as they submit to Him. Christians are to be filled with the Holy Spirit and live daily under His control. (John 14:16-17; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16-17; 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 3:16-17; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 1:13; 5:18).

### **4 About the Bible**

The Bible is God's self-communication in written form to us. It is an historical book written by human authors, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the revelation of the objective Word of God regardless of our subjective response to it. It is the supreme source of truth and the final authority for Christian belief and living. It is not an end in itself but the means by which we come to a knowledge of Christ. Because God inspired it, it is the truth without error. (Psalm 12:6; 119:105, 160; Proverbs 30:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-13; 1 Timothy 2:4; 4:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2:25; 3:7, 16; Hebrews 10:26; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

### **5 About People**

People are the supreme object of God's creation. They are made in His image to be His representatives and like Him in character. Although all human beings still display evidence of their divine creation, they are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called sin. Sin is the irrational assertion of independence from the Creator, tainting the good in people and in their thoughts, words and deeds. From the moment the human race

rebelled (fell), this attitude of independence from God has caused alienation from self, neighbour and the environment. This alienation or death means that every individual is hopelessly lost and destined for an eternity in hell, the second death. (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; 59: 1,2; Romans 3:23, 5:12; 8:19-22; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Revelation 20:14-15).

## **6 About Eternity**

All people are created as eternal beings. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence. After death, there will be a resurrection of the body and a final judgment of all people by the Lord Jesus Christ. There will then be the creation of new heavens and earth where sin will no longer exist. All will either exist eternally in Hell, alienated and separated from God because of personal sin (eternal loneliness and death); or eternally in fellowship with God through salvation from sin (eternal union or life). (Matthew 18:8; 25:41, 46; John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:42-48; Hebrews 9:27; 1 John 2:25; 5:11-13; Revelation 20:15).

## **7 About Salvation**

Salvation begins for the individual when that person receives the free gift of eternal life. Eternal life is the very life of Jesus Christ Himself resident in the individual through the person of the Holy Spirit. This occurs upon repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone and is declared in Believer's Baptism. This gift of God's grace and mercy is what Jesus Christ has made possible by His perfect life, His atoning death, His powerful resurrection, His glorious ascension, His ongoing priesthood and His certain return. Salvation is assured by the grace and commitment power of God. The Holy Spirit provides power over sin as a person lives in dependence upon and in obedience to Him. (John 10: 29; 14:6; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25, 10:10, 14; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

## **8 About Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only two ordinances, which were given by Jesus Christ, as recorded in Scripture, to be observed by the Church till His return. Baptism is in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Baptism endorsed by Jesus is by full immersion of believers in water upon profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a declaration of and a picture of union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection and an initiation into the Body of Christ, the Church.

The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of and thanksgiving for the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to be regularly practiced until He comes. It reminds us of our forgiveness of sin, present sanctification and future glorification in Jesus Christ and is a sign of the believer's continuing fellowship in the body of Christ, the Church.

(Matthew 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 14:13-26; Luke 22:14-20; Acts 2:41; 8:12; 18:8; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Colossians 2:12).

## **9 About the Church**

Christ alone is the Head of the Church. No other person, group, or religious organisation can profess to be the Head of the Church. The Church is the instrument which displays the redemptive activity of God. Each local Church is a full manifestation of the Church. Wherever the Church operates it is the one universal church and is competent to function. It is composed of believers, that is all persons who have been born again by the Spirit of God and through Baptism have been initiated into its membership. The authority of Christ is in the Church not in an individual and is ministered through the Holy Spirit. (Acts 9:31; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:1-16; 5:25-27; Colossians 1:18-24).

## **10 About Faith and Practice**

The Bible (Scripture) is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. Where the Scripture is silent each believer must exercise liberty of conscience in line with the principles of God's Word and in the light of the One to whom all are ultimately accountable. (Matthew 4:4; 1 Corinthians 8; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 5:13-14).