

Concurring Testimonies About Our Doctrine And Practice

- I. This study is meant to demonstrate that we are not entirely alone on various distinguishing points of doctrine or practice. My goal is to comfort and confirm your souls by this approach. **ACT 14:22; 15:32, 41; ROM 11:2-4.**
- A. There are certain doctrinal points we hold with which “mainstream Christianity” would not find fault: the Trinity, the dual Nature of Christ (God & Man), the Virgin Birth, the sinless nature of Christ, His vicarious atonement & blood-redemption, His bodily resurrection & ascension, His second coming, etc.
 - B. But there are other more refined points of doctrine which many professors of Christianity would (and do) consider aberrant.
 - C. Sometimes it is helpful to point out to people that:
 - 1. they believe the same thing, but have just not thought about it thoroughly.
Example: We believe that God's grace is sufficient to even eternally save (if He so wills) an unbeliever. Most Arminians and some Calvinists believe the same thing when it comes to perishing infants, idiots or some of the heathen. But they may not have “put two and two together” in a conscious recognition.
 - 2. it is not we who have swerved from the faith. Many denominations once believed similar doctrine and held to similar practice as we still do, but have shifted from their old foundations. Examples:
 - a. There was once a time when the observance of Christmas or Easter was almost universally rejected by many Protestants and Baptists.
 - b. There is a “Founder's Movement” among the Southern Baptist Convention to return to the Sovereign Grace soteriology which once defined many of their churches.
 - c. Certain Protestants and even some Catholics historically rejected the use of musical instruments in worship services.
 - D. Paul would sometimes use such strategies in reasoning with people. **ACT 17:28-29; 24:14-15.**
- II. Some foundations need to be laid down here.
- A. That others may share some of the more distinctive aspects of doctrine which we hold should not be viewed as a *necessary* validation of our beliefs. We are warned against foolish comparisons such as this. **2CO 3:1; 10:12, 18.**
 - B. The Biblical overview of history shows that false prophets, teachers and systems are likely to be in the majority. **GEN 7:1; 1KI 18:22; MAT 7:13-14; ACT 24:21; ROM 11:3-4.**
 - C. The further through history from the apostolic era that one goes, the less is the likelihood of pure continuation of “...the faith once delivered unto the saints” (**JUDE 1:3**). **2TI 3:13; LUK 17:26; 18:8.**
 - D. If you are uneasy about the general rejection of your profession by the world, you should be more uneasy if your profession meets with broad approval. **LUK 6:26.**
 - 1. The path of true faith will not be loved by the world. **JOH 15:18-20.**
 - 2. Compromising for the love of this world is wrong. **2TI 4:10; JAM 4:4; 1JO 2:15.**
 - 3. Mosheim (Lutheran historian) acknowledges: “There were certain sects and doctors against whom the zeal, vigilance, and severity of Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists were united. The objects of their common aversion were the Anabaptists.” (quoted in Concise History of Baptists, G.H. Orchard, p.346)
 - E. Truth is not determined by numbers, one way or the other.
 - 1. “The many” may be wrong (as seen above) and this trend persists to the end.

LUK 17:26-30.

2. “The few” may be wrong. **1CO 15:12; 2TI 2:17-18.**
3. Truth is determined by the words of Scripture and sound reasoning therefrom.
ROM 4:3; 2TI 3:16-17; ACT 17:2.

III. Baptism by immersion.

- A. Obviously this is not a remarkable distinction. Any Baptist congregation would hold to this, as would Greek Orthodox churches. But so also would a number of Protestant or quasi-Protestant communions, such as the Assembly of God, Seventh-Day Adventists, the Campbellites (Church of Christ), certain Pentecostals, etc.
- B. Martin Luther testified to immersion and even rendered **MAT 3:1**, “John the Dipper.”
 1. “...let Luther, the father of Lutheranism, speak: ‘Baptism is a Greek word, and may be translated immersion, as when we immerse something in water that it may be wholly covered, and although it is almost wholly abolished (for they do not dip the whole, i.e., children, but pour a little water on them), they ought to be wholly immersed...for that the etymology of the term seems to demand.’”
(J. R. Graves, The Act of Christian Baptism, p. 28)
 2. Luther had some “choice” words for Baptists elsewhere.
- C. Thomas Aquinas testified to immersion in the Catholic church up until the 13th. C.
- D. “St. Paul alludes to the manner in which Baptism was ordinarily conferred in the primitive Church, by immersion. The descent into the water is suggestive of the body into the grave, and the ascent is suggestive of the resurrection to a new life.” (footnote on **ROM 6:3** of the Douay Confraternity Version of the Holy Bible [Roman Catholic])
- E. John Calvin admitted, “...Although the mere term Baptize means to immerse entirely, and it is certain that the custom of entirely immersing was anciently observed in the Church.” (Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book IV, p. 524)
- F. “Respecting the form of baptism, the impartial historian is compelled by exegesis and history substantially to yield the point to the Baptists.”
(Philip Schaff [Reformed], History of the Apostolic Church, p. 570)

IV. The King James Version issue.

- A. There was once a time among virtually all non-Catholic, English-speaking denominations that the KJV was received as the word of God. We are not the ones who have changed on this point. Even the Catholics conceded the excellency of the KJV in that they upgraded the Douay-Rheims version in the past to align it more with the KJV (until they got the Protestants and Baptists to accept the Vatican manuscripts as the basis for new bibles).
- B. Controversy was created by the doubts which precipitated and which followed the production of competitive, counterfeit versions foisted upon English-speaking people since 1871.
 1. Flooding Christendom with counterfeit scriptures is nothing new.
2CO 2:17; 2TH 2:2.
 2. The real issue here is that of authority. To dare to say that one book is God's book
 - a. leaves no “wobble room.”
 - b. demands that all other “bibles” which differ from it are not true Bibles at all. “*Rectum est index sui et oblique* (The line which shows itself to be straight shows also what line is crooked).”
 - c. “To hold a thing as true while simultaneously holding something completely contradictory as equally true is not being tolerant; it is being idiotic.”
(Ted Byfield, publisher, Alberta Report magazine)

- C. Is it so hard or foolish to believe that the omnipotent God could preserve His word perfectly through copies and translations?
DEU 17:18; JOS 8:32-35; PRO 25:1; ACT 2:4-11.
- D. There are numerous authors and denominations which hold to the uniqueness of the KJV of the Bible in English.
1. Dean John William Burgon (Anglican) was a towering defender of the texts underlying the KJV and devoted great labors towards the exposure of the corrupt nature of the Westcott-Hort texts and their 1871 revision.
 2. Commenting on **PSA 119:89**, "...In fact, a frequent objection raised to the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy is that, since all the original 'autographs' have been lost, we can never really be sure of any passage. It is interesting to speculate on what happened to those manuscripts directly inspired by God and penned by Moses, John, Paul and the others. It is strange that they all simply disappeared, with not a hint as to their history. If they had been preserved in a church or monastery somewhere, they would have soon become idolatrous objects of worship, so it is probably best they are gone... If, perhaps, angels somehow carried the original manuscripts of God's word to heaven after enough copies had been made to assure its faithful transmission on Earth, placing them there in the ark, like the tables of the law when it was still on the earth, this would surely give added meaning to our wonderful text verse: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven!" (Dr. Henry Morris, Founder and President Emeritus of the Institute for Creation Research; as seen in 'Days of Praise' devotional of 8-2-98)
 3. "I believe, therefore, after studying, teaching, and loving the Bible for over 55 years, that Christians---especially creationists!--- need to hang on to their old King James Bibles as long as they live.....(it) is the most beautiful, the most powerful, and (I strongly believe) the most reliable of any that we have or ever will have, until Christ returns."
(Dr. Henry Morris, A Creationist's Defense of the King James Bible, 1996)
 4. Peter Ruckman (Fundamentalist) was a prolific author and teacher in defense of the KJV.
 5. Dr. Frank Logsdon was supportive of The Amplified Version and The New American Standard Bible but renounced those works: "I must under God renounce every attachment to the New American Standard Bible... The deletions are absolutely frightening... Some of the finest people in the world believe in that Greek text, the finest leaders that we have today. You'd be surprised; if I told you, you wouldn't believe it. They haven't gone into it, just as I hadn't gone into it; [they're] just taking it for granted... I'm afraid I'm in trouble with the Lord, because I encouraged him [Dewey Lockman of the Lockman Foundation which produced the NASB] to go ahead with it. We laid the groundwork; I wrote the format; I helped to interview some of the translators; I sat with the translators; I wrote the preface... Friends, you can say the Authorized Version is absolutely correct. How correct? One hundred percent correct."

V. The incarnate sonship of Jesus Christ.

- A. We affirm that the sonship of Jesus Christ refers to His incarnation, having been begotten by the Father in the Virgin's womb, not to some mysterious, unexplainable movement or relationship in the Godhead in eternity past. **LUK 1:35; JOH 1:14.**
- B. Roman Catholic theology, virtually all Protestant theology, and even some Baptist theology hold to the position of eternal sonship / eternal generation of the Son.

- C. We are not alone in our position here. Among those who likewise have held to Incarnate Sonship are certain Freewill Baptists, Peter Ruckman (Baptist), John MacArthur (noted Christian author), Alexander Campbell, Adam Clarke (Methodist author and theologian).
- D. Speaking of the Person of Jesus Christ, “He is the Eternal Word made flesh, the only begotten Son of the Father...” (Book of Discipline, United Methodist Church doctrine)
- E. “(b) The Scripture nowhere calls Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God, and He is never called Son at all prior to the incarnation, except in prophetic passages in the Old Testament... (d) Many heresies have seized upon the confusion created by the illogical 'eternal Sonship' or 'eternal generation' theory of Roman Catholic theology, unfortunately carried over to some aspects of Protestant theology. (e) Finally; there cannot be any such thing as eternal Sonship, for there is a logical contradiction of terminology due to the fact that the word 'Son' predicates time and the involvement of creativity. Christ, the Scripture tells us, as the Logos, is timeless, '...the Word was in the beginning,' not the Son!” (Walter R. Martin, The Kingdom of the Cults, p. 103)

VI. Church perpetuity / Baptist antiquity.

- A. We affirm that our church(es) are the lineal descendants of that church which was reformed by Jesus Christ and built upon Him to endure without interruption.

ACT 7:38; HEB 9:10; MAT 16:18.

- 1. This demands that there has been on earth since the days of the Apostles a continual existence of local church(es) built by a perpetuated ministry immersing believers in water, the Biblical building system of a true church. **ACT 2:38-47.**
- 2. This also demands that historical Baptist(ic) churches are the only churches that can possibly be of this character, antedating such later inventions as the Roman Catholic Church and her Protestant daughters.
- 3. For a modern church to deny that it is a perpetuation of the church which Christ left in Jerusalem to be His kingdom on this earth is to deny its validity as a true church of Jesus Christ.
- 4. NOTE: We do not hold that a true church would necessarily have the word “Baptist” in its name or be doctrinally flawless.
 - a. No church in Scripture had the word “Baptist” in its name and churches were identified only as churches of particular locations.
 - b. But a church must be baptistic in practice: building repentant believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ together in a spiritual body by baptism in water.
 - c. No church springing from the Roman Catholic system or any other post-apostolic start-up would qualify as a true church even if had the word “Baptist” in its name.
 - d. A true church might be misnamed by its enemies (**ACT 24:5**), or by ignorant parties, or choose a unique name for itself.
- B. Note these following testimonies to Baptist antiquity:
 - 1. “For not so long ago I read the edict of the other prince who lamented the fate of the Anabaptists who, so we read, were pronounced heretics twelve hundred years ago and deserving of capital punishment. He wanted them to be heard and not taken as condemned without a hearing.” (The letters of Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius, Libe Epistolarum 150, titled “Alberto Bavariae Duci” in about 1563 A.D., translated by Carolinne White, Ph. D., Oxford University, Head of Oxford Latin)
 - 2. Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer said (circa 1525): “The institution of anabaptism is no novelty, but for 1300 years has caused great disturbance in the Church, and has acquired such a strength that the attempt in this age to contend with it appeared

- futile for a time.” This dates Baptists back to at least 225 A.D.
3. “Again, we have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times the Mennonites, were the original Waldenses; and who have long in the history of the Church, received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered the only Christian community which has stood since the apostles; and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrine of the gospel through all ages.” (Encyclopedia Of Religious Knowledge)
 4. “It must have already occurred to our readers that the Baptists are the same sect of Christians that were formerly described as Ana-Baptists. Indeed, this seems to have been their leading principle from the time of Tertullian (born 50 years after the death of the Apostle John) to the present time.”
(Edinburgh Cyclopaedia [Presbyterian])

VII. The holiday issue.

- A. We affirm that the observance of such holidays (holy days) as Christmas and Easter are, at best, foolish, man-made substitutes for the way that God in the Scriptures ordained the birth, death and resurrection of His Son to be honored. At worst, such observances are rank disobedience to the plain commands of Scripture and are the assimilation of devil-worship.
 1. The observance of holy days was abolished with the coming of Jesus Christ and His New Testament. **COL 2:16-17 c/w GAL 4:9-10.**
 2. Human additions / traditions displace God's order, cause His word to be of no effect and invalidate worship. **MAR 7:7, 9, 13.**
 3. Human additions / traditions are especially obnoxious to God when they incorporate heathen customs / idol sympathies into the religion of Christ. **DEU 12:30-32 c/w 2CO 6:14-18 c/w 1CO 10:18-22.**
- B. At one time or another, Quakers, Scotch-Irish, Methodists, Baptists, Mennonites, Brethren, Amish, Congregationalists, Presbyterians (Puritans) all rejected Christmas.
- C. Consider these statements:
 1. “The scriptures, both by precept and example, forbid the use of any form of worship which is not ordained by God. Since Christmas has no biblical warrant, it should be rejected, even if there were no other reason to question it. The reader who doubts this conclusion, should take a thoughtful look at scriptural passages which demonstrate the unlawfulness of adding to the worship of God through the innovations of man. (See Deut. 4:2; 12:29-32; Lev. 10:1-2; 1 Sam. 13:9-13; Col. 2:16.) Christmas has brought an infusion of paganism into the Church. This kind of admixture was prohibited among God's people in both the Old and New Testaments. The people of God must purge such corruptions from their midst. ‘What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?...come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you’ (2Cor. 6:16-17).”
(Kevin Reed, [Reformed] Christmas: An Historical Survey Regarding Its Origins and Opposition to It)
 2. “10. Moreover, we have ever regarded all the inventions of men as an unspeakable abomination before God; such as the festival days and vigils of saints, and what is called holy-water, the abstaining from flesh on certain days, and such like things, but above all, the masses.” (Waldensian Confession of 1120)
 3. “The ecclesiastical historian, Socrates, states with perfect truth that neither Christ nor His apostles enjoined the keeping of this or any other festival. The sanctity of

special times or places was an idea quite alien from the early Christian mind.”

(Encyclopedia Britannica, 9th ed., art. Christmas)

4. “Herewith I shall end this year---except to recall one more incident, rather amusing than serious. On Christmas Day, the Governor called the people out to work as usual; but most of the new company excused themselves, and said it went against their consciences to work on that day. So the Governor told them, if they made it a matter of conscience, he would spare them till they were better informed. So he went with the rest, and left them; but on returning from work at noon he found them at play in the street, some pitching the bar, some at stool-ball, and such like sports. So he went to them and took away their games, and told them that it was against his conscience that they should play and others work.”
(William Bradford, Bradford's History of the Plymouth Settlement, pp. 94-95)

VIII. The Sabbath.

- A. We affirm that the observance of one day in seven as an obligatory sabbath of rest was peculiar to the nation of Israel under the O.T. All sabbaths were then only temporary shadows of Jesus Christ and His rest to be observed by the Jews until their (the sabbaths) abrogation by His New Testament. **EXO 31:12-17 c/w COL 2:16-17.**
 1. If a Christian desires to dedicate a particular day of the week as one of rest for meditation on God, he is at liberty to do so. **ROM 14:5.**
 2. But to hold others in contempt for not doing so is to make oneself a judge of God's law, which makes no such requirement of N.T. saints. **JAM 4:11.**
- B. Consider these statements from others:
 1. “Hence, as the Apostle elsewhere says, 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ' (Col.ii 16, 17);... This is not contented with one day, but requires the whole course of our lives, until being completely dead to ourselves, we are filled with the life of God. Christians, therefore, should have nothing to do with a superstitious observance of days.”
(John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book II, p. 341)
 2. “41. We teach that in the New Testament God has abrogated the Sabbath and all the holy days prescribed for the Church of the Old Covenant, so that neither ‘the keeping of the Sabbath nor any other day’ nor the observance of at least one specific day of the seven days of the week is ordained or commanded by God, Col. 2:16; Rom. 14:5.”
(Augsburg Confession [Lutheran], Triglot, p. 91, Paragraphs 51-60; M., p. 66).

IX. No musical instruments in church worship.

- A. We affirm that the N.T. specifies congregational singing in church worship (**EPH 5:19; COL 3:16; 1CO 14:15; HEB 2:12; JAM 5:13**), and that musical instruments add an unscriptural element which cannot teach or admonish as God intended church music to do.
 1. Adding musical instruments to church worship assumes that the simple order of God (singing) was deficient, and the instruments therefore are not unlike the “strange fire” offered by Nadab and Abihu (**LEV 10:1-2**), i.e., *will worship* (worship according to one's own will or fancy, or imposed by human will, without divine authority, per O.E.D.). **COL 2:22-23.**
 2. The O.T. service had limited musical instruments as part of that system's *carnal ordinances* (**HEB 9:10**) but the N.T. is more gloriously of the spirit which gives *life* (**2CO 3:6-8**), which musical instruments do not have. **1CO 14:7.**

- B. Consider the following observations:
1. “Instruments of music, such as harps and psalteries, the church does not adopt for divine praises, lest it should seem to Judaize... Instruments of this sort more move the mind to delight than form internally a good disposition. Under the Old Testament, however, there was some utility in such instruments, both because the people were more hard and carnal, and needed to be stirred up by instruments of this kind as by promises of earthly good, and also because material instruments of this sort *figured* something.” (Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II. ii. 2, xci., A. ii., 4, *et conclusio*: Tom. iv., Ratisbona, 1884, p. 646)
 2. “Musical instruments in celebrating the praise of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews.” (John Calvin's Commentary, on **PSA 33**)
 3. John Wesley said, “I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen.” (Adam Clarke's Commentary, Vol. IV, p. 684)
 4. “I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them (musical instruments) productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity.” (Ibid.)
 5. Martin Luther “...called the organ an ensign of Baal.” (McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia, Vol. VI, p. 762)
 6. Charles H. Spurgeon did not have musical instruments in the worship at Metropolitan Tabernacle.
 7. Conybeare and Howson, scholars of the Church of England, said, “Make melody with the music of your hearts, to the Lord...let your songs be, not the drinking of heathen feasts, but psalms and hymns; and their accompaniment, not the music of the lyre, but the melody of the heart.” (Comment on **EPH 5:19** in Life and Epistles of St. Paul, Vol. II, p. 408)
 8. A Jansenist (order of Augustinian Catholics which included the likes of Blaise Pascal), when asked why there were no adornments or musical instruments in their place of worship said, “Because the purpose of church worship is to feed the sheep, not entertain the goats.” (Instrumental Music In Church Worship, p.?)
 9. “This mirth and gaiety in the worship would be very agreeable to carnal sensual minds, that are strangers to that spiritual worship which is due to God who is a spirit... That way that sense directs the most will go; there is nothing so bad which the careless world will not be drawn to by a concert of music, or driven to by a fiery furnace. And by such methods as these false worship has been set up and maintained.” (Matthew Henry Commentary on Nebuchadnezzar’s instrumental worship service, **DAN 3:5-6**)
 10. “It is remarkable that corruption of religion and morals advanced most rapidly in the line of Cain, where the greatest progress had been made in art and in science; thus showing that knowledge and civilization, apart from religion, have no power to purify the heart, or to preserve society from corruption.” (W.G. Blaikie, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1892, on **GEN 4:16-22**, note v. 21)
 11. “Instrumental music is permissible for a church under the following conditions: 1.

When a church never had or has lost the Spirit of Christ. 2. If a church has a preacher who never had or has lost the Spirit of Christ, who has become a dry, prosing and lifeless preacher. 3. If a church only intends being a fashionable society, a mere place of amusements and secular entertainment and abandoning the idea of religion and worship. 4. If a church has within it a large number of dishonest and corrupt men. 5. If a church has given up all idea of trying to convert the world.” (Benjamin Franklin, editor of American Christian Review, 1860.)

X. Feetwashing.

- A. We affirm that the example of saints humbly washing one another’s feet which the Lord Jesus Christ ordained in **JOH 13:4-17** is to be occasionally observed as part of our obedient service to Him and tokens of our servant-mindedness and need of regular spiritual washing from defilements. **PHIL 2:3; 1PE 5:5; 1JO 1:9.**
- B. Feetwashing is practiced by Primitive Baptists, Freewill Baptists, Mennonites, Seventh-Day Adventists, Churches of God and there is even a feetwashing ceremony in the Roman Catholic Church.
- C. Consider these statements:
1. “The action of Christ after the Last Supper (John 13:1-15) must also have invested it with a deep religious significance, and in fact down to the time of St. Bernard we find ecclesiastical writers, at least occasionally, applying to this ceremony the term Sacramentum in its wider sense, by which they no doubt meant that it possessed the virtue of what we now call a sacramental. Christ's command to wash one another's feet must have been understood from the beginning in a literal sense, for St. Paul (1 Timothy 5:10) implies that a widow to be honoured and consecrated in the Church should be one ‘having testimony for her good works, if she have received to harbour, if she have washed the saints' feet.’ ”
(Catholic Encyclopedia [online], art. Washing of Feet and Hands)
 2. “The Master ordained the service of foot washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christlike humility, and to unite our hearts in love.” (Seventh Day Adventist Confession)
 3. “We believe that Jesus Christ calls us to serve one another in love as he did. Rather than seeking to lord it over others, we are called to follow the example of our Lord, who chose the role of a servant by washing his disciples' feet. Just before his death, Jesus stooped to wash the disciples' feet and told them, ‘So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.’ In this act, Jesus showed humility and servanthood, even laying down his life for those he loved. In washing the disciples' feet, Jesus acted out a parable of his life unto death for them, and of the way his disciples are called to live in the world. Believers who wash each other's feet show that they share in the body of Christ. They thus acknowledge their frequent need of cleansing, renew their willingness to let go of pride and worldly power, and offer their lives in humble service and sacrificial love.” (Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective, 1995)
 4. “Christ washed his disciples' feet that he might signify to them spiritual washing, and the cleansing of the soul from the pollutions of sin. This is plainly intimated in his discourse with Peter upon it, Joh 13:6-11...” (Matthew Henry Commentary)

XI. The Millennium.

- A. We affirm that the church age in which we are living is the “last days” which shall end

with the visible coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and there shall be one resurrection of the dead, just and unjust, at which time He will destroy the present heavens and earth, judge all men and reveal a new heavens and earth for His redeemed. We look for no future “golden age” or “millennium” in this world, but for a new heavens and earth characterized by righteousness.

HEB 1:2; JOH 6:40; 5:28-29; ACT 24:14-15; MAT 13:24-30, 37-43; 2PE 3:10-14.

B. We affirm that the church of Jesus Christ in this world is the prophesied kingdom of God which was to come (**DAN 2:44**) and that its pilgrimage in this world until the return of Christ is the “thousand-year reign” of **REV 20**. This is also reflected in Catholic eschatology and among certain Protestants (including Presbyterian and Lutheran confessions).

1. “The evangelical accounts clearly prove how fervently the Jews at the time of Christ expected an earthly Messianic kingdom, but the Saviour came to proclaim the spiritual kingdom of God for the deliverance of man from his sins and for his sanctification, a kingdom which actually began with His birth. There is no trace of chiliasm to be found in the Gospels or in the Epistles of St. Paul; everything moves in the spiritual and religious sphere...”
(Catholic Encyclopedia [online], art. Millennium and Millenarianism)
2. “With the Augsburg Confession (Art. XVII) we reject every type of millennialism, or Chiliasm, the opinions that Christ will return visibly to this earth a thousand years before the end of the world and establish a dominion of the Church over the world; or that before the end of the world the Church is to enjoy a season of special prosperity; or that before a general resurrection on Judgment Day a number of departed Christians or martyrs are to be raised again to reign in glory in this world; or that before the end of the world a universal conversion of the Jewish nation (of Israel according to the flesh) will take place. Over against this, Scripture clearly teaches, and we teach accordingly, that the kingdom of Christ on earth will remain under the cross until the end of the world, Act 14:22; John 16:33; 18:36; Luke 9:23; 14:27; 17:20-37; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 12:28; Luke 18:8; that the second visible coming of the Lord will be His final advent, His coming to judge the quick and the dead, Matt. 24:29, 30; 25:31; 2 Tim. 4:1; 2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 9:26-28; that there will be but one resurrection of the dead, John 5:28; 6:39, 40; that the time of the Last Day is, and will remain, unknown, Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:32, 37; Acts 1:7, which would not be the case if the Last Day were to come a thousand years after the beginning of a millennium; and that there will be no general conversion, a conversion en masse, of the Jewish nation, Rom. 11:7; 2 Cor. 3:14; Rom. 11:25; 1 Thess. 2:16. According to these clear passages of Scripture we reject the whole of Millennialism, since it not only contradicts Scripture, but also engenders a false conception of the kingdom of Christ, turns the hope of Christians upon earthly goals, 1 Cor. 15:19; Col. 3:2, and leads them to look upon the Bible as an obscure book. (Lutheran Confession)
3. “Although amillennialists expect no millennial kingdom, this does not mean amillennialists deny a millennium entirely, as the terminology may seem to imply. Anthony Hoekema provides a concise amillennial interpretation of Revelation 20: Amillennialists interpret the millennium ... as describing the present reign of the souls of deceased believers with Christ in heaven. They understand the binding of Satan ... as being in effect during the entire period between the first and second comings of Christ, though ending shortly before Christ’s return. They teach that Christ will return after this heavenly reign.”

XII. Salvation.

A. We affirm that Adam plunged the whole of his posterity under the condemnation of sin, which they inherit through his loins and which leaves their nature totally depraved and unable to extricate themselves in any way from out of this condition of death in trespasses and sins. This condition exists in fallen man from conception and remains unaltered unless God of His own will freely gives a person a new heart and nature via a new spiritual birth. **ROM 3:9-19, 23; 5:12; EPH 2:1; PSA 58:3; 51:5; EPH 2:10.**

1. This total depravity negates the free agency of fallen man's will to choose or do right or even exercise faith in God. Natural man is only free from righteousness, not to it. Grace is free, not natural man's will. **ROM 6:20; 8:7-8.**
 - a. "X. Of Free Will. The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will." (The 39 Articles, Anglican)
 - b. "Of Free Will they teach that man's will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness, and to work things subject to reason. But it has no power, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2,14; but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the Word. These things are said in as many words by Augustine in his Hypognosticon, Book III: We grant that all men have a free will, free, inasmuch as it has the judgment of reason; not that it is thereby capable, without God, either to begin, or, at least, to complete aught in things pertaining to God, but only in works of this life, whether good or evil. 'Good' I call those works which spring from the good in nature, such as, willing to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to have a friend, to clothe oneself, to build a house, to marry a wife, to raise cattle, to learn divers useful arts, or whatsoever good pertains to this life. For all of these things are not without dependence on the providence of God; yea, of Him and through Him they are and have their being. 'Evil' I call such works as willing to worship an idol, to commit murder, etc. They condemn the Pelagians and others, who teach that without the Holy Ghost, by the power of nature alone, we are able to love God above all things; also to do the commandments of God as touching 'the substance of the act.' For, although nature is able in a manner to do the outward work, (for it is able to keep the hands from theft and murder,) yet it cannot produce the inward motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, etc." (Augsburg Confession, Article XVIII, 1530)
 - c. "Many Christians are under the mistaken notion that children are innocent, but the Scriptures teach differently: "The LORD said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imaginations of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis 8:21). David said, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Our text indicates that we are "by nature the children of wrath."

(Paul G. Humber, M.S., on **EPH 2:3**, Days of Praise, 2-28-01)

2. We also affirm that the Bible teaches that God, in view of man's fall and depravity, freely elected *only some* of them unto forgiveness, sonship and eternal life through Jesus Christ and predestinated them unto that before the world began, giving no consideration to any good work on their part, including faith.
EPH 1:3-6; ROM 8:28-30; 9:11-16; 2TI 1:9-10.
 - a. "God from eternity elected and appointed Christ to be the covenant head, mediator, and surety of his church, to redeem and save it. God elected also in Christ a great multitude, which no man can number, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, to holiness and eternal life: and appointed all the means necessary to accomplish this end. This election is eternal, righteous, sovereign, unconditional, particular or personal, and unchangeable. The election of grace wrongs no one : though God in righteousness left some persons unpredestinated, yet, he did them no injustice; they are in the same condition in which they would have been, if there had been no election; and if there had been no election of grace, no flesh would have been saved." (Calvinistic Methodist Confession, 1823)
 - b. "36. Accordingly we reject as an anti-Scriptural error the doctrine that not alone the grace of God and the merit of Christ are the cause of the election of grace, but that God has, in addition, found or regarded something good in us which prompted or caused Him to elect us, this being variously designated as 'good works,' 'right conduct,' 'proper self-determination,' 'refraining from willful resistance,' etc. Nor does Holy Scripture know of an election 'by foreseen faith,' 'in view of faith,' as though the faith of the elect were to be placed before their election; but according to Scripture the faith which the elect have in time belongs to the spiritual blessings with which God has endowed them by His eternal election. For Scripture teaches, Acts 13:48: 'And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed.'"
(Missouri Synod [Lutheran] doctrinal statement)
 - c. "V. Election: Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life---not because of foreseen merit in them, but of his mere mercy in Christ---in consequence of which choice they are called, justified and glorified."
(James P. Boyce [Southern Baptist] Fundamental Laws of the Seminary, April 30, 1858)
3. Since the depravity of man's nature forbids him from doing good to please God, and since exercising faith in God is such a good (**1JO 3:22-23**), we affirm that the sinner's faith is one of the *subsequent evidences and assurances* (not the cause) of being born of God (regenerated, recreated), having everlasting life, and being legally justified by Jesus Christ.
1JO 5:1; JOH 1:12-13; 5:24; ACT 13:39; EPH 2:10.
 - a. See quotes from The 39 Articles (Anglican), and from the Missouri Synod doctrinal statement, above.
 - b. Various Calvinistic orders (certain Protestant Reformed & Presbyterian churches) hold to this position.
 - c. Commenting on Cornelius's conversion, John Calvin noted, "The case of Paul we admit, but we hold that they are in error as to Cornelius; for it appears that he was already enlightened and regenerated [before Peter's arrival], so that all which he wanted was a clear revelation of the Gospel."

(Institutes of the Christian Religion, B3.24.10:1, brackets mine, TEB) Note here that Calvin allows for a distinction between *regeneration* and *conversion*.

d. “Observe, [1.] All those who in the fulness of time are effectually called and sanctified were from eternity elected and chosen to salvation. [2.] The election of God is of his own good pleasure and mere grace, not for the sake of any merit in those who are chosen. [3.] The election of God may be known by the fruits thereof... Their ready acceptance and entertainment of the gospel he preached to them were an evidence of their being elected and beloved of God. It was in this way that he knew their election.”

(Matthew Henry Commentary on 1TH 1:4-5)

e. “Thus, salvation is the priceless possession of those to whom Christ’s work of righteousness has been imputed, through faith. On the other hand, the assurance of salvation, accompanied by quietness and peace of heart, is “experienced” only by saved believers who practice the work of righteousness in their daily walk with the Lord. If we truly have salvation, then we ought to manifest the “things that accompany salvation... For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward His name... And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end” (Hebrews 6:9–11). We can, indeed, know that we are saved simply through faith in His work and His word (e.g., I John 5:13). Nevertheless, to know that one’s faith itself is genuine, God has given us this test of faith. “And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments” (I John 2:3). This is surely blessed assurance of salvation and a foretaste of glory divine! (Dr. Henry Morris, Days of Praise, 2-4-01)

f. “Election: 3. *Did God make this choice because he foresaw that these persons would be pious and good?* He did not; for the goodness and piety of any are due to the influences of the Spirit. 4. *Was it, then, because He foresaw that they would believe?* On the contrary, it is through his choice that they are led to believe. 5. *What, then, was the ground of that choice?* His own sovereign will. 6. *How may we know if we be of the Elect of God?* Only by perceiving that the Holy Spirit has led us to repentance and faith and loving obedience to God.”

(James P. Boyce [Southern Baptist], Catechism of Bible Doctrine)

B. We affirm that *regeneration* (new birth, quickening) is the action of God calling to spiritual life all the spiritually dead whom He elected and predestinated in Jesus Christ without regard to their obedience of faith or good works, whereas *conversion* is the positive response of the regenerated to the gospel by faith, repentance and good works. These are related but separate operations. Regeneration is salvation from the uncontested dominion of Satan and death in the powerless sinner and is a secure, permanent change; conversion is salvation of the regenerated sinner from the deceptions of Satan unto the truth of Christ and may be forfeited by sin. Conversion can only happen where regeneration has already occurred: life must precede thought and action.

EPH 2:1-3; JOH 5:24; ROM 8:29-30; TIT 3:5; 2TI 2:24-26.

1. Recall above that John Calvin allowed for the distinction between regeneration and conversion, and that regeneration preceded conversion in Cornelius.
2. “Yet, after all, the Scriptures also teach that regeneration is the work of God, changing the heart of man by his sovereign will, while conversion is the act of man

- turning towards God with the new inclination thus given to his heart.”
 (James P. Boyce [Southern Baptist], Abstract of Systematic Theology, p. 374)
3. “Conversion: I. This is the result of regeneration. The new heart is prepared to turn to God and does actually so turn. Without regeneration, the sinfulness of man keeps him away from God, causes him to set his affections upon self and his own pleasure, and to find gratification in things which are opposed to God and holiness. The regenerated heart has new affections and desires and is, therefore, fitted to seek after God and holiness.”
 (James P. Boyce [Southern Baptist], Abstract of Systematic Theology, p. 379)
 4. “5th. That God elected and chose, in His Eternal counsel, some persons to life and salvation, before the foundation of the world, whom accordingly He doth and will effectually call, and whom He doth so call, He will certainly keep by His power, through faith to salvation... 6th. That election was free in God, of His own pleasure, and not at all for, or with reference to, any foreseen works of faith in the creature as the motive thereunto... 8th. That all men until they be quickened by Christ are dead in trespasses (EPH 2:1); and therefore have no power of themselves to believe savingly (JOH 15:5). But faith is the free gift of God, and the mighty work of God in the soul, even like the rising of Christ from the dead (EPH 1:19). Therefore consent not with those who hold that God hath given power to all men to believe to salvation.” (Midland Confession of 1655)
- C. We affirm that the grace of God in saving His elect is broad enough to include even some who do not believe the gospel. This means that belief of the gospel of Jesus Christ is NOT an infallible concomitant of regeneration unto spiritual life as a child of God and the pardoning of sin. **ROM 11:28-29; 2TI 2:12-13.**
1. As noted earlier, most “free-will” Arminian-type professors reluctantly concede this concerning infants, idiots or even some unevangelized heathen. Calvinism tends to inseparably link regeneration with conversion (before, during or after) but even some Calvinists have recognized a separation.
 2. “Inward Illumination Does Not Eliminate External Preaching... At the same time we recognize that God can illuminate whom and when he will, even without the external ministry, for that is in his power;... it does not follow, however, that because God is not obliged to offer pardon to the unevangelized heathen, either here or hereafter, therefore no unevangelized heathen are pardoned. The electing mercy of God reaches to the heathen... It is not the doctrine of the Church, that the entire mass of pagans, without exception, have gone down to endless impenitence and death. That some unevangelized men are saved, in the present life, by an extraordinary exercise of redeeming grace in Christ, has the hope and belief of Christendom. It was the hope and belief of the elder Calvinists, as it is of the later... The Westminster Confession (X, 3), after saying that ‘elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when and where he pleaseth,’ adds, ‘so also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.’ This is commonly understood to refer not merely, to idiots and insane persons, but to such of the pagan world as God pleases to regenerate without the use of written revelation.”
 (W. G. Shedd [Presbyterian], Dogmatic Theology, ch. 1, par. 6-7 et.al.)
 3. “FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE? The Father imposed His wrath due unto, and the Son underwent punishment for, either: 1. All the sins of all men. 2. All the sins of some men, or 3. Some of the sins of all men. In which case it may be said: a. That if the last be true, all men have some sins to answer for, and so none are saved.

b. That if the second be true, then Christ, in their stead suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the whole world, and this is the truth c. But if the first be the case, why are not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins? You answer, Because of unbelief. I ask, is this unbelief a sin, or is it not? If it be, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or He did not. If He did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which He died? If He did not, He did not die for all their sins.” (Dr. John Owen, Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell and Vice Chancellor of Oxford University)

- D. We affirm that there is more than one salvation that comes from God. We see a distinction between *eternal* salvation which is *unconditional* by which God establishes through Christ *sonship* with His elect to deliver them from eternal wrath, and *temporal* salvation which is *conditioned* upon the faith and obedience of the elect which establishes or restores *fellowship* with the Father by saving him from Satan’s power over his mind to repent and acquire forgiveness. Temporal salvation may include salvation from troubles in this life. **2TI 1:9; 2:10; ACT 2:38-41 c/w 1JO 1:3; ACT 3:19; 26:18; PSA 51:9-12; 116:8.**
1. Temporal salvation may even be granted to some in spite of their lack of faith, as was the case with Lot, a compromised just man. **GEN 19:15-16 c/w 2PE 2:6-9.**
 2. “This is the beautiful testimony of the psalmist when the Lord answered his prayer: ‘The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul’ (Psalm 116:3,4). The Lord does, indeed, deliver our souls when we call upon Him for salvation in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved’ (Romans 10:13). Divine deliverance, however, is more than deliverance from death and hell. ‘Therefore the redeemed of the LORD... shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away’ (Isaiah 51:11). ‘And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying’ (Revelation 21:4). God delivers us from the PENALTY of our sins, from death and hell, right now, and then from all our sorrows and tears in the age to come, delivering us even from all the effects of sin forever. But He also delivers us right now from the POWER of sin in our lives, which would otherwise come again to cause our downfall even after we have been saved. Many a fearful Christian, afraid that he is unable to hang on to the Lord, needs to know that it is the Lord who hangs on to him! For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?’ (Psalm 56:13). Our Savior, who died for our sins and rose again for our justification, promises this. ‘My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall [anyone] pluck them out of my hand’ (John 10:27, 28).”
(Dr. Henry Morris, on **PSA 116:8**, Days of Praise, 10-8-00, caps mine, TEB)
 3. “If the question is asked: ‘Does a Christian not sin?’ then the answer is, no. ‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us’ (I John 1:8,10). Even the most godly Christian does sin occasionally—in thought if not in deed, in omission if not in commission. The God-given antidote is I John 1:9, ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’” (Dr. Henry Morris, Days of Praise, 7-5-01)
 4. “What it is to ‘walk in the light’ is explained by vs. 8-10... The presence of God brings the consciousness of sin in the nature (v. 8), and sins in the life (vs. 9, 10).

The blood of Christ is the divine provision for both. To walk in the light is to live in fellowship with the Father and the Son. Sin interrupts, but confession restores that fellowship.”

(C.I. Scofield, Scofield Reference Bible, footnote on **1JO 1:8-10**, p. 1321)

5. Commenting on the ‘destruction’ and ‘perishing’ in **ROM 14:15** and **1CO 8:11**, “It will appear from the context, that the destruction of the weak brother dehorted from, is not the eternal destruction of his person; but the present destruction, interruption, or hindrance of his peace and comfort... The perishing of this weak brother, is to be understood of, and is explained by, a defiling of his conscience, ver. 7; a wounding of it, ver. 12; and making him to offend, ver. 13, by the imprudent abuse of Christian liberty in those who had stronger faith, and greater knowledge, and by a participation in things offered to idols, in an idol’s temple, ver, 7, 10; and not of his eternal damnation in hell, which could never enter into the apostles’ thoughts.” (Dr. John Gill, The Cause of God and Truth, pp. 39, 40)
6. Commenting on **HOS 1:7**, “ ‘...[I] will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword...’ This, without doubt, refers to the temporal salvations which God wrought for Judah...” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary)
7. “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily,.... As before explained, 1Co 11:27 ‘eateth and drinketh damnation to himself’; or guilt, or judgment, or condemnation; for by either may the word be rendered; nor is eternal damnation here meant; but with respect to the Lord’s own people, who may through unbelief, the weakness of grace, and strength of corruption, behave unworthily at this supper, temporal chastisement, which is distinguished from condemnation with the world, and is inflicted in order to prevent it, 1Co 11:32 and with respect to others it intends temporal punishment, as affliction and diseases of body, or corporeal death...” (Dr. John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible, comment on **1CO 11:29**)
8. Refer to the accompanying document, “Temporal Salvation Witnesses” for further examples.

XIII. Other distinguishing points of faith which we hold can also be seen to have a corroborating testimony in the world.

- A. There is virtually no single point of our doctrine or practice which makes us to stand out as a sore thumb in professing Christendom.
- B. It is that we hold to an exceedingly rare combination of points that sets us apart as strange.
- C. Being strange or mad to the world may be the best thing sometimes. **ACT 17:20; 26:24.**