

does not serve for gain, for glory or for power, but eagerly, willingly and in an exemplary fashion (I Pet 5:1-3).

The pastor is not a CEO, nor an employee of a church, but the servant of God, and to God he must one day give an account (Jas 3:1). Every pastor who believes the scriptures must tremble at the weight of responsibility entrusted to him and live honourably in the fear of God.

The church is instructed to obey their leaders and make their labour a joy; they are also called to consider their way of life and imitate their faith (Heb 13:7, 17); the church is responsible for supporting their pastor financially. I believe that a pastor is called of God, and thus a pastor 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The pastor is as much a pastor at 3 AM as at 3 PM; at home or abroad. Pastoral labour is not like any other job or career; but is called of God to give his life in leading, feeding and protecting his flock.

Our Baptist forebears had the wisdom and courage to insist that it wasn't right for the pastor to be the poorest man in the congregation, nor the most affluent; he should not be burdened while others go free, as they put it; nor should the congregation be burdened as the pastor luxuriates in wealth.

The lighter print in articles XX and XXI are additions to the historic articles by me. These were the only two historic articles I felt I could not fully affirm without some modification (XX) or explanation (XXI). I have stood upon the shoulders of our forebears in preparing this document; these faithful pastors have expressed what they believe and what I still believe. The original words are drawn from the 'Articles of Faith and Practice' published in the 1867 minute book of the Grand River Association. These were adopted by the Grand River Association at their regular annual meeting held on June 8th and 9th 1866 at Vittoria Baptist Church. The writers of the original document are Revs. W.C. Beardsall, Isaac Elliott, John Torrence; they were amended and enlarged on December 27th 1866 by Rev. Dr. Fyfe and E. Topping. Though the congregation of Walsh Baptist Church (originally called Charlotteville Centre) would not be established for another 10 years; this reflects the shared doctrinal belief of our association 140 years ago.

XXIV. I believe that all Christians are commanded to be faithful, to improve every gift which is bestowed on them, in order to do which there ought to be such a gospel freedom that the church may know where every gift is, that it may be improved in its proper place, to the glory of God and the good of his people.

The Scriptures declare: *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:6-8; see also Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 7:7; 12-14; Hebrews 2:4; I Peter 4:10-11*

I believe that every believer is given gifts by the Holy Spirit for the common good of the church (I Cor 12:7). The utilization of these gifts is necessary to full functioning of the church. Discovering and using one's spiritual gift will result in personal edification, but more gloriously in the edification and building up of the church.

The Holy Spirit is free in his distribution of gifts, but the scriptures make clear that no one person has all the gifts. Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 reveal that the church is like a body with different members, and so must function in co-operation as a body, no one Christian can function as a church alone. I believe that no one gift is given to all Christians; thus the teaching long held by the Pentecostal church that all Christians will receive the gift of speaking in tongues is false and finds no support in scripture.

I believe that the Holy Spirit appoints to each one individually as he wills (I Cor 12:11). I reject the cessationist claims that certain gifts have ceased. I also reject the inordinate and unbiblical emphasis placed on certain gifts by the charismatic movement. I hold this position on the basis of a sincere and careful reading of I Corinthians 14 which I believe will not support either the cessationist, nor the charismatic position as they are currently articulated.

XXV. I believe that there is a mutual obligation between minister and people – the one to administer in things religious and spiritual, according to the gifts God has given him – the other to communicate of their worldly substance for his comfort and support, and by an equality as nearly as possible, that one may not be burdened and another eased; and every member deficient in this matter ought to be disciplined by gospel rule, as for any other breach of covenant or neglect of Christian duty.

The Scriptures declare: *So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. I Peter 5:1-3*

Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? I Corinthians 9:5-11; see also Hebrews 13:7, 17; Ezekiel 3:17, 20; James 3:1; I Timothy 4:13, 16; 5:17-18; 2 Timothy 2:24-25a; 3:16-17; 4:13, 16

I believe that a pastor is under constraint to preach faithfully the Word of God. The pastor is to preach in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking and exhorting through their teaching (2 Tim 4:2); he is to be constant and consistent in his application of scripture with confidence that faithful preaching will save those who heed it, not only from death, but also from compromise with the world (1 Tim 4:16; 6:3). The pastor

only men to the role of pastor, elder, bishop or overseer (1 Tim 2:12; 1 Cor 14:34). The question of male headship in the church is not a question of desire or ability, rather it is a matter of obedience and yieldedness to the command of scripture. I am committed to seeing men and women reach their full potential as fully participating members of the body of Christ. I believe in calling men to bear the burden and responsibility of leading and pastoring in the Church of Christ with love and humility.

XXIII. I believe that a Bishop, Pastor or Elder has no more power or authority to decide any case or controversy in the church than any private brother; but having superior gifts for teaching and understanding the Word of God, which is the law of the church, it is his duty to explain that law faithfully, so that the church may arrive at a correct and righteous decision, as near as possible in all cases; moreover, it is his province to see that the law of the church in all spiritual matters is acted upon by its members, and to reprove, instruct, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine, and thus oversee the church. To administer the ordinances, and to teach and exhort the people publicly, and from house to house; and it is the duty of the church to give heed unto his teaching, and have respect unto his doctrine.

The Scriptures declare: But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie- just as it has taught you, abide in him. 1 John 2:27

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9; see also John 14:26; 16:14; Jeremiah 31:34; 1 John 2:20-21; 1 Timothy 4:13, 16

Under the Old Covenant the Israelites required a human priest to serve as the mediator between God and themselves. Under the New Covenant, Jesus was revealed as the great high priest and the sole mediator between God and his people. The scriptures teach that every Christian is also made a priest who is able to know God and commune personally with him.

Jesus and his disciples taught that the indwelling Holy Spirit would reveal truth to the believer. I believe that the Holy Spirit reveals truth to us; the Spirit leads us to truth through the Word of God and thus it is necessary that Christians read, study, meditate upon and hear preached God's Word, trusting that the Holy Spirit will apply its truth to our hearts and lead us.

invisible church. The invisible church is made up of those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and redeemed by the blood of Jesus and adopted by the Father. It is this church which is shut against all those who cannot give evidence of their union with Christ.

This is a statement that addresses who is recognized as being a 'member' of the church. Just as we baptize people with water as an outward sign that they have already been baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit; so we formally recognize believers as 'members' of the local church who have already been made 'members' of the body of Christ. There are many people who are members of the body of Christ who are not members of Walsh Baptist Church. (Most of you reading this statement are members of the body of Christ, but not members of Walsh Baptist Church.) But it should be our aim and purpose that their should never be anyone who is 'member' of Walsh Baptist Church but NOT a 'member' of the body of Christ. That gets to the heart of what these faithful old Baptists were saying with this unusual statement.

There are many people who want the respectability of having their name written down as a church member (not so much now, as in the past), but it does them no good and much harm to be added to a church roll if in fact they are not truly born again.

I believe that the local church has a responsibility to examine and acknowledge as members of the local church, those who are shown to be true believers. I believe that all true believers should seek to be joined to a local church for the edification of that body and for their own discipleship. I believe the church is responsible for discipling and disciplining those in membership for their benefit and for the witness of the church.

XXII. I believe that a church thus formed has power to choose those officers that Christ hath appointed in his church, viz., Bishops or Elders, and Deacons, and to ordain them by laying on of the hands of the presbytery, and also to depose them, and to discipline their members.

The Scriptures declare: *Therefore brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. Acts 6:3*

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Acts 14:23

Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. I Timothy 5:19-20; see also (Acts 18:26; Romans 16:1-2; I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:12-15); I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9;

I believe that every local church is invested with authority from God for appointing leaders and recognizing members and also for disciplining members and rebuking leaders; the local church need not seek a higher authority than the one it has been given. There is no authority on earth that has power over the local church, neither government official, nor church official (pope, cardinal, bishop or denominational leader). Every true church is under the headship of Christ and is called to yield obedience to scripture. I believe the scriptures reject any claim of autonomy from the scriptures or from obedience to God.

I believe that God has called all Christians, male and female to minister in the church. I believe God has gifted them for ministry (I Cor 12:18) and has called them to present their bodies as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1). I believe in the equality of men and women (Gen 1:27), and that there is no distinction in the justification, sanctification or glorification of men and women through Christ (Gal. 3:28). I believe that God calls

This is one of two GRA statements I have modified to reflect my own belief and practice. While I agree that Baptism is a normal expectation for all believers, I know of many genuine believers who have not been baptized in the manner prescribed in scripture. I cannot find biblical warrant to withhold from such the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. I expect those who established this congregation would take exception to my practice, of admitting to the Lord's Table those who make a profession of faith, but are not baptized by immersion. Yet the passage used to 'fence' the table and to declare that Communion be granted only to true believers, does not specify that Baptism is a prerequisite for admission. It does make clear that the church must duly warn all before they partake to examine themselves (I Cor 11:28), and in such a manner to eat; it also threatens that those who eat and drink in an unworthy manner, eat and drink damnation unto themselves (I Cor 11:27).

So it is my constant practice to instruct all assembled for worship on the true meaning of the Lord's Supper, who is invited to participate, and who must refrain.

XXI. I believe that since none but believers can rightly partake of the gospel, the door of the church should be shut against all such as cannot give scriptural evidence of their union with Christ. *(The services of the church shall be open to all, and all encouraged to attend to the preaching of the Word. But membership in church be granted only to those who give evidence of being born again through their profession of faith; obedience of baptism; and desire to follow after Christ.)*

The Scriptures declare: So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. Acts 2:41

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit. I Corinthians 12:12-13

When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. I Corinthians 5:4-5

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. I John 2:19; see also Romans 12:4-5; I Peter 5:2

This is the strangest statement out of the 25 statements that our forebears chose to include in their agreement on faith and doctrine. At first it sounds wrong – why would the door of the church be shut against all who cannot give scriptural evidence of their union with Christ? Did that mean that only those who were held to be true believers were allowed to enter the building and sit in the pews and listen to the preaching? Not at all. This has nothing to do with a physical building, nor with a physical door. This statement makes perfect sense when you read it as it was intended: in relation to the

We find ourselves condemned on every count of God's moral law (Ex 20). Apart from divine intervention we have no hope of salvation. We have freely chosen our sin, we are without excuse and God is in no way indebted to us or bound to deliver us from our plight. Those whom God saves are saved wholly by an act of grace, purchased through Christ's blood and applied through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

I believe that sinners will be condemned to an eternity in hell, separated from every good thing. I reject and deny the teaching of conditionalism and annihilationism as unbiblical and heretical.

Christ, in his first advent appeared as a suffering servant, as the lamb slain from the foundation of the earth, as the Saviour of the World, as one sent to seek and save the lost. Christ, in his second advent will appear as King of kings and Lord of lords, as the rightful heir of all creation, as the appointed judge of all the earth. The book of Revelation reveals Jesus as the triumphant conqueror riding at the head of heaven's armies with a sword slaked in the blood of his enemies. To proclaim Jesus as merely meek and mild denies sinners the opportunity to understand why they need a Saviour.

I believe that no one knows the day or the hour of Christ's return, but that the gospel must be proclaimed throughout the whole world and then the end will come (Mk 13:32; Mt 24:14).

XX. I believe that *baptism* and the Lord's Supper are church ordinances, appointed by Jesus Christ, to be continued until his second coming, and that the former, which is to be observed but once by each believer, is a pre-requisite to the latter, which is to be frequently repeated. *However, those professing faith, and having been duly warned by scripture of the consequences of partaking falsely, may be permitted to take of the Lord's Supper in accordance with scripture.*

The Scriptures declare: *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; see also Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; John 6:53-54 and 2 Corinthians 13:5*

The Lord's Supper or the Lord's Table or Communion is a living sermon that Jesus gave to the church. I believe that it is a unique act of worship and remembrance. I reject any teaching that suggests that the bread or wine are transformed physically or spiritually into the actual body or blood of Jesus. Rather I believe that this act is an ordinance participated in frequently by all true believers that focuses our thoughts on Jesus work past, present and future.

As regards the past, we remember that Jesus gave himself up for us all, giving his body and blood to redeem us from our sins; as regards the present, we recognize that we have been brought into union with Christ, that we are justified by his life and death and are made spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ; as regards the future, that we do this until he comes – and that when he comes we will no longer need to commemorate his death and resurrection, for we will be with him.

XVIII. I believe that there will be a general resurrection both of the just and the unjust, and that all the bodies of the dead shall be raised up at the last day.

The Scriptures declare: *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Daniel 12:2*

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. John 5:28-29

And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Revelation 20:13; see also Matthew 25:31-32; Romans 8:11; I Corinthians 15 and I Thessalonians 4:13-17

I believe in the literal physical resurrection of every person who has ever lived. I believe that the human state consists of and will always consist of body and soul. When the scriptures speak of resurrection, they speak of a literal future event.

Modern science is no hindrance to our understanding of this doctrine, on the contrary, it is a help to faith. The audience who originally received these scriptures were no less aware of the effects of decomposition upon the body than we are, but our scientific understanding of DNA lead us to see how God could reconstitute a body specific to every individual human. (I do not here state that this is how God will do this, I simply state that science offers no barrier to our understanding by faith what God has declared.)

To deny that the dead are raised is to deny the hope of Christianity and to declare that those who have died in Christ have lived in vain. If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised, and we are of all people most to be pitied.

XIX. I believe that there will be a general judgment, when God shall judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, and will reward every man according to his works, when the wicked shall be sent away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous received into everlasting life.

The Scriptures declare: *The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. Acts 17:30-31*

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done... And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11-12, 15; see also Psalm 9:8; 96:13; 98:9; Isaiah 2:12; Jeremiah 46:10; Malachi 3:2; Matthew 12:36; Acts 10:42; Romans 2:16; I Corinthians 3:13; I Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Timothy 4:8

Few doctrines of scripture are so broadly proclaimed as the certainty of final judgment and final justice before the throne of God. The promise of scripture is that God will judge the world in righteousness and with justice. I believe that God has established his law and written it upon the conscience of every human. I believe that we are responsible for our own sinfulness and that ultimately we will receive the recompense for our sin: death. The scriptures declare that the wages of sin are death (Rom. 6:23); that we are without excuse, the creation itself giving evidence of God's existence (Rom 1:18-23). Yet we have robbed God of worship and praise, giving what is rightfully his to created things, or keeping it for ourselves. Knowing in our conscience what is right and denying it we have freely and willingly participated in sin (Mt 7:12).

XVI. I believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labour and recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace both private and public, and by preparation for that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

The Scriptures declare: *If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honourable; if you honour it, not going you own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly... Isaiah 58:13*

And he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath. Mark 2:27-28; see also Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 13:10-17; Hebrews 4:9

The evangelical church of the 21st Century has grossly capitulated to the world in this regard.

Less than 200 years ago, our Baptist forebears were fully persuaded that the first day of the week was the Lord's Day, and as such should be hallowed. It was to be a day of worshipful rest that entailed both a rest from regular work and regular recreations and at the same time a day set aside for worship. It was common in those days to attend public worship morning and evening and to insist that places of recreation and business close their doors for the day.

Today we are far from both of these principles, and many Christians, along with the world, think of Sunday as the best day for shopping, sports or to gain overtime pay; while public and private worship are pushed aside as an interruption into the pursuit of pleasure.

I believe that Sunday should be again hallowed as the Lord's Day and marked, a day for rest, a day for public worship and a day for being refreshed in the Lord.

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

The Scriptures declare: *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Romans 13:1*

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 1 Peter 2:13-14

Jesus said to them, 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' And they marveled at him. Mark 12:17; see also Acts 4:19-20; Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1

Living as a Christian often requires careful thought, especially when dealing with the civil government. If Paul, living under the rule of Nero, could write that God was the source of all authority, the Christian living in 21st Century Canada must recognize that our own government is ordained of God. That being said, we owe our first allegiance to God, and are bound by conscience to obey God, even if we must disobey our own leaders in order to do so.

There is an added level of complexity living in a democracy, where we are not only under a government ordained by God, but we are responsible for participating in choosing our government through casting a ballot. I believe it is the duty of every Christian to carefully exercise their democratic right, not for the advancement of their finances or comforts, but for the advancement of virtue and truth. There are evils in our civil governments which must be opposed by writing, speaking and refusing to vote with complicity. Exercising these rights must be done with careful reflection and for the glory of God.

XV. I believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of believers, who have been immersed in water on a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and who have covenanted to walk together according to the rules of the gospel.

The Scriptures declare: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19*

And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Phillip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. Acts 8:36, 38

...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. Colossians 2:12; see also Mark 16:16; John 3:23; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12; 9:18; 10:48; 16:33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:5; 1 Peter 3:21

I believe that the scriptures teach that all those who believe in Jesus Christ should be baptized by immersion. This is an integral aspect of Jesus' instruction to his disciples in the Great Commission: They are to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Throughout the book of Acts baptism is the consistent sign given to new believers.

I believe that the scriptures point to immersion as the normative application of this sign. John 3:23 indicates that John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was plentiful there. Had he been sprinkling, one would presume only a very small amount would be necessary.

I believe that the symbolic picture of burial and resurrection is depicted in the ordinance of baptism.

I believe that baptism belongs to believers alone and that it is applied to 'beginners', that is to say, not as a sign of maturity in Christ, but a sign of professing Christ. The Ethiopian Eunuch was baptized upon his confession of Christ, as were most converts in the book of Acts. At times baptism is even concurrent with faith. However, I stop short of holding baptism to be necessary for conversion on account of the fact that it is not universally shown to be present at conversion. The Apostle Paul differentiated between the work of preaching the gospel and baptizing in I Corinthians 1:17. It is unimaginable that Paul would make such a separation if baptism were a necessary act to secure salvation.

I believe there should no delay in baptizing those who are able to make a sure profession of their faith in Jesus Christ; even in the case of young children who are able to articulate that they have come repenting of their sin and believing upon Jesus.

XIII. I believe that good works are the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and follow after justification, and although they cannot put away our sins, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures declare: *An so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:9-10*

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10; see also Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 2:13; I Corinthians 15:10

I believe that the Christian will do good works. We are not justified by works, and all of our good deeds apart from Christ are as filthy rags in God's sight (Is 64:6). This fact does not suggest that the Christian life is divorced from good works, on the contrary, the Christian life is exemplified by works. Faith that has no works is not true faith (Jas 2:14-26). This tension in scripture must be very carefully examined and explained. Works are NEVER the cause of justification but are ALWAYS the result of justification.

A dangerous teaching has found root in the evangelical church that suggests that a person professing faith but producing no fruit has no reason for concern. The Scriptures speak of those who profess faith, but have no work, and ask rhetorically: 'Can such a faith save?' The expected response is – no.

The Spirit empowered work of sanctification is clearly observable by the world, for it truly results in the Christian living a good life and doing good works – and the credit for this life and these works goes not to the Christian, but to God, for He is the one who prepared the good works beforehand that we should walk in them. This truth leads us to understand that we are saved by faith alone, and that we will be examined according to our works.

XIV. I believe that true believers being united to Jesus Christ shall never perish, being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and shall live and reign with him forever.

The Scriptures declare: *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. John 10:27-29*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. I Peter 1:3-5; see also Luke 22:31-34; John 6:39; 17:12; 18:9; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25

I believe in the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. While it is true that some believers may fall into very great sins, the grace of God will restore them and return them again to repentance; the true believer will not totally or finally fall away from a state of grace.

I do not believe that everyone who PROFESSES faith in Christ belongs in this category; for the scriptures also teach that there are false converts who are shown in the end to be unregenerate and therefore condemned and without a Saviour (Mt 7:21-23); those who persevere will be seen to be persevering in the end (Rom 2:13).

The man or woman who professes to be a Christian, but who is practicing sin and finds no desire for righteousness also finds no basis for assurance, though they may finally be shown to be preserved by the grace of God, the evidence of their salvation is found in the fruit of good work that the Holy Spirit produces in them, and an inclination towards obedience. It is not the Christian who preserves themselves, but the grace of God working in them sustains their faith.

XI. I believe that we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, realized to us by faith, and not for our own works and deservings; wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort. (If I do anything for this it robs Christ of glory MB.)

The Scriptures declare: *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Romans 3:21-26; see also Romans 9:30; I Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 3:9; Titus 3:5*

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation reacting against the Catholic teaching that righteousness could be obtained through human effort, works, piety and even the purchase of indulgences declared Sola Fide or Faith Alone.

Those who penned the original document used by the Grand River Association rightly declared this a comforting and wholesome doctrine. If salvation depends on works, it is not a gift from God, but a wage paid to those who have earned it. If it is a work, one is constantly bombarded by fears that their effort might be too small or puffed up with pride at the thought that they have merited something from God.

But the great comfort of the believer is realizing that his righteousness is imputed from Christ and received by faith.

XII. I believe that the life of religion consists in the knowledge of God in Christ, and conformity with him in the inward man, which necessarily produceth an external conformity to his commands, and brings us to live in obedience to his holy will in all our ways and relations.

The Scriptures declare: *And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. I John 2:3-6; see also John 14:15, 23; 15:10; I John 5:3; I Peter 4:17; Romans 2:6-11;*

The effects of regeneration upon a human being are many; however one of the most obvious marks of true religion are a genuine love for God displayed in a genuine love for the law of God displayed in a humble obedience to God's commandments. This is no dependence on works for justification, nor is it an undermining of grace in the process of sanctification, it is an acknowledgement of the teaching of Scripture, that salvation replaces a rebellious heart with an obedient one. The true Christian is not born again BECAUSE they obey God, they obey God BECAUSE they have been born again by the Holy Spirit. John 15 is helpful in showing that spiritual life flows from 'abiding' in the vine; the vine is Christ. A person who claims to be in union with Christ, but bears no fruit is deceived and should be dealt with as an unbeliever.

The whole counsel of Scripture bears out the fact that the Christian life is intended to be a life of holiness, our daily reality is that we struggle with temptation and that we sin against God's grace. No Christian is content to sin, or complacent about their sin, rather we hunger and thirst for righteousness. The letter of I John is helpful in pointing us to our high calling of holiness and practicing perfection, while at the same time acknowledging that the Christian is constantly battling sin and temptation.

IX. I believe in a particular, efficacious and unconditional redemption of sinners by the death of Christ, and that the Spirit of God applies the benefits of this redemption, by convincing us of our sinful, lost and ruined condition, and then discovering the glorious Saviour as he is exhibited in the gospel in his suitableness and sufficiency, and enabling us, by faith, to embrace him with our whole souls.

The Scriptures declare: *...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Romans 3:23-36; see also Romans 4:4-5, 16; 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Ephesians 1:7, 9; Colossians 1:14, 20; Hebrews 9:15, 25-28; 1 John 2:1-2*

Jesus Christ is the propitiation for my sin. He has taken the full weight of sins penalty and has satisfied forever the demand of the law so that all who believe in Christ might know that there is no condemnation for all who are in Christ Jesus.

We can speak of being saved by grace alone and being saved by faith alone; for the one is the gift of God and the other my full confidence in God's promise. We are saved by grace, through faith: so the child of God speaks not of their own accomplishment, or even of their own faith, as if they deserved some credit for believing; but of the righteousness of Jesus and the grace of God.

The work of revealing, convicting and convincing the sinner of the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ is undertaken by the Holy Spirit.

X. I believe in the regeneration of the soul, which is a real spiritual change, implanting in us a love for whatever is holy and pure, wrought in the hearts of all the redeemed by the Holy Spirit of God alone.

The Scriptures declare: *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ezekiel 36:25-27*

Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God... Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' John 3:3, 5; see also Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 2:14-15; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Colossians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:3, 23; Ephesians 2:4-5; 4:24; 1 Peter 2:2;

Regeneration is an act of God in redeeming the elect from their fallen state. Since it is impossible that one dead in trespass and sin can respond to the offer of grace in their own strength or ability, God acts by grace to command spiritual life in those spiritually dead. The first effect of this work of 'regeneration' is faith and repentance. Thus even faith is a gift of God.

Confusion often abounds around this point of salvation because from the human perspective it often seems that faith is the first evidence of salvation. Yet the Scriptures teach that regeneration is the cause and faith the effect. Thus, when we see faith, it is the fruit of God's gracious action.

According to the prophecy of Ezekiel, the work of the Holy Spirit not only brings forth faith, but also re-orientates the entire life of a believer and inclines the believer to obedience by replacing the heart of stone with a heart of flesh. One evidence of regeneration is an inclination to obedience and a love for God's Word and commands.

VII. I believe that God the Father, out of his mere goodwill and pleasure, has elected from all eternity a great multitude of the human family, which no man can number, out of all nations, kindreds, people and tongues, and given them to his Son in the covenant of his grace, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and this gracious arrangement is the only foundation of salvation for lost and helpless sinners.

The Scriptures declare: *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out... No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. John 6:37, 44; see also John 6:65; 12:32; 17:2, 9, 24*

...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will... Ephesians 1:4-5; Acts 13:48; Romans 8:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:9

...though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad – in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls – she was told, 'The older will serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I love, but Esau I hated.' Romans 9:11-13; see all of Romans 9 and all of Genesis.

The doctrine of unconditional election is clearly revealed in scripture. From the moment that God elected Abraham and not his brother Haran, Isaac and not Ishmael and Jacob and not Esau we have a declaration from God that he is electing according to the pleasure of his will. The Israelites are God's 'chosen' people, not the Canaanites. God does not depart from this pattern under the New Covenant. While the natural man accuses God of injustice, this is a false accusation; God gives justice to all, and mercy to some. Grace is always a free and undeserved gift given according to the 'unsearchable counsels' of God's will and good pleasure.

VIII. I believe that in the fullness of time, Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, came into the world, took upon himself our nature, and in that nature yielded a perfect obedience to the law which we have transgressed, and hath suffered death for our sins, and brought in a complete and everlasting righteousness, and hath risen from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God, and ever liveth to make intercession for us.

The Scriptures declare: *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:5-8*

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:5

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21; see also John 1:1-14; John 5:18; 10:33; Romans 5:19; 8:3, 34; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 8:9; Galatians 4:4

The incarnation, obedience, death and resurrection of Christ is the great pinnacle of God's redemptive action, and his revelation of His own glory. The Scriptures reveal that Jesus is the second Adam, humanity's true representative. He takes upon himself the yoke of the law and fulfils the demands of the law perfectly. He is the only man who has ever lived, who at the end of his life could lay hold of eternal life by works. By his obedience he EARNED, MERITED, WON the favour of God and could have taken his reward; instead, he willingly surrendered his life, dying on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for my sin. God, having given the sinner's penalty to his Son, now offers the reward of Christ's obedience to sinners who rest on Christ by faith.

V. I believe that man being left to himself fell from that happy and glorious estate in which he was made, whereby he involved himself and all his posterity in temporal and eternal misery.

The Scriptures declare: *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate... Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever – ' therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. Genesis 3:6, 22-23; see also Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:21-22; I Timothy 2:13-14; Hosea 6:7*

The great tension of the Biblical story of creation is established when Adam, the 'federal head' (humanity's legal representative) rebelled against God, heeding the counsel of his wife, who had, in turn, heeded the counsel of the serpent and knowingly ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge and good and evil. With this act, the whole order of creation was set on its head. Adam reached out to 'be like God' and instead carried his entire line into an ever increasing condition of sinfulness and separation from God. All sins have, at their root, sin; an act of rebellion against the rightful authority of God, our creator.

It should be noted that though it was Eve who was first deceived, and Eve who first ate, the responsibility for the fall is set at Adam's feet. Much has been made in recent years over the line in Genesis 3:6 '*her husband who was WITH HER*', it is quite possible that Adam was present as Eve was tempted and that his first failure was to take an active role in protecting his wife and rebuking the serpent. While this is a possible understanding, what is abundantly clear in scripture, is that the sin of Adam destroyed innocence and led to a world of sin.

I believe that the scriptures reveal and require an original Adam; any teaching denying a literal Adam is a denial of scripture and orthodoxy.

VI. I believe that man being thus totally morally depraved, his recovery is wholly in and from God.

The Scriptures declare: *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. Ephesians 2:1-3;*

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Romans 8:7-8; see also Romans 3:10-18; 5:12; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Psalm 14:2-3; 51:5; Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 13:23

The doctrine of total depravity revealed in the scriptures is not that man is as depraved as he can possibly be. The doctrine of total depravity does not preclude that a human might act in a way that wins him merit and praise from other man – but that nothing he does is considered 'spiritually' good. The natural man is unable to please God or win his favour.

The natural man may not always act in the most depraved manner but it is clear that he is dead in his trespass and sin and unable to do anything about his own spiritual plight. He is as able of performing the necessary work before God as a corpse is of breathing, eating or walking. The consistent message of the scripture is that natural man is wholly under the thrall of sin, even to the extent that his righteous deeds are corrupt in the sight of God.

I believe that man is responsible before God, the opportunity to obey God lies before him, but in his depraved condition he is unable and unwilling to choose this obedience. God's law commands obedience that a man is responsible to give to God, in spite of the fact that moral inability prevents every man from obeying God's law.

III. I believe that the purposes of God are eternal, and his providence universal, so that no event ever did, or can, take place contrary to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; yet his eternal purposes are perfectly consistent with the voluntary agency and accountability of his creatures.

The Scriptures declare: *Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish my purpose,' calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it. Isaiah 46:8-11; see also Psalm 2:1-6; 33:11; Proverbs 19:21*

I believe that God has held perfect control of the universe for all time. He has ordained from beginning to end the events of this world. This is why He is able to declare the end from the beginning.

Not only is God the creator of this world, but he sustains it by the power of His Word. Every atom and every molecule is obedient to the will and purpose of God.

God providentially cares for His creation, and it is not hyperbole when Jesus states that he sees the sparrow fall and that he has numbered even the hairs of our head. These things are no burden or difficulty for an infinite God.

God is not responsible for sin; however he permits sin in order to bring about his purpose. We see this displayed in the story of Joseph and Job, we see it most perfectly revealed in the most wicked event in the history of the world – the crucifixion of Jesus: *...this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. Acts 2:23.* God does not act upon or outside of the will of man, but through it, so that a man is both fully voluntary and accountable.

IV. I believe that God made man in his own image, in righteousness and true holiness, and made with him a covenant of life, the condition of which was perfect obedience.

The Scriptures state: *The God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26a, 27;*

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Genesis 2:15-17

Adam's original holiness is revealed in God declaring 'very good' over the man he had created. The first covenant made with man is implicit and covered in the promise of abundant and eternal life in the Garden of Eden, a life of knowing God; these blessings are contingent on obedience to God's command restricting the man and the woman from the tree of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil.

To state concisely that God made man in his own image is to state that human beings have the capacity for reason, conscience and free will. We have the capacity to reflect the communicable attributes of God, to love, to create, and to understand truth and more.

Though our Baptist forebears had little reason to draw out this fact, in our 21st Century milieu it bears stating that God created man in two distinct genders, male and female. From the beginning they have been unique and distinguishable. While at times dealt with together as 'human', they are often dealt with distinctly in Scripture as male and female, with differing roles and responsibilities given to each. This teaches us that gender is part of God's original design. Before sin entered the human experience we lived as distinctly male and female.

I. I believe that the Holy Scriptures were given by the inspiration of God, and are the only perfect rule of faith and practice for mankind.

The Scriptures declare: *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 2 Timothy 3:16; see also 2 Peter 3:15-16; Matthew 4:4 and the consistent use of 'And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying...' in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.*

I begin my statement with the Word of God. I believe the Scriptures are the very Word of God, when the Scriptures speak, God speaks. Why do doctrinal statements so often begin with Scripture and not with a statement about God? Because apart from the Scriptures we could not know God. God is revealed to us in the scriptures, so before we can turn to discussing the nature, attributes and person of God, we must come to understand how God is to be known.

I believe that God has revealed himself in Scripture. I believe the scriptures to reveal exactly what the Holy Spirit intended them to about God, about humanity and about how we are to live and believe. It cannot be more simply stated: When Scripture speaks, God speaks. What the Scriptures command ought always to be done, what the Scriptures forbid ought never to be done. To disobey the Word of God is to disobey God.

I believe in the Authority, Sufficiency, Simplicity and Necessity of the Scriptures. No other book is needed to lead us to God and to tell us all that is needed to know Him and worship Him rightly.

II. I believe that there is but one true and living God, who is the Creator and Preserver of all things, and revealed unto man under the personal and relative distinctions of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, united in one Godhead, the same in substance, and equal in power and glory.

The Scriptures declare: *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Deuteronomy 6:4*

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. John 1:1; see also Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20-21; Genesis 1:26

God has revealed, through the Scriptures, that there is only one God, infinite, eternal and sovereign. Offering praise or worship to any other being or created thing is idolatry.

Having clearly established that there is only one God, the scriptures reveal that God is three distinct persons. This language is sometimes confusing, but these terms have been established from the days of Athanasius. By person I mean to say a being distinguished from the other two by incommunicable properties, while at the same time related by subsistence in the divine essence. Stated more simply: The Father is not the Son or the Spirit; the Son is not the Father or the Spirit and the Spirit is not the Father or the Son. While this is a mystery that the human mind can perceive, it is not something which we can fully fathom.

The three persons of the trinity have always existed and the divine attributes belong equally to each of them. (For example, all three are holy, all three are infinite, all three are eternal, etc.) However, each member of the trinity acts distinctly in creation and in redemption of the world. While equal, it is also true that the Son is 'eternally begotten by the Father, and the Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son. Thus a functional, though not actual subordination in operation.

reduced to tears at the thought of my own sinfulness – I remember the sense of having disqualified myself from usefulness, of believing that I could never possibly serve God in ministry – something I had long said I wanted to do.

It was there, on a dark and very starry night, sitting miserably alone repenting sin I could never undo to God that I sensed the amazing depths of his grace and forgiveness. Though I did not recognize it at the time, in the many years since, I have come to realize that up until that time I had believed that God was fortunate to have someone so committed as myself – after that point I realized that I was fortunate to have a God so gracious – my service to him is a debt of love which I have ever after felt privileged to render – even in times of great trial and challenge.

PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

I thoroughly believe that God may call a person many times and often to deeper places of repentance and faith: Peter was called first at the beginning of Jesus ministry, and then again after he had denied Christ. In 2011 it seems to me that God began to confront me with my luke-warm approach to ministry. Through conversations, books and sermons I was led to believe that my proclamation of the gospel had strayed dangerously and I was failing to present a robust gospel. Those who have sat under my ministry can likely attest to the shaking and uprooting that occurred as I began to preach through Jesus's Sermon on the Mount.

At this point in my life I had developed a fairly popular reputation as a fun and easy-going pastor. For a number of years together I was invited to take funerals at local funeral homes for those who had no church, because I was so 'relaxed' and 'relate-able'. In the midst of a conversation with one of the funeral directors he indicated that he preferred my service to those of the United Church minister, because the United Church minister was too evangelistic and

preachy for his taste (by implication, I was not). This was a stunning blow that led me to question whether I was fulfilling my calling.

All of this was part of God's purpose. I realized that holiness had no place in my preaching, and indeed, was absent from the preaching of many 'evangelical churches'. I had decided that I could do a better job than Jesus, Paul, Peter and the rest of the apostles by never speaking of God's righteous demands and warning of judgment, and instead speaking only of God's love and mercy. I never called sinners to repent, nor gave them any reason to expect that they would one day face a holy God who would condemn their sinful rebellion. I was preaching only half the truth, and a half truth is a whole lie.

It is my firm conviction today, that the call to ministry is primarily a call to preach. The preacher stands in a position between the people and Word of God and must proclaim it boldly and faithfully. The pastor seeks to awaken the lost and perishing sinners, some who have long attended a church and may even be on the membership roll, by the bold proclamation of the Word of God. To those awakened, the pastor applies the promises of salvation to those who believe and seeks to lead his congregation ever closer to God.

This was the role of the pastor in the first century – it is his role today. He is a man out of step with the culture that surrounds him – he cannot fall in step with the culture, he must strive to walk in step with the Word of God and to preach as a dying man to dying men to come, and follow Jesus.

and a tool the Lord used to hone my outward ability and challenge my heart inwardly. It was here that I believe I received my initial call to ministry.

At the end of high school I enrolled at Ontario Bible College (now Tyndale University College) to study for the ministry. While I was involved at the College I continued to serve my home congregations in Port Dover and Simcoe by teaching Sunday School, leading youth group Bible Studies and through camp ministries.

I also began preaching in small churches in the summer of 1994. Over the final couple of years at Bible College I was exposed to ministry with Baptist Churches, Brethren Assemblies and Presbyterian Churches.

In the spring of 1997 I graduated with a Bachelor of Religious Studies, a few months later I was given the responsibility of preaching morning and evening at Waterford Baptist Church (though I was not employed in the pastoral role) and in August of 1997 married my wife, Michelle.

In the Spring of 1998 we followed the Lord's leading to Creston, BC where I became Associate Pastor of Youth and Worship at Creston Baptist Church (a North-American Baptist Church). I had a less than comprehensive idea of what it meant to be a pastor, but I was determined to impact young people with the gospel, and throughout my time in Creston strived to present the gospel consistently.

My time in Creston was difficult, and I encountered a great deal of opposition from certain quarters of established leadership. I tried to act with integrity in each situation, though some of the difficulty was my own failings in the capacity I had been called to.

God, in his grace taught me many things, some through gentle instruction, some through difficult rebuke and painful trial. At the

end of nearly 5 years I left Creston Baptist on good terms with the church and leadership in order to pursue a Master of Divinity.

Though I was not seeking a pulpit at the time, the Lord orchestrated events in such a way that I came to Walsh Baptist (CBOQ) as an interim pastor at a time when they were in need. After 3 months, and a great deal of prayer and consideration, I agreed to remain as their pastor.

I can say, that there were years when I considered whether there was any more that I could do for Walsh, and even once I quietly considered leaving. But in each situation it seemed that I was led to remain. I have now pastored Walsh Baptist Church for more than 13 years.

CALL TO MINISTRY – For a very long time I questioned whether I had truly received a call to ministry. In some ways it seemed to me that it was something that I wanted to do from the time of my youth, and that I chose it as a profession, rather than being called to it.

I must confess that there have been many years that I treated it as a job or a profession rather than a calling, and times when I have thought of myself as an employee and 'professional' but I repent publicly of any such ideas now. I do believe that God has called me to ministry – that it is my life's purpose and work, and that I was made for this.

In retrospect, I recognize that my call to ministry occurred in the early summer of 1990 on the shores of Lake Chautauqua, while I was attending the Boys JIM Club. I had returned to JIM Club as a counselor that summer with wrong motives. Certain sins, which Satan reminds me of to this day in my darkest times, had taken hold upon my heart. I had rationalized them, but had not repented or turned from them. It was during that first session at camp that God revealed to me the very wicked condition of my own heart. I was

INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATION OF THIS DOCUMENT –

Writing an ordination statement is not an easy task. On the one hand there is the necessity to be broad, deep and theologically sound; while on the other hand it must be concise and simple enough for those who hold no degree in theology to read and comprehend.

Four times over I began to write this document, and each time, save the last, abandoned the work as either too long, too simple, too complicated. I should say at this point that I believe that theology (that is the study of God) should not be an experience in novelty; novelty, innovation and uniqueness are not virtues in the ancient doctrines of the church. Providentially, as summer began, I was in the archives preparing an article on the historic understandings of autonomy in Canadian Baptist Churches when I discovered a fascinating document.

Printed in the inaugural minute book of the Grand River South Association were 25 articles called 'Articles of Faith and Practice'. As I read these, I found myself uttering a hearty AMEN to what had been recorded and longing for a day when this sort of theological agreement would again mark our shared associations.

The GRA is the Baptist Association that would eventually become so large that it was divided into multiple smaller associations one of which was the Norfolk Association. In fact, this document was presented on June 8th and 9th 1866 at the Annual Meeting held with the Regular Baptist church in Vittoria. These articles of faith and practice are the articles that our forebears believed and agreed upon, I expand upon them here.

Each article in this statement begins with the words of the GRA document in bold. The scriptural proofs are my own and are added in italics. Finally my own expansion and explanation follows in regular typeface.

BRIEF AUTOBIOGRAPHY – I was born January 6, 1975 to Don and Joan Bertrand in the town of Simcoe. My father was a factory worker, my mother a homemaker, both are devoted Christians attending the local brethren assembly and actively involved in ministry there.

From my earliest days I recall my mother singing hymns and spiritual songs as she worked about the house. I recall my father carrying packets of memory verses in his work-shirts when he would go to the factory. It was not uncommon for me to find either of my parents with their Bible open at the kitchen table on any given day of the week.

It was of deep importance to my parents that I should understand that even as a boy I needed a Saviour and I was often told the stories of the Old and New Testament and led to understand that Jesus Christ died on the cross in my place, and that only by trusting him could I have assurance of forgiveness for sins and eternal life. I well remember a sense of urgency early in my youth and telling my mother that I had 'asked' Jesus into my heart at the age of four. Though this seems an unbelievably early age, I was quite earnest in my desire to know the Lord Jesus.

As a boy of 5 I wrote simple songs of praise as I walked back and forth to school and would often converse with my classmates at school about the importance of trusting Jesus.

By the time I had reached middle school I found myself often excluded, and ridiculed by the other children for my strong beliefs. These difficulties often served to strengthen my resolve. Over my high school years I would often keep detailed prayer journals as I prayed for the salvation of my classmates.

I had the opportunity to attend the Boys JIM Club of America beginning in 1988. This was a Christian leadership training camp,