



**Affirmation
2010**

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PREFACE

The idea for an “Affirmation” was conceived in 2008 within the Bible League Trust and as a result of conversations about what has been described as “the changing face of Evangelicalism” and even “the crumbling of Evangelicalism.” Tragically, in recent years, there has been such an unprecedented decline, both in faith and in practice, that many of us no longer recognise “modern Evangelicalism” as the faith in which we were brought up or as the faith to which we still firmly adhere.

In not a few churches there has been a serious departure from Biblical truth. The doctrine preached from many pulpits has been diluted, and even adulterated; worship has undergone a change so radical as to become almost entertainment, wholly devoid of that awe and reverence which befits the worship of our holy, glorious and majestic God. Sadly it has to be added that the behaviour of many who profess the true faith is hardly distinguishable from that of worldly men and women.

Discerning persons will observe that it is *conservative* Evangelicalism, with its emphasis on Biblical truth, holy living and heart experience, which has suffered most in the grievous decline in the latter part of the twentieth century.

It is hoped that this Affirmation, under the good hand of God, will become a standard to which truly conservative men might rally. There has already been an encouraging response and enthusiastic support for it. The Affirmation may be a means of alerting believers to the deteriorating state of things and informing them of the way back from compromise to faithfulness and blessing. It may also be a means of enabling those who

presently grieve over the corruption of our churches to re-group (but not in any formal, denominational way) and to take their stand (identifying with like-minded men and women) for the things once commonly held among us and which desperately need to be maintained and defended again.

Donald Cargill, the Covenanter and martyr, once said: “I have followed holiness, I have taught truth, and *I have been most in the main things*”. Those last words are particularly striking and seem to sum up what the Affirmation is all about. It does not deal with matters on which genuine Evangelicals might differ one from another (for example, in matters of church government and the sacraments), but it does seek to be “*most in the main things.*”

History and experience show very clearly that the best of churches can quickly and sadly lose their conservative evangelical identity *unless* there is a strong theological document to which they sincerely give adherence. Saying this, we are aware that even when such a document is in place, unbelief can bring insincerity, and ultimately, defection. But even though that is true, it does not remove from us the responsibility, in an evil day, of declaring both where evangelicals should stand and protesting against the errors and the false ways which are being blindly followed by so many. God, in His great mercy and grace, may be pleased so to use a faithful declaration to halt further slide into apostasy and even to recover true religion in professing Christian churches. In these matters, as in all things, we are utterly dependent upon the favour of God and the gracious working of His Holy Spirit.

The Affirmation is not now associated with any individual or any particular society or organization. It is the common possession of all who can, out of love for the truth, identify with its content and with its emphasis. It will be a blessed thing if the Lord moves

the hearts of true, conservative evangelicals so that they once again stand together for vital and non-negotiable truth.

As a document, the Affirmation differs from other like statements in several particulars: first of all it concentrates on truth presently being undermined in our churches; secondly, it deals with the outworking of doctrine in practical Christian living; and thirdly, it emphasises genuine Christian experience – and this last aspect is without doubt of the utmost importance in these spiritually lifeless times.

We appeal to all who love and still adhere to “the old paths” to identify with this Affirmation and so to stand shoulder to shoulder with us in defence of *vital* Christianity and godliness.

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Affirmation 2010

In view of the present violent opposition from the adversary of God and man, and the evident confusion and grave departure from Biblical Truth in the professing Church, we believe it laid upon us to make solemn affirmation of the doctrine we seek firmly to believe and strenuously to maintain. It is understood that this Affirmation does not cover every tenet of the Faith once delivered to us, but statement is herein made, and emphasis given, to the doctrine particularly assailed at the present time. Aware, as we certainly are, of our own great weakness, and depending as always upon the support and strength of our faithful God, we unitedly make solemn and public testimony to vitally important truth, while at the same time firmly rejecting the errors and novelties which are contrary to them. We call upon all who love the Truth to join with us in making this formal affirmation of Faith, and we pray God to use it to the overthrow of false doctrine and practice.

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.”

Isaiah 59:19

1. Infallibility of Scripture

We affirm that God has supernaturally revealed to man objective truth. General revelation comes through the universe God has made¹ and through the nature of man, made in God’s image.² But special revelation has been given in a variety of ways (by angels, dreams, voices, and the like), climaxing in the revelation of God in Christ, which is both perfect and complete.³ This

revelation has been permanently secured in the scriptural record by the process of inspiration, whereby God “breathed out”, or caused to proceed from Him, the writings which now make up the Holy Bible.⁴ The resultant product was the *infallible* Word of God, *without any mixture of error in either doctrine or in fact.*⁵ The 66 books of the Bible were recognized by the Lord’s people as inspired and, by these books’ own testimony, they became the divine rule by which all beliefs and practices were to be tried and tested.⁶ God, by His singular care and providence, has preserved His written Word.⁷ The authentic and preserved Texts are the *Hebrew Masoretic* and *Greek Received Texts*, and these are the Texts which underlie the *Authorized Version*, which is by far the best and most accurate English translation of God’s infallible and inerrant Word currently in use.

We reject modern and unfaithful versions, based upon corrupted texts and making free use of dynamic equivalence in the translation.

¹ Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:18-23 ² Genesis 1:26; Romans 2:14,15; ³ John 1:14; Hebrews 1:1, 2 ⁴ 2 Timothy 3:16,17; Hebrews 3:7 ⁵ Psalm 119:160; Daniel 10:21; John 10:35 ⁶ Isaiah 8:20; 34:16; Matthew 22:29; Acts 17:2 ⁷ Psalm 119:152,160; Isaiah 40:8; 59:21; Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:24,25

2. The Trinity

We affirm that there is only one living and true God.¹ Although incomprehensible in His essence and nature,² this God is revealed in Scripture to be pure Spirit,³ of infinite or absolute perfection,⁴ and eternally subsisting in (or existing in the form of) *a Trinity of Persons:*⁵ the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁶ These Persons, or personal distinctions, within the divine Being, are mysteriously related to one another,⁷ and they equally share the same divine essence⁸ and are therefore equal

in power and glory.⁹ Each of the Persons in the Godhead has His personal, characteristic and distinctive property (or feature) within the divine Being: it is the property of the Father to *beget from eternity*¹⁰ (Paternity); of the Son to be *eternally begotten of the Father* (Filiation);¹¹ and of the Holy Spirit to *proceed eternally from the Father and the Son* (Procession).¹² These personal properties in no way imply precedence or succession (the idea of time is totally excluded) or superiority or inferiority (the idea of rank, or status, is also totally excluded), but rather they denote *relations eternally existing* within the unchanging Godhead.¹³ It was the Second Person of the Godhead (the eternally begotten Son) Who, in the time appointed, entered this poor world and became man,¹⁴ voluntarily taking to Himself a *real human body*¹⁵ and a *rational soul*.¹⁶ A supernatural and miraculous agency was at work in His conception,¹⁷ and being born, *not* in the way of ordinary generation, whereby original sin is propagated,¹⁸ He was free from the guilt and corruption of Adam's sin, and was altogether holy and pure.¹⁹ Thus it was that He was fitted to obtain redemption for His people.²⁰ The secured redemption is applied to elect sinners by no other than the Third Person of the Godhead (the Holy Spirit), Who ensures that such are spiritually and savingly blessed both in this life and in the life to come.²¹ The Lord Jesus Christ shall for ever unite in Himself the natures of God and man, the two natures existing in His one person.²² *This Triune God*, most blessed and most glorious, is *the true and only object of worship*, the One on Whom faith depends and to Whom obedience is rendered. By matchless grace, this is the God we own, the God we seek to glorify and the God we hope to enjoy to all eternity.²³

We reject the ancient heresies re-appearing in our day: Tritheism (which makes of the Three Persons, three Gods), Sabellianism

(which views the Three Persons as mere modes of self-manifestation), and Arianism (which teaches that the Son is an exalted creature and the Holy Spirit is simply a power produced by the Son). Of particular concern is the increasingly common denial of our Lord's eternal generation and eternal Sonship, and also the denial that the incarnate Lord possessed a proper human soul (His divine nature being said to take the place of the soul in the person of Jesus Christ). In our view, these are serious and dangerous errors, compromising either our Lord's Divinity or His true humanity; and we urge far more careful adherence to the Scriptures in these matters, and to those historic Creeds and Confessions which faithfully uphold the true and proper doctrine of God's Word on the profound but sublime truth of the Holy Trinity.

¹ Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Samuel 22:32; Nehemiah 9:6; Isaiah 43:10 ² Job 11:7-9; 26:14; Psalm 139:6; Proverbs 30:4; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 1 Timothy 6:16 ³ Isaiah 31:3; John 4:24; Hebrews 12:9 ⁴ Matthew 19:17; 1 John 1:5 ⁵ Genesis 1:1 – “God” translates “Elohim”, which is plural in form (cf. Ecclesiastes 12:1 – literally, “thy Creators”), 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Numbers 6:24-26; Psalm 115:9-11; Isaiah 6:3; Daniel 9:19 ⁶ Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 5:7; Revelation 1:4,5 ⁷ Psalm 110:1; Isaiah 48:16; 61:1; 63:7-10; Daniel 9:19; Matthew 3:16-17; 11:27; John 3:35; 14:16,17, 26; 15:26; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 2:23 ⁸ The Father – Matthew 11:25; Romans 15:6; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 1:1,3. The Son – Psalm 45:6 (cf. Hebrews 1:8); Isaiah 9:6; 40:3; Jeremiah 23:6; Matthew 1:22,23; John 1:1; 5:18; 10:30; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 3:16; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 5:11-14. The Holy Spirit – 2 Samuel 23:2,3; Acts 5:3,4; Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:22 ⁹ Song of Solomon 4:16; Ezekiel 37:9,14; Zechariah 13:7; Matthew 28:19; John 5:22,23; Philippians 2:6; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 1:4,5; 5:13-14 ¹⁰ John 5:26 ¹¹ Psalm 2:7 – “this day” is “eternity”; Proverbs 8:24,25; Micah 5:2; Mark 12:6; John 1:14,18 – “the only begotten of the Father”, “the only begotten Son”; 3:16; Romans 8:3; 1 John 4:9 – “only begotten” *before* “sent... into the world” ¹² Isaiah 61:1;

John 14:26; 15:26; Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6 ¹³ Matthew 11:27; John 17:25,26; Romans 15:19 ¹⁴ John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:7,8; 1 Timothy 2:5 ¹⁵ Luke 24:39; Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 2:14; 10:5 (cf. Matthew 4:2; Mark 4:38; John 4:6,7) ¹⁶ Isaiah 53:10,12; Matthew 26:38; Luke 23:46 (cf. Mark 3:5; Luke 10:21) ¹⁷ Luke 1:31,35; 1 Timothy 3:16 ¹⁸ Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:22,23; Galatians 4:4 (cf. Romans 5:12) ¹⁹ John 14:30; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 9:14; 1 Peter 2:22 ²⁰ Matthew 20:28; Galatians 4:4,5 ²¹ 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:4-7 ²² Romans 1:3,4; 9:5; Philippians 2:6-9 ²³ Deuteronomy 26:17; Psalm 48:14; Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Psalm 4:6,7; 16:11; 27:4; 43:4; 73:25,26; Isaiah 29:19; Revelation 22:3-5

3. The Doctrine of Grace

We affirm that the doctrine of grace common to the Reformed Confessions (such as Westminster, 1647; Savoy, 1658; and London, 1689) wholly conforms to Scripture, the only infallible standard for doctrine. That doctrine, commonly called *Calvinistic*, emphasizes the absolute sovereignty of God¹ and includes the truth of Total Depravity,² Unconditional Election,³ Particular Redemption,⁴ Irresistible Grace,⁵ and Perseverance of the Saints,⁶ but also embraces other revealed truth of *the historic Reformed Faith*. All such truth is held along with a godly concern for lost sinners, and we strongly believe in the need to fulfil *the evangelistic commission and preach the Gospel to every creature, in all the world*.⁷ This Gospel is good news to sinful men, through Jesus Christ, the only Saviour, therein set forth to be believed and trusted (through grace) that sinners may not perish, but have everlasting life.⁸

We reject Arminianism in all its forms, especially modern “decisionism” and “easy-believism”.

¹ Deuteronomy 4:39; Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 46:9-11; Daniel 4:34,35; Ephesians 1:11 ² Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21,22 ³ Romans 9:10-13; Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 ⁴ Romans 9:10-13;

Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 ⁵ Romans 9:10-13; Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 ⁶ Job 17:9; Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 1:5 ⁷ Mark 16:15,16; Luke 14:15-24; Romans 1:14-16 ⁸ Luke 2:10; John 1:12,13; 3:16,17; Acts 4:12; 13:26; 18:27; 1 Corinthians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Galatians 3:1,8; Ephesians 2:8,9; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 John 5:11,12

4. Six-day Creation

We affirm the *historicity* of the biblical account of Creation, found in the early chapters of Genesis.¹ Creation is *God's supernatural act*² whereby, in the beginning³ and at His Word or immediate command,⁴ He brought, out of nothing, everything into existence,⁵ and this in the space of *six literal, twenty-four hour days*.⁶

We reject the theory of evolution (both theistic and atheistic), even as we deny all attempts to interpret Genesis according to modern scientific theories, as in the case of the “Day-Age Theory” (making the six days to be long and indefinite periods of time).

¹ Genesis 1:1-31; 2:1-25; Matthew 19:4; 2 Peter 3:5 ² Job 38:4-6; Psalm 90:1,2; Isaiah 37:16; 44:24; 45:9 ³ Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 1:10 ⁴ Genesis 1:3ff; Psalm 33:6,9; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Peter 3:5 ⁵ Romans 4:17; Hebrews 11:3

⁶ Genesis 1:3-5ff; Exodus 20:8-11

5. Penal Substitution

We affirm Christ's atonement to be one of “penal satisfaction to the justice of God”. In the plan of redemption, He was appointed “a surety”, and as such was obliged to *perform a service or pay a debt for others*.¹ Fulfilling this engagement, in infinite love to His people, He not only rendered obedience to the Law's precepts but also suffered the Law's penalty of the wrath and curse of God.² Throughout His life, but particularly in His

death, He “bare our sins”, an expression which means that He took the punishment of all those sins;³ and so it is said that He, being “delivered for (*peri* – ‘on account of’) our sins”, actually “suffered for sins, the just for (*huper* – ‘in the stead of’) the unjust”.⁴ Indeed, it was thus that He became a “sacrifice”,⁵ our guilt being transferred to Him and, in consequence, His life being taken as the penalty due.⁶ There can be no doubt, therefore, that God inflicted upon Him – the sinner’s legal Substitute – “chastisement” and “punishment”, in order that we might be “saved from wrath through Him”.⁷ This is the glory of the Gospel and it is the only hope of poor, wretched sinners.

We reject the views of certain modern liberals (claiming to be “evangelicals”) who dare to suggest that “penal substitution” is a mere “theory” of the atonement, one which they blasphemously assert to be “cosmic child abuse”.

¹ Hebrews 7:22 cf. Genesis 43:9; Philemon 18 ² Isaiah 53:4,5; Galatians 3:13 ³ 1 Peter 2:24 cf. Leviticus 20:17ff ⁴ Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 3:18 ⁵ Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 9:26 ⁶ Isaiah 53:4-7 cf. Leviticus 1:4,5 ⁷ Isaiah 53:5,10; Zechariah 13:7; Romans 5:9

6. Justification by Faith Alone

We affirm justification to be God’s gracious act of declaring sinners righteous in the sight of His Law:¹ hence it is used in Scripture in contrast to accusation or condemnation.² This verdict, pronounced once and for ever, is not on account of any merit in the sinner, either present or future, but solely on the basis of *the righteousness of Jesus Christ*,³ that is to say, His *active* obedience whereby He perfectly fulfilled all the precepts of the Law,⁴ and His *passive* obedience whereby He endured the full penalty of the Law.⁵ This active and passive obedience was *vicarious*, in that it was an obedience offered by Him, as

the Representative of elect sinners, in their place and on their behalf.⁶ Justification is decreed from eternity, but the decree is fulfilled and takes place in the experience of the elect when, through grace, they *believe*, receiving Christ as Saviour in reliance upon the all-sufficiency of what He has done for them in life and death,⁷ and when Christ's righteousness, which perfectly satisfies the Law, is actually *imputed* to them, that is, reckoned to them or put to their account.⁸ God then pronounces His judgment or sentence of justification, pardoning all their sins (past, present, and future), or remitting the penalty due for them,⁹ and declaring them righteous before Him, as if they had obeyed every precept.¹⁰ This gives to believing sinners a title to eternal life;¹¹ and such justification is irrevocable.¹²

We reject the Romanist doctrine that infused righteousness in the sinner is meritorious and contributes to final justification, as we also reject the "New Perspective on Paul", "Auburn Avenue Theology" and "Federal Vision", which similarly compromise the doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone, suggesting that it is partly by works and, more particularly, by "faithful faith", "faithful obedience" or "(a mere external) covenant membership".

¹ Romans 3:24; 5:17; 8:33; Titus 3:7 ² Romans 8:33,34 cf. Deuteronomy 25:1 ³ Isaiah 45:25; Jeremiah 23:6; Romans 3:24-26; 5:9,18; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21 ⁴ Psalm 40:8; Romans 5:19; Philippians 2:8 ⁵ Romans 4:25; 5:9; 8:4 ⁶ Isaiah 53:6,11; Romans 5:15-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Galatians 4:4,5; Hebrews 7:22 ⁷ Acts 13:39; Romans 3:22,28; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:8,9 ⁸ Romans 4:6-8, 20-25; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21 ⁹ Romans 4:6-8; 8:1,33 ¹⁰ Romans 4:5; Ephesians 1:6 ¹¹ Romans 5:1,2,18,21; Titus 3:7 ¹² Romans 8:1; 30-34

7. Holiness of Life

We affirm that, because God is holy, He requires *holiness* in the

lives of all believers.¹ Made holy in Christ as to our standing, we are to live holily by Christ as to our state.² Holiness is, first and foremost, a matter of the heart,³ but inevitably it must show itself in conduct, both in words and in deeds.⁴ This will involve, for the Christian, *separation from all that is worldly and sinful*, so that our lives are markedly different from those men and women round about us.⁵ This is the purpose of God's grace,⁶ and therefore the continuing work of God in us;⁷ and although never perfect in this life,⁸ it will be blessedly perfect in the life to come.⁹ As the Lord's people, we therefore long for that future holiness when, completely hallowed by His will, we shall be perfected in the image of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.¹⁰

We reject the view of many professing Christians in these days that it is quite acceptable to follow the ungodly world in dress and in the ways they think, speak and behave.

¹ Isaiah 35:8; 1 Peter 1:15,16; 2 Timothy 2:19 ² 1 Corinthians 1:30; Hebrews 12:14; 13:12 ³ Psalm 45:13; Matthew 5:8; 23:25-28 ⁴ Ephesians 4:29; Titus 2:12 ⁵ 2 Corinthians 6:17; Philippians 2:15; 1 John 2:15,16 ⁶ Ephesians 1:4 ⁷ Philippians 2:12,13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23 ⁸ Romans 7:14-25; 1 John 1:8,10 ⁹ Ephesians 5:25-27; Hebrews 12:23; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24; Revelation 21:4,27 ¹⁰ Psalm 17:15; Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4

8. Christian Experience

We affirm the need for *experimental Christianity* or true *Christian experience*.¹ While knowledge is not to be despised, there is danger in an unspiritual pre-occupation with the intellect. The Reformed Faith, in its purest form, is the theology of the heart, and it should therefore deeply move us and profoundly change us.² Shown, by grace, God in His infinite sovereignty, majesty and glory, we are filled with a sense of *adoring wonder* and a sense of *great unworthiness*.³ We feel amazement that there

is mercy with Him, enabling Him to receive sinners.⁴ Trusting wholly in the Redeemer, through Whose blood that mercy flows to us, we seek the pardon which fills our souls with joy and peace.⁵ To the Lord our God we constantly turn for refuge and comfort, our lives being characterized by persistent prayer for the fulfilment of the divine promises.⁶ His Word is our daily meditation: in it we find sure counsel, and from it we derive all necessary strength and support.⁷ In our daily walk, we are aware that His all-seeing, watchful eyes are upon us, and we therefore ever seek to walk humbly with Him.⁸ At times, such is our sweet communion that we are lost in love and praise, and great is our delight on Sabbath days to draw near to God, in the way of His appointments, glorying in the fact that He is our blessed Portion, in this life and the next.⁹ His love for us not only begets love for Him, but also leads us to love His people with pure affection, and poor, lost sinners with earnest longing that they may be saved.¹⁰ In all these things, *our great end is that God may be glorified* – that everything concerning us, as chosen, redeemed, and called sinners, may redound to the glory of God.¹¹

We reject that representation of the Reformed Faith which is little more than assent to a particular theology and that bare academic Calvinism which makes even the Doctrine of Grace to appear dry and arid.

¹ Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 8:16; Philippians 3:10 ² Ezekiel 36:26; Acts 16:14; Ephesians 3:14-19 ³ Isaiah 6:1-5; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 4:7 ⁴ Psalm 130:3,4; 1 Timothy 1:12-14; 1 Peter 2:10 ⁵ Job 19:25-27; Micah 7:18; Romans 15:13 ⁶ Psalm 71:3; 119:49; 142:5; Jude 20,21 ⁷ Job 23:11,12; Psalm 1:1-6; Matthew 4:4 ⁸ Genesis 16:13; Psalm 16:8; 139:1-5; Micah 6:8 ⁹ Psalm 43:3,4; 48:14; 73:25; Lamentations 3:24 ¹⁰ Psalm 116:1; Romans 5:5; 10:1; 1 John 4:7 ¹¹ 1 Corinthians 6:20; Ephesians 3:21; 1 Timothy 1:17

9. The Sabbath Day

We affirm the perpetuity of the Sabbath. Appointed at the creation,¹ observed by the patriarchs,² maintained in the wilderness,³ incorporated in the Decalogue (or Ten Commandments),⁴ confirmed by the prophets,⁵ and predicted for New Testament times,⁶ it was upheld and enforced by our Lord.⁷ The keeping of the Sabbath involves the setting apart of “the seventh day”; and throughout the period of the Old Testament this was the seventh day of the week,⁸ but our Lord, while still keeping the seventh-day principle,⁹ changed the day from the seventh to the first day of the week, the day of His resurrection from the dead,¹⁰ and this day was therefore observed by the early Christian Church.¹¹ A Sabbath therefore *remains* for the people of God,¹² and we should keep it by resting from normal employment¹³ (except for works of necessity and mercy¹⁴) and from recreation¹⁵ (which may be perfectly lawful on other days¹⁶), and by spending the day, as far as is possible, in public and private worship, including spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, and conversation.¹⁷ The Sabbath thus kept will prove to be an inestimable blessing to individuals and to nations.¹⁸

We reject the anti-Sabbatarianism which prevails in some circles; and we deeply lament the great decline in Sabbath observance; and the fact that so many in the world – and not a few in the church – openly profane the Sabbath by unnecessary work, watching television, the practice of sport, frequenting restaurants, and holiday travel. Tragically, contemporary “antinomianism” – especially in the form of “New Covenant Theology” – encourages the sinful profanation and desecration of God’s Holy Day, and we abhor and denounce these theological errors as detrimental to God’s greater glory and man’s spiritual good.

¹ Genesis 2:3 ² Genesis 4:3 – “in process of time”, literally, “at the end of days” cf. 8:10,12; 29:27,28; Job 1:4,5 ³ Exodus 16:23,26 ⁴ Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15 ⁵ Isaiah 58:13; Jeremiah 17:21,22 ⁶ Isaiah 56:6,7; 66:23 ⁷ Matthew 24:20; Mark 2:27,28; Luke 4:16,31; 23:56 ⁸ Genesis 2:2,3; 4:3; Exodus 31:16,17 ⁹ Mark 2:27,28 ¹⁰ John 20:1,19,26; Revelation 1:10 ¹¹ Acts 2:1; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2 ¹² Hebrews 4:9 ¹³ Exodus 20:10; 34:21; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:14; Nehemiah 13:15-20; Jeremiah 17:21 ¹⁴ Matthew 12:1,10-13; Luke 13:16 ¹⁵ Isaiah 58:13 ¹⁶ Genesis 27:3; Nehemiah 8:10; Ecclesiastes 8:15 ¹⁷ Leviticus 23:3; Psalm 92 – title; Isaiah 66:23; Luke 4:16; Acts 16:13,14; 20:7 ¹⁸ Genesis 2:3; Isaiah 56:7,8; 58:13,14

10. Reverence in Worship

We affirm the concept of reverence for God.¹ Scripture distinguishes between *servile* fear which is little more than fear of God’s wrath and punishment² and *filial* fear which is an holy disposition formed in our souls by the Holy Spirit,³ whereby we are enabled properly to respond to God’s infinite excellence⁴ - His greatness and goodness.⁵ This is the grace which believers are called upon to exercise.⁶ It is awe, wonder, and *profound respect before God*,⁷ manifesting itself in a variety of ways, including strict regard to His revealed will,⁸ abhorrence of what is evil or unworthy,⁹ watchfulness over heart and life,¹⁰ sincerity, seriousness and diligence in His service,¹¹ withholding nothing from Him,¹² hope in the divine mercy alone,¹³ and a deep, strong desire for His presence and favour.¹⁴ This deep veneration for God must be *especially* evident in the church’s worship,¹⁵ wherein God is not only recognized as the heavenly Majesty, but He is also honoured and praised as such.¹⁶ Such fear is not at all incompatible with the worshipper’s love for God, but it does affect the character of that love, making it not carnal familiarity but reverential affection;¹⁷ neither is it incompatible with our joy

in God, but godly fear has a sanctifying and solemnizing effect upon it, transforming this emotion into something sober and serene, not expressed in worldly laughter but rather in spiritual rejoicing.¹⁸

We reject the spirit prevailing in many churches, with its tendency to turn worship into nothing more than worldly entertainment. It grieves us that, in God's House, ministers so often choose to dress casually and conduct themselves in an undignified manner, as it also grieves us that congregations are prone to follow their bad examples, becoming cavalier about God and His holiness and behaving in a most unworthy and unseemly manner. The reverence and awe of God have tragically all but disappeared in our day.

¹ Genesis 31:42; Psalm 33:8; Proverbs 1:7; Hebrews 12:28 ² Genesis 3:10; Matthew 25:24,25; James 2:19 ³ Deuteronomy 5:29; Psalm 86:11; Isaiah 11:2,3; Jeremiah 32:39,40 ⁴ Deuteronomy 28:58; Psalm 112:1 ⁵ Jeremiah 5:22; 10:6,7; Psalm 130:4; Hosea 3:5 ⁶ Proverbs 23:17; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 1:17 ⁷ Ecclesiastes 5:2; Isaiah 6:1-3, 8:13 ⁸ Psalm 112:1; Ecclesiastes 12:13 ⁹ Genesis 20:11; 42:18; Job 1:1; Proverbs 8:13, 16:6 ¹⁰ Romans 11:20,21; 2 Corinthians 7:1 ¹¹ Psalm 2:11; Philippians 2:12; Colossians 3:22 ¹² Genesis 22:12; Nehemiah 5:15; Isaiah 60:5 ¹³ Psalm 147:11 ¹⁴ Psalm 25:1,14; Acts 10:1,2 ¹⁵ Exodus 15:11; Psalm 5:7; 89:7; Acts 9:31 ¹⁶ Psalm 29:2; 50:23; 86:9; Revelation 14:7; 15:4 ¹⁷ Psalm 70:4; 73:25 ¹⁸ Psalm 2:11; Proverbs 28:14; Philippians 4:4

11. The Regulative Principle

We affirm the divine Law for worship, known as the *Regulative Principle*, which states that there must be positive authority of Scriptural appointment, or prescription, in the way of direct command or approved example, for all parts of the worship of God. This Law has been expressed in the statement, '*What Scripture does not prescribe, it forbids.*'²¹ We understand that statement

to mean that the parts of ordinary worship should only include the singing of scriptural and worthy praise;² the reading of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in a faithful and accurate translation;³ the offering up of prayer, which includes thanksgiving,⁴ confession⁵ and petition;⁶ the preaching and hearing of God's Word;⁷ and the Benediction or Blessing.⁸ In addition to these ordinances, there is also the administration of the two sacraments, or symbolical ordinances: namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper.⁹

We reject the introduction into solemn public worship of worldly entertainment, be it drama, mime, puppetry, art, dance, comedy, or pop-music (with its music groups and instrumentalists). Indeed, we deprecate so-called 'Contemporary Christian Worship', believing its innovations to be dishonouring to God, contrary to Scripture (as "will-worship"), and harmful to the testimony of Christ's professing Church.

¹ Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Matthew 15:3,9; 28:20; 1 Corinthians 11:2,23; Colossians 2:22 ² Psalm 95:1,2; Colossians 3:16 ³ Joshua 8:34,35; Nehemiah 8:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:27 ⁴ Hosea 14:1,2; Philippians 4:6; Hebrews 13:15 ⁵ Daniel 9:4; Matthew 6:12; 1 John 1:9 ⁶ Ephesians 6:18,19; Philippians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:1,2,8 ⁷ Acts 10:33; 2 Timothy 4:2 ⁸ Numbers 6:22-27; 2 Corinthians 13:14 ⁹ Matthew 28:19,20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

12. The Holy Ministry

We affirm belief in the holy Ministry. Even in Old Testament times, there were Ministers of the Word, both extraordinary and ordinary,¹ but in New Testament times the Ministerial Office comes very much to the fore.² Our Lord Himself was a Minister,³ and during the period of His public preaching and teaching, He ordained first the Twelve, and later the Seventy;⁴

but He intimated that others still would be involved in this work⁵ and, before ascending, He declared *a Ministry would exist to the end of time.*⁶ Thus, even now, the exalted Lord gives ‘pastors and teachers’ to His Church.⁷ Scripture insists that such men should be divinely qualified by a holy and blameless life, rational and experimental knowledge of the Truth, and ability faithfully and zealously to declare and to apply the Word of God.⁸ It is also required – indeed it is essential – that such be ‘called’ into the Ministry, which ‘call’ is two-fold: an inner call from the Lord (the divine will impressed on the heart, bringing real, deep and compelling conviction) and an outer call from the Church (involving election and then solemn ordination or appointment).⁹ It is clear that men only are called to the office, and so publicly to lead worship and minister God’s Word in the Churches;¹⁰ and whatever other officers may function in a Gospel Church (Ruling Elders or Deacons), their service can never be a substitute for a proper Biblical and stated Ministry.¹¹ Those duly appointed to the Ministry should perform their duties, not in any overbearing or domineering manner, but with a *humble, forbearing and compassionate spirit*, such as is ever found in the chief Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ.¹² Furthermore, according to the Scriptures, their Ministry is *not* priestly or sacerdotal (the order of Aaron having been set aside, and the order of Melchizedek being unique to the Lord Jesus Christ):¹³ instead, its chief functions are *the preaching or teaching of God’s Word and the administering of the ordinances.*¹⁴ The only divinely authorized public means for the instruction and conversion of sinners is the *verbal* proclamation of God’s holy Word¹⁵ and one of the greatest needs of the present time is for men to be raised up to preach the whole counsel of God authoritatively and faithfully,¹⁶ and for these preachers – and for this preaching – to be anointed and empowered by the Holy

Spirit sent down from heaven.¹⁷

We reject the view that the ministry ‘lies in common’, so that *anyone* may undertake public ministry in the church, even as we reject the idea that women may lead any part of divine worship or preach to the gathered church. We also repudiate any use of drama, mime, puppetry, and the like, as illegitimate and improper means to communicate God’s revealed Truth, since we believe God has appointed preaching as the proper way to make known His Truth to this needy world.

¹ Luke 1:70; 2 Peter 1:21; Deuteronomy 33:10; 2 Chronicles 15:3; Malachi 2:7; Acts 15:21 ² Acts 6:4; Ephesians 4:11,12; 1 Timothy 1:12 ³ Isaiah 61:1; Romans 15:8; Revelation 3:14 ⁴ Mark 3:13,14; Luke 10:1-16
⁵ Matthew 13:52; Luke 12:42,43 ⁶ Matthew 28:19,20 ⁷ Ephesians 4:11,12; 1 Corinthians 12:28 ⁸ Acts 20:27,28; Romans 12:6-8; 2 Corinthians 3:5,6; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:15,24; 4:1-5; Titus 1:4-9 ⁹ Acts 13:1,2; Romans 10:15; 1 Corinthians 9:16; Acts 1:15-26; 13: 1-3; 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14 ¹⁰ 1 Timothy 3:1; 1 Corinthians 14:34,35; 1 Timothy 2:11,12 ¹¹ Acts 12:17; 21:18; Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Hebrews 13:7,17 ¹² Matthew 20:25-28; 23:11,12; 1 Peter 5:3; 3 John 9-11 ¹³ Hebrews 8:13; 10:11,12 ¹⁴ Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 6:4; 20:7-11; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:1-4 ¹⁵ Luke 24:46-48; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 4:5 ¹⁶ Matthew 9:37,38; Acts 20:27; 2 Timothy 2:2
¹⁷ Luke 24:49; John 20:21,22; Acts 4:8,31; 1 Peter 1:12

13. Separation

We affirm the duty of making clear testimony to our Faith by separating from all error and therefore from all co-operation in religious activities with those who deny any cardinal truth of the Christian Faith.¹ Under the old covenant, God’s people were solemnly warned against associating with those who had seriously deviated from the Truth,² and when they did not heed such warning they were sternly reprovved, rebuked or judged.³

Under the new covenant, we are plainly told to *withdraw* from those who separate themselves from God’s inviolable Truth.⁴ It is also clear that we are to restrict fellowship – especially church, public fellowship – with those professing “evangelicals” who disregard the teaching of Scripture on separation, choosing to fraternize with those who question or repudiate Bible Truth.⁵ It is one of the greatest weaknesses of modern “evangelicalism” that it fails to take a separated stand from apostasy. Those representing true, conservative evangelicalism should stand together – and work together – for the Faith once delivered to the saints.⁶

We reject all Inter-Faith activities, even as we totally repudiate false Ecumenism which attempts to bring together those who cannot agree on the fundamentals of the Christian Faith, and Romanism which promotes an idolatry essentially and blasphemously heathen, and Modernism which violates the doctrine of the verbal and plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture, and New Evangelicalism which opts for a position of neutralism and appeasement, compromising distinctive and vital Biblical Truth.

¹ Romans 16:17,18; Ephesians 5:11; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10,11 ² Exodus 23:32; 34:12,15; Joshua 23:7 ³ Judges 2:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2 cf. 18:1; 20:35-37; Ezra 9:1,2,14 ⁴ Matthew 7:15; 15:14; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Galatians 1:8,9; 2:4,5,11; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 5:21; Revelation 2:14-17; 18:4 ⁵ 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14,15 ⁶ Acts 2:42; 2 Corinthians 13:8; Philippians 1:27; 3 John 5-8; Jude 3

14. Revival

We affirm the reality and glory of spiritual revival. This is not something of modern origin, for the Holy Spirit was present in Old Testament times,¹ and, on several occasions, in times of

spiritual declension, the Lord's ancient people were granted a *fresh manifestation of the Spirit's presence and activity*, which resulted in the *spiritual quickening and renewal of their souls*.² The prophets predicted that there would be further reviving visitations in this Christian era³ and they, along with the godly remnant, longed and prayed for such times.⁴ Pentecost saw the formal coming of the Holy Spirit to commence His new covenant activity in glorifying the exalted Christ;⁵ but for the early Christians that remarkable event did not preclude subsequent, overwhelming experiences of the Spirit's presence and power.⁶ Even so, the Church, in its present lifeless state, needs the Holy Spirit as never before in her history, to empower preaching, produce a fresh surge of spiritual life in the Church, and effect the conversion of multitudes in this ungodly world.⁷ The resultant revival will be characterized by a profound sense of God, true brokenness of heart, real soul-concern, diligent attendance at the means of grace, earnest supplication, sanctified Christian living, strong assurance, and sacrificial service.⁸ The Lord's people should *pray fervently* for a mighty, Holy Spirit revival, that God may be exalted and glorified in and through the blessing of His Church.⁹

We reject the idea that revival belongs only to the past, as we oppose the idea that it is something the Church can do without, and that all that is required is for the Church to continue testifying to the Truth. Evangelism and outward reformation, *in and of themselves*, are not the answers to the dreadful lack of spiritual vitality and vigour, and mere activism on the part of Christians will *never* effect the desired transformation of Christ's Church. However, we also reject the Charismatic Movement, which subordinates doctrine to experience, lays claim to extra-Biblical revelation through miraculous gifts, attempts to restore the extraordinary and temporary offices of Apostles and Prophets,

advocates the continuing need for signs and wonders, encourages gross irreverence and worldliness in public worship, approves a life-style incompatible with holy living, and promotes its own subtle form of ecumenism. This Movement, we believe, has done incalculable harm to Evangelical and Reformed Churches and, unhesitatingly, we both censure and repudiate it.

¹ Genesis 6:3; Exodus 28:3; Numbers 11:17; 1 Samuel 16:13; Nehemiah 9:20,30; Psalm 51:11,12; Isaiah 63:10; Haggai 2:5 ² Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 2 Chronicles 15:1; 20:14; 24:20; Nehemiah 9:30 ³ Isaiah 32:15; 41:18; 44:3; Joel 2:28,29; Zechariah 12:10 ⁴ Psalm 85:6; Isaiah 45:8; 64:1,2; Habakkuk 3:2 ⁵ John 7:39; 15:26; 16:13-15; Acts 2:1,2, 22-36 ⁶ Acts 4:31; 5:14; 11:24 ⁷ Luke 4:14; 24:49; Acts 1:8; 4:31-33; 6:7; 12:24; Psalm 72:6,7; Ezekiel 37:1-10; Romans 8:2; Psalm 110:3; John 3:8; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-7 ⁸ Ezra 1:5; Ezekiel 36:26; Habakkuk 2:20; Zechariah 12:10; Acts 2:37; 13:2,4,9; Romans 5:5; 8:26; 14:17; Ephesians 1:13 ⁹ Psalm 85:6; Habakkuk 3:2; Luke 11:13

15. Christ's Second Coming

We affirm the blessed hope of Christ's return.¹ It is *certain* that He will come again² and His coming will be personal, visible, mighty and glorious.³ At the appointed time, He will descend from heaven in fire, in the clouds, and in the company of angelic hosts.⁴ His appearance will be with a shout – to open graves and awaken the dead; with the voice of the archangel – to direct the gathering together of all believers; and with the trump of God – to instil profound reverence while solemnly summoning men to meet the Lord.⁵ His purpose then will be to destroy evil, to overcome His enemies, to deliver His people from every distress, to gather them together unto Himself, to change and glorify them, to reward faithfulness, and to inaugurate His kingdom.⁶ In the light of this event, it behoves men and women to make sure that they are *spiritually prepared*.⁷ Believers, in particular, should

be diligent in their life and service, watching, praying and waiting for the sight of their Redeemer.⁸ Their hope rests on nothing in this vain world. It rests altogether on the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ Who alone can bring to all His beloved people everlasting joy and peace.⁹

We reject any attempt to “spiritualize” the second coming. We repudiate the vain notion that suggests Christ’s second coming took place when Jerusalem was destroyed, or when the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost, or when the Kingdom of God was established by the Gospel. Just as strongly do we repudiate the erroneous view that Christ’s coming is something subjective, realized in believers’ present inner experience of the Lord Jesus Christ. All such interpretations mark a departure from the plain teaching of Scripture.

¹Titus 2:13 ²Matthew 16:27; John 14:3; Acts 3:21; Hebrews 10:37 ³Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 22:20; Matthew 24:27,30; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 1:7; Mark 13:24-26; Luke 21:27; Philippians 3:20,21; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14,15; Matthew 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26 ⁴Psalms 50:3,4; 2 Thessalonians 1:7,8; 2 Peter 3:10; Matthew 24:30; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; Revelation 1:7; Matthew 16:27; 25:31; Jude 14,15 ⁵1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 ⁶Matthew 24:31; 25:14-30; Luke 21:28; Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 15:51,52; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; 2 Timothy 4:1 ⁷Amos 4:12; Matthew 24:44; 25:1-13; Luke 12:40 ⁸Mark 13:33; Luke 12:36; 19:13; 21:36; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 2 Peter 3:11-14; 1 John 2:28; 3:3 ⁹Psalms 16:11; 1 Timothy 1:1; 1 Peter 1:13; 1 John 3:3

16. The Eternal State

We affirm the awesome reality of Eternity.¹ God dwells in eternity, where there is *perpetual duration*.² He is eternal in a sense that men are not, in that He had no beginning; but He is eternal in a sense that men are, in that He will live for ever.³ Created

in God's image and likeness, men live and they are destined for endless existence.⁴ It is true that death takes place, but souls *survive* that change and experience continued conscious existence, believers enjoying the bliss of heaven, and unbelievers, the torments of hell.⁵ A time is appointed, however, for the resurrection of the body; and then, after souls are re-united to their bodies, there will be *the Final Judgment of the Great Day*.⁶ God, in the Person of His Son, will usher in that Day when He will visibly appear, in the full possession of divine Might, and with the display of His Majesty.⁷ Millions will then be gripped with exceedingly great fear, as the created world is shaken and heaven and earth appear convulsed together.⁸ Summoned from all over the earth, and from the dark cavernous graves, men and women of every land and generation shall assemble before God's great Throne.⁹ Each, as if there were no other, shall be judged and face the awesome scrutiny of this decisive Day.¹⁰ All works, of every kind, will be divinely recalled and examined, and each person will be solemnly judged according to those works.¹¹ The sentence will be pronounced and impenitent unbelievers – who have never placed their confidence and hope in the only Saviour of sinners, whose names were never written in the Lamb's book of life – shall hear their dreadful doom pronounced, and their *appointed* and *eternal destiny* will succeed.¹² Although believers will eventually find themselves, as before, in the place of unspeakable glory and bliss, unbelievers will find themselves in the place of unspeakable misery and eternal torment.¹³ It is our firm conviction that every one of the Lord's believing people will *for ever enjoy* the presence of God, the holy angels and the whole company of the redeemed, while every unbeliever will *consciously experience*, with the whole company of the lost, in that place prepared for the devil and his angels, God's *unending* wrath

and punishment in inextinguishable fire.¹⁴ In the light of such an eternity, we must seek a personal and experimental knowledge of God and seek constant grace to serve Him faithfully throughout the period of our earthly lives.¹⁵

We reject as grievous errors the doctrines of: Annihilationism or Conditional Immortality, teaching the utter extinction of the wicked; Soul-Sleep, or Psychopannychy, teaching an unconscious state between death and resurrection; Purgatory, teaching an intermediate state of punishment in which souls are cleansed and purified; Second, or Future Probationism, teaching the opportunity to be saved after death; and Universalism, teaching that all men eventually will be saved. We believe these to be very grave departures from the Biblical Truth stated and maintained in our historic Confessions.

¹ John 3:15,16; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 5:9; 6:2; 9:15
² Isaiah 57:15; 1 Timothy 1:17 ³ Genesis 1:1; 21:33; Deuteronomy 33:27; Job 36:26; Psalm 90:1,2; 1 Timothy 6:13-16; Revelation 1:8 ⁴ Genesis 1:26,27; Matthew 10:28; 2 Timothy 1:10 ⁵ Genesis 35:18; 1 Kings 17:21,22; Job 34:14; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Isaiah 14:9,15; 57:1,2; Ezekiel 31:16; Luke 16:22,23; 23:42,43; Acts 1:25; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:21,23; Revelation 14:13 ⁶ Isaiah 25:8; 26:19; Daniel 12:1,2; John 5:28,29; 11:24; Acts 24:14,15; 2 Peter 3:7; Jude 6; Revelation 11:18 ⁷ Psalm 50:3; Matthew 16:27; Mark 13:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; Titus 2:13; Revelation 1:7 ⁸ Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Revelation 6:12-17 ⁹ Romans 2:5,6; Jude 14,15; Revelation 20:11-13 ¹⁰ Acts 17:31; Revelation 20:11-12 ¹¹ Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 2:5,6; Revelation 20:12 ¹² Matthew 11:20-22; Revelation 20:13 ¹³ Psalm 16:11; 23:6; 73:24,25; Matthew 8:11,12; John 3:36; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 21:8 ¹⁴ Psalm 23:6; Matthew 25:41,46; Mark 9:43-48; John 3:36; 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11; 20:10; 22:3-5 ¹⁵ Genesis 5:24; Job 22:21; 1 Corinthians 15:55-58; Titus 2:11-14; 2 Peter 3:11; Revelation 2:10

Soli Deo Gloria

“If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are attacking at that moment, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all battlefields besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.” Martin Luther

In view of the present violent opposition from the adversary of God and man, and the evident confusion and grave departure from Biblical Truth in the professing Church, we believe it laid upon us to make solemn affirmation of the doctrine we seek firmly to believe and strenuously to maintain. It is understood that this Affirmation does not cover every tenet of the Faith once delivered to us, but statement is herein made, and emphasis given, to the doctrine particularly assailed at the present time. Aware, as we certainly are, of our own great weakness, and depending as always upon the support and strength of our faithful God, we unitedly make solemn and public testimony to vitally important truth, while at the same time firmly rejecting the errors and novelties which are contrary to them. We call upon all who love the Truth to join with us in making this formal affirmation of Faith, and we pray God to use it to the overthrow of false doctrine and practice.

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.”

Isaiah 59:19