

# Articles of Faith

In issues of faith and doctrine, Reconciliation Church adheres to the spirit, biblical foundation, and theological conclusions of the [1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith](#).<sup>1</sup> Noting the historical nature of this document, some minor clarifications must be made in the addenda below.

A [modern translation of the 1689 LBC](#) is also available. It should be noted that, as with any historical document, the interpretation of the meaning of some parts for the original 1689 LBC are debated. Reconciliation Church does not endorse the interpretation of this modern translation when it comes to the explanation of election of elders to the local church through voting. A thorough explanation of Reconciliation Church's understanding of this issue is located below under *Of The Church*. This modern translation is meant to serve as a tool to better explain the majority of the original 1689 LBC.

Below are listed selected addenda to better explain Reconciliation Church's doctrinal stance on theological issues relevant to the cultural context in which Reconciliation Church does ministry.

## Addenda

### Of the Holy Scriptures

- Reconciliation Church recognizes that there are differing interpretive methods of the Holy Scriptures which have emerged since the writing of the 1689 London Baptist Confession. Most notably has been the interpretive method known as Dispensationalism. This is a method of Discontinuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The primary interpretive method employed by elders and teachers of Reconciliation Church will be a method of Continuity. This is a view that understands The Old and New Testaments as containing the same revelation of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament holds the promises of the coming Savior, while the New Testament explains the promises fulfilled (John 5:39; Heb. 10:1).

### Of Creation

- Reconciliation Church recognizes that the interpretation on the time and nature of the creation events in the first two chapters of Genesis can be contentious and divisive. Therefore, recognizing that many different views meet the requirements for orthodoxy, Reconciliation Church believes that the interpretation of 'day' at the time of creation may be open, but any interpretation that outright denies the order and events as untrue will be rejected.

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth designated 'LBC'



## Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment Thereof

- Chapter 6, Paragraph 1 states that God created man “upright and perfect.” While the Bible describes the creation of man as “very good” (Genesis 1:31), there is no hint that humanity was created perfect. Perfection would lead some to logically conclude that humanity would not be able to sin if created in perfection. However, humanity did fall into sin. Therefore, it is best to say that humanity was created very good rather than perfect.

## Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath

- Chapter 22, Paragraph 7 of the 1689 LBC describes how Christians ought to pursue a Sabbath rest on Sunday, the Lord’s Day. Reconciliation Church believes that all Christians should practice Sabbath rest, but that not all Christians are at liberty to practice such rest on the Lord’s Day. While it is convenient and obvious for most Christians to practice Sabbath rest on Sunday, freedom to practice Sabbath rest at another time during the week should be applied to those who are not able to conveniently practice this kind of rest on Sunday. This in no way should discourage the importance of Christians coming together for public worship on the Lord’s Day or for Christians practicing Sabbath rest at a time during the week.
  - The use of 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 to prescribe Sabbath rest exclusively on Sunday, the Lord’s Day, does not take into consideration the context of Paul’s message. The command Paul gives in these verses demands that the church in Corinth set something aside for the church in Jerusalem and not a command to set aside something for their own rest on the Sabbath. The context of these verses is not Sabbath rest for the church in Corinth.
  - Acts 20:7 describes how Christians were gathered together to break bread on the Lord’s Day, the first day of the week. While this is a description of the reality of how Christians were practicing Sabbath rest on the Lord’s, this is in no way a declaration of how Christians ought to practice rest. Therefore, Reconciliation Church cannot prescribe exclusive Sabbath rest on Sunday.

## Of Marriage

- Chapter 25, Paragraph 3 states that it is legal for all sorts of people to marry, but that those who are within the church ought not marry those outside of the church. Therefore, Elders that represent Reconciliation Church, due to the wisdom of scripture, will not marry persons of the opposite sex, nor will they marry Christians with non-Christians so that the Christian is unequally yoked.



# Of The Church

- Due to the standard of Continuity in interpreting the Holy Scriptures outlined above, elders of Reconciliation Church will be required to uphold this standard. This will disallow prospective candidates for eldership to hold a position of interpretive Discontinuity like Dispensationalism.
- The question of women serving the local church in the role of Deacon has been a controversial issue for some time. While the Scriptures are somewhat ambiguous on the gender of deacons in the New Testament, Reconciliation Church believes the Scriptures reflect the participation of women in the office of deacon. This is due to the fact that the Greek noun for deacon, *diakonos*, is applied both in a masculine and feminine context in the New Testament. Therefore, Reconciliation Church joyfully encourages women to discern the calling to this office.
- In Chapter 26, Paragraph 4 of the 1689 LBC, the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church is named the antiChrist, the man of sin, and son of perdition. Due to social, political, and religious circumstances of the time of writing the 1689 LBC, many Protestants believed the Roman Catholic Pope to be the literal antiChrist. While Reconciliation Church believes the Roman Catholic Church has exalted the Pope to an unbiblical position, this does not mean that the Pope in the 17th century, or now, is the literal antichrist. An gospel that exalts man over God is by nature anti-Christ. The Roman Catholic Pope has in now way claimed himself to be be God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).
- In Chapter 26, Paragraph 9 of the 1689 LBC, it is stated that men seeking the office of elder are "chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church itself." Deacons are, likewise, to be "chosen by the like suffrage." Many Baptists have taken this to mean that elders and deacons must be elected through a voting process by members of the local church. Reconciliation Church does not believe that the use of suffrage within the 1689 LBC should be understood in such a way given a few arguments.
  - While it is difficult to discern exactly what the writers of the confession meant by their use of 'suffrage,' other texts of the time period have suffrage meaning "consent" or "voice" or "help".
  - The Savoy Declaration, which is a slightly earlier document (1685) of common descent from the Westminster Confession of Faith, is the reformed document most closely associated with congregational polity. In the appended section meant for congregational polity of the declaration entitled *The Institution of Churches, and the Order Appointed in Them by Jesus Christ*, Paragraph 11 matches the language of Chapter 26, Paragraph 9 of the 1689 LBC in that elders and deacons are chosen by the common suffrage of the church. However, Paragraph 12 of the appended section in Savoy notes: "The essence of this call of a pastor, teacher or elder unto office, consists in the election of the church, together with his acceptance of it, and separation by fasting and prayer." While Savoy clearly notes the election of elders through methods of congregational voting, the 1689 LBC makes no such argument.



- Given that Reconciliation Church does not believe the Biblical evidence supports congregational voting for the offices of ministry (see Section 8, Parts 2 and 3), and that the context of suffrage at the time of the writing of the 1689 Confession more likely meant congregational affirmation than voting, Reconciliation Church upholds the idea of Chapter 26, Paragraph 9 of the 1689 LBC to mean that elders and deacons should be appointed by prayer and affirmation and not through voting.

## Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

- Reconciliation Church believes that the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, both appointed by the Lord Jesus, are not merely dead practices meant to be performed by duty, but also serve as signs that communicate a spiritual relation or communion between the sign and the thing signified (Mat 26:27-28; Tts 3:5). This means that the ordinances communicate a type of sacred grace towards the Church. These duties can be mutually referred to as ordinance or sacrament.
- The grace that is communicated by these ordinances or sacraments is not granted by any power within them; nor is the efficacy of the ordinance or sacrament based on the spiritual piety or intention of the person who administers these sacred practices. This grace is only established through the work of the Holy Spirit (Mat 3:11; 1 Cor 12:13) and the institution of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mat 26:27-28; 28:19-20).

## Of the Last Judgment (Eschatology)

- Reconciliation Church recognizes there are numerous views orthodox Christians hold regarding different elements to understanding the end times. Some of these elements are: understanding of biblical covenants, interpretive continuity between the Old Testament and New Testament, timing of eschatological events, and understanding of the composition of the Church and Israel. As stated above, elders of Reconciliation Church hold to an interpretive view on Continuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Because of this requirement for eldership, eschatological views that promote discontinuity between the two testaments (Dispensationalism) will be generally avoided in promotion within Reconciliation Church except for informational/teaching purposes.
- Persons who desire membership with Reconciliation Church and hold views of Dispensationalism are in no way restricted from becoming members of Reconciliation Church, but must understand that elders of Reconciliation Church will not teach from such an interpretive point of view.

