

# Articles of Religion for the Free Methodist Church

## ABOUT GOD

### I. The Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, the maker and preserver of all things. In the unity of this Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one in eternity, deity, and purpose; everlasting, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. (Genesis 1:1-2; Exodus 3:13-15; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-3; 5:19-23; 14:9-11; 16:13-15; 2 Cor3:14)

### II. The Son

His Incarnation – God was Himself in Jesus Christ to reconcile man to God. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, He joined together the deity of God and the humanity of man. Jesus of Nazareth was God in human flesh, truly God and truly man. He came to save us. For us the Son of God suffered, was crucified, dead and buried. He poured out His life as a blameless sacrifice for our sin and transgressions. We gratefully acknowledge that He is our Savior, the one perfect mediatory between God and man. (Matt 1:21; 20:20; 26:27-28; Luke 1:35; 19:10; John 1:1, 10, 14; 2 Cor 5:18-19; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:17; 9:14-15)

His Resurrection and Exaltation – Jesus Christ is risen victorious from the dead. His resurrected body became more glorious, not hindered by ordinary human limitations. Thus He ascended into heaven. There He sits as our exalted Lord at the right hand of God the Father, where He intercedes for us until His enemies shall be brought into complete subjection. He will return to judge all men. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Matt 25:31-32; Luke 24:1-7; 24:39; John 20:19; Acts 1:9-11; 2:24; Romans 8:33-34; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:1-4)

### III. The Holy Spirit

His Person – The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. Proceeding from the Father and the Son, He is one with them, the eternal Godhead; equal in deity, majesty, and power. He is God effective in Creation, in life, and in the church. The incarnation and ministry of Jesus Christ were accomplished by the Holy Spirit. He continues to reveal, interpret, and glorify the Son.

(Matt 28:19; John 4:24; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13-15)

His Work in Salvation – The Holy Spirit is the administrator of the salvation planned by the Father and provided by the Son's death, resurrection, and ascension. He is the effective agent in our conviction, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. He is our Lord's ever-present self, indwelling, assuring, and enabling the believer. (John 16:7-8; Acts 15:8-9; Romans 8:9, 14-16; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Galatians 4:6)

His Relation to the Church – The Holy Spirit is poured out upon the church by the Father and the Son. He is the church's life and witnessing power. He bestows the love of God and makes real the lordship of Jesus Christ in the believer so that both His gifts of words and service may achieve the common good, and build and increase the church. In relation to the world He is the Spirit of truth, and His instrument is the Word of God. (Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 2 Peter 1:21)

## ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES

### IV. Authority

The Bible is God's written Word, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit. It bears unerring witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word. As attested by the early church and subsequent councils, it is the trustworthy record of God's revelation, completely truthful in all it affirms. It has been faithfully preserved and proves itself true in human experience. The Scriptures have come to us through human authors who wrote, as God moved

them, in the languages and literary forms of their times. God continues, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, to speak through this Word to each generation and culture. The Bible has authority over all human life. It teaches the truth about God, His creation, His people, His one and only Son, and the destiny of all mankind. It also teaches the way of salvation and the life of faith. Whatever is not found in the Bible nor can be proved by it is not to be required as an article of belief or as necessary to salvation. (Deuteronomy 4:2; 28:9; Psalm 19:7-11;

John 14:26; 17:17; Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:21)

#### V. Authority of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New. Both Testaments bear witness to God's salvation in Christ; both speak of God's will for His people. The ancient laws for ceremonies and rites, and the civil precepts for the nation Israel are not necessarily binding on Christians today. But, on the example of Jesus we are obligated to obey the moral commandments of the Old Testament. The books of the Old Testament are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. (Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 10:25-28; John 5:39, 46-47; Acts 10:43; Galatians 5:3-4; 1 Peter 1:10-12)

#### VI. New Testament

The New Testament fulfills and interprets the Old Testament. It is the record of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is God's final word regarding man, his sin, and his salvation, the world, and destiny. The books of the New Testament are: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter,

2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation. (Matthew 24:35; Mark 8:38; John 14:24; Hebrews 2:1-4; 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 John 2:2-6; Rev 21:5; 22:19)

#### ABOUT MAN

#### VII. A Free Moral Person

God created man in His own image, innocent, morally free, and responsible to choose between good and evil, right and wrong. By the sin of Adam, man as the offspring of Adam is corrupted in his very nature so that from birth he is inclined to sin. He is unable by his own strength and work to restore himself in right relationship with God and to merit eternal salvation. God, the Omnipotent, provides all the resources of the Trinity to make it possible for man to respond to His grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. By God's grace and help man is enabled to do good works with a free will. (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 51:5; 130:3; Romans 5:17-19; Ephesians 2:8-10)

#### VIII. Law of Life and Love

God's law for all human life, personal and social, is expressed in two divine commands: Love the Lord God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself. These commands reveal what is best for man in his relationship with God, persons, and society. They set forth the principles of human duty in both individual and social action. They recognize God as the only Sovereign. All men as created by Him and in His image have the same inherent rights regardless of sex, race, or color. Men should therefore give God absolute obedience in their individual, social, and political acts. They should strive to secure to everyone respect for his person, his rights, and his greatest happiness in the possession and exercise of the right within the moral law. (Matthew 22:35-40; John 15:17; Galatians 3:28; 1 John 4:19-21)

#### IX. Good Works

Good works are the fruit of faith in Jesus Christ, but works cannot save us from our sins nor from God's judgement. As expressions of Christian faith and love, our good works performed with reverence and

humility are both acceptable and pleasing to God. However, good works do not earn God's grace. (Matthew 5:16; 7:16-20; Romans 3:27-28; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 1:8-9; Titus 3:5)

## ABOUT SALVATION

### X. Christ's Sacrifice

Christ offered once and for all the one perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. No other satisfaction for sin is necessary; none other can atone. (Luke 24:46-8; John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:8-11; Galatians 2:16; 3:2-3; Ephesians 1:7-8; 2:13; Hebrews 9:11-13, 25-26; 10:8-14)

### XI. The New Life in Christ

A new life and a right relationship with God are made possible through the redemptive acts of God in Jesus Christ. God, by His Spirit, acts to impart new life and put us into a relationship with Himself as we repent and our faith responds to His grace. Justification, regeneration, and adoption speak significantly to entrance into and continuance in the new life. (John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Acts 13:38-39; Romans 8:15-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 3:9-10)

**Justification** – Justification is a legal term that emphasizes that by our new relationship in Jesus Christ we are in fact accounted righteous, being freed from both the guilt and the penalty of our sins. (Psalm 32:1-2; Acts 10:43; Romans 3:21-26, 28; 4:2-5; 5:8-9; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Philippians 3:9)

**Regeneration** – Regeneration is a biological term which illustrates that by our new relationships in Christ we do in fact have a new life and a new spiritual nature capable of faith, love, and obedience to Christ Jesus as Lord. The believer is born again. He or she is a new creation. The old life is past; a new life is begun. (Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 5:24; Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10; Titus 3:4-5; 1 Peter 1:23)

**Adoption** – Adoption is a filial term full of warmth, love, and acceptance. It denotes that by our new relationship in Christ we have become His wanted children freed from the mastery of both sin and Satan. The believer has the witness of the Spirit that he or she is a child of God. (Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:5-6; 1 John 3:1-3)

### XII. Entire Sanctification

Entire sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to regeneration, by which the fully consecrated believer, upon exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ, is cleansed in that moment from all inward sin and empowered for service. The resulting relationship is attested by the witness of the Holy Spirit and is maintained by faith and obedience. Entire sanctification enables the believer to love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, and his neighbor as himself, and it prepares him for greater growth in grace. (Leviticus 20:7-8; John 14:16-17; 17:19; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 15:8-9; Romans 5:3-5; 8:12-17; 12:1-2; 1 Cor 6:11; 12:4-11; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Thess 4:7; 5:23-24; 2 Thess 2:13; Hebrews 10:14)

### XIII. Restoration

The Christian may be sustained in a growing relationship with Jesus as Savior and Lord. However, he may grieve the Holy Spirit in the relationships of life without returning to the dominion of sin. When he does, he must humbly accept the correction of the Holy Spirit, trust in the advocacy of Jesus, and mend his relationships. The Christian can sin willfully and sever his relationship with Christ. Even so by repentance before God, forgiveness is granted and the relationship with Christ restored, for not every sin is the sin against the Holy Spirit and unpardonable. God's grace is sufficient for those who truly repent and, by His enabling, amend their lives. However, forgiveness does not give the believer liberty to sin and escape the consequences of sinning. God has given responsibility and power to the church to restore a penitent believer through loving reproof, counsel, and acceptance. (Matt 12:31-32; 18:21-22; Romans 6:1-2; Galatians 6:1; 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2; 5:16-17; Rev 2:5; 3:19-20)

## ABOUT THE CHURCH

#### XIV. The Church

The church is created by God; it is the people of God. Christ Jesus is its Lord and Head; the Holy Spirit is its life and power. It is both divine and human, heavenly and earthly, ideal and imperfect. It is an organism, not an unchanging institution. It exists to fulfil the purposes of God in Christ. It redemptively ministers to persons. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that it should be holy and without blemish. The church is a fellowship of the redeemed and the redeeming, preaching the Word of God and administering the sacraments according to Christ's instruction. The Free Methodist Church purposes to be representative of what the church of Jesus Christ should be on earth. It therefore requires specific commitment regarding the faith and life of its members. In its requirements it seeks to honour Christ and obey the written Word of God. (Matt 16:15-18; 18:17; Acts 2:41-47; 9:31; 12:5; 14:23-26; 15:22; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 11:23; 12:28; 16:1; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:9-10; 5:22-23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:14-15)

#### XV. The Language of Worship

According to the Word of God and the custom of the early church, public worship and prayer and the administration of the sacraments should be in a language understood by the people. The Reformation applied this principle to provide for the use of the common language of the people. It is likewise clear that the Apostle Paul places the strongest emphasis upon rational and intelligible utterance in worship. We cannot endorse practices which plainly violate these scriptural principles. (Nehemiah 8:5, 6, 8; Matthew 6:7; 1 Corinthians 14:6-9; 1 Corinthians 14:23-25)

#### XVI. The Holy Sacraments

Water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church commanded by Christ. They are means of grace through faith, tokens of our profession of Christian faith, and signs of God's gracious ministry toward us. By them, He works within us to quicken, strengthen, and confirm our faith. (Matthew 26:26-29; 28:19; Acts 22:16; Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-26; Galatians 3:27)

Baptism – Water baptism is a sacrament of the church, commanded by our Lord, signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ to be administered to believers, as declaration of their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Baptism is a symbol of the new covenant of grace as circumcision was the symbol of the old covenant; and, since infants are recognized as being included in the atonement, we hold that they may be baptized upon the request of parents or guardians who shall give assurance for them of necessary Christian training. They shall be required to affirm the vow for themselves before being accepted into church membership. (John 3:5; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12-17; 9:18; 16:33; 18:8; 19:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27-29; Colossians 2:11-12; Titus 3:5)

The Lord's Supper – The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death. To those who rightly, worthily, and with faith receive it, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ. The supper is also a sign of the love and unity that Christians have among themselves. Christ, according to His promise, is really present in the sacrament. But His body is given, taken, and eaten only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. No change is effected in the element; the bread and wine are not literally the body and blood of Christ. Nor is the body and blood of Christ literally present with the elements. The elements are never to be considered objects of worship. The body of Christ is received and eaten in faith. (Mark 14:22-24; John 6:53-58; Acts 2:46; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8; 10:16; 11:20, 23-29)

#### ABOUT LAST THINGS

#### XVII. The Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is a prominent Bible theme providing the Christian with both his task and hope. Jesus announced its presence. The kingdom is realized now as God's reign is established in the hearts and lives of believers. The church, by its prayers, example, and proclamation of the gospel, is the appointed and appropriate instrument of God in building His kingdom. But the kingdom is also future and is related to the return of Christ when judgment will fall upon the present order. The enemies of Christ will be subdued; the reign of God will be established; a total cosmic renewal which is both material and moral shall occur; and

the hope of the redeemed will be fully realized. (Matthew 6:10, 19-20; 24:14; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:19-23; 1 Corinthians 15:20-25; Philippians 2:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12; 2 Peter 3:3-10; Revelation 14:6; 21:3-8; 22:1-5, 17)

#### XVIII. The Return of Christ

The return of Christ is certain and may occur at any moment, although it is not given us to know the hour. At His return He will fulfill all prophecies concerning His final triumph over all evil. The believer's response is joyous expectation, watchfulness, readiness, and diligence. (Matthew 24:1-51; 26:64; Mark 13:26-27; Luke 17:26-37; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 9:27-28; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:6-7, 12, 20)

#### XIX. Resurrection

There will be a bodily resurrection from the dead of both the just and the unjust, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. The resurrected body will be a spiritual body, but the person will be whole and identifiable. The resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of resurrection unto life to those who are in Him. (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 51-57; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14)

#### XX. Judgment

God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness in accordance with the gospel and men's deeds in this life. (Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 11:31-32; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Romans 2:15-16; 14:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Hebrews 9:27-28; 10:26-31; 2 Peter 3:7)

#### XXI. Final Destiny

The eternal destiny of man is determined by God's grace and man's response, not by arbitrary decrees of God. For those who trust Him and obediently follow Jesus as Savior and Lord, there is a heaven of eternal glory and the blessedness of Christ's presence. But for the finally impenitent there is a hell of eternal suffering and of separation from God. (Mark 9:42-48; John 14:3; Hebrews 2:1-3; Rev 20:11-15; 21:22-27)

The doctrines of the Free Methodist Church are based upon the Holy Scriptures and are derived from their total biblical context. The references [given for each section] are appropriate passages related to the given articles. They are listed in their biblical sequence and are not intended to be exhaustive.