

## PRINCIPLES OF FAITH 1915-1920

<b>ACCESSION NUMBER:</b>	2691
<b>DATE:</b>	May 12, 1915
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Houston, Texas
<b>TYPE:</b>	SBC

The Baptist Task -- Your missionaries are more and more convinced that Baptists still have a very definite contribution to make to the evangelization of the Far East. This is a day of argument for comity, union enterprises, division of territory, and cooperation. Whenever we can do so without sacrifice of principle, we gladly cooperate with others, and in opening new work seek for places of greatest need, but we maintain that we can be loyal to Christ only when we are true to our age-long New Testament **principles** which distinguish us from other denominations, and mark us as a peculiar people. If others have non-essentials and differences which they can give up, we rejoice to see them taking any step towards union, when it brings them nearer the simple New Testament model. There are over twenty millions of people in the fields touched by two hundred Baptist workers under the Commission "preach the gospel to every creature."

<b>ACCESSION NUMBER:</b>	2513
<b>DATE:</b>	Apr 06, 1916
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Richmond, Virginia
<b>TYPE:</b>	FMB

Committee on Attitude of Board Toward Union Effort --

Brother R. B. Garrett read the following report of the Committee to prepare a "Statement of the attitude of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention toward Union effort in Mission Work". The report was discussed by Brethren Love, Ray, Hening and others, and was adopted.

"Thinking it timely to issue a statement setting forth its attitude toward cooperation and union in mission work, the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, at its Annual Meeting, June 1915, appointed a committee charged with the duty of preparing such a statement. That committee herewith submits its report as follows: We would, as the Southern Baptist Convention has already done, put ourselves on record as cherishing a very tender Christian regard for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and as desiring the most cordial Christian relationship with those who like ourselves are trying to make Him known to a lost world. The dissent which this report affirms is made necessary by a general program of union and cooperation which conflicts at certain points with the policies of this Board, and with well-known **principles** of the denomination which it represents. We regret the necessity for this dissent. The program which provokes it, threatens to hinder rather than help Christian unity. But the issues having been raised, it becomes us to deal with them candidly.

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Before enumerating certain points of dissent, we would recite the action taken by the Southern Baptist Convention, for the guidance of its mission boards and its missionaries, and to insure the unity of our people in their great missionary tasks.

"We believe that the highest efficiency of the Southern Baptist Convention in the propagation and confirmation of the Gospel can be attained.

By the observance of strict loyalty to Christ as the head of the church, in a spirit of candor and Christian courtesy toward all who profess to be His disciples.

1. By preserving a complete autonomy at home and abroad, unembarrassed by entangling alliances with other bodies holding to different standards of doctrine and different views of church life and church order.
2. By devoting our energies and resources with singleness of heart to fostering and multiplying denominational schools and other agencies at home and abroad in full denominational control, and in full harmony with the spirit and doctrine of the churches contributing funds to our boards.
3. By a complete alignment of all our denominational forces, churches, schools, hospitals, papers, Sunday schools, women's and young people's societies, in purpose, spirit and practice with the program of Christ as set out in the great commission, avoiding the weakness of vagueness and the diffusion of denominational strength into channels leading away from the churches.
4. We believe also that in this way we can render the greatest service to other Christians and most surely and speedily promote their union on the Holy Scripture, the only possible base of real and abiding Christian union."

The churches ought to be assured that their gifts to the Convention boards shall not be diverted to unauthorized enterprises, and misunderstanding, embarrassment and friction ought, if possible, to be avoided. Therefore, as interpretative of the above, and in the interest of mutual understanding and good-will among all concerned, we offer the following, together with what has gone before, as the attitude of this Board to the proposed union and cooperation in mission work:

1. This Board has not and will not enter into nor be committed to any compact by which arbitrary territorial boundaries or divisions are fixed for its missionary operations. Such division of territory being a part of a general program of federation, and it being impossible for this Board to recognize divisions thus arbitrarily made, we must decline participation in such program. The Board and its missionaries will in the future as in the past endeavor to exercise wisdom and Christian courtesy as well as conscience in such matters; will seek to conserve economy of labor and money in locating its forces, and with due regard to need, opportunity, and probable results, but cannot consent to have any limitations fixed upon the Commission under which it operates, nor be put in a position which would forbid its loyalty and faithfulness to any company of Christian converts who may now or hereafter profess a "like precious faith with us".

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2. We cannot subscribe to any agreement providing for an interchange of church letters contrary to the recognized custom among the Baptist churches of the South. The churches which are supporting the work of this Board have a well-known standard of qualification for church membership, and we shall seek to foster this standard in every land where this Board sends its missionaries.
3. This Board will not engage in any form of cooperation, hospital, publication, educational or other missionary activity, which is not fully reported to the Convention, and which does not meet the approval of the Convention, under the auspices of which it operates, and to the instructions of which it is subject. We esteem it to be a matter of primary importance that this Board be in a position to control, or control jointly with other Baptist bodies, the religious instruction which is given boys and girls entrusted to its care. This is necessary in order to safeguard what we believe to be our message to the world.
4. To avoid an exhaustive enumeration, and yet to make the statement comprehensive, we add, that we shall seek to foster a policy abroad which is consistent with the denominational policy at home, and no pressure will be allowed to swerve the Board from this course. We make these declarations for the information of our people at home, and with the view of saving the scattered missionaries of this Board from any embarrassment or confusion from this pressure.

Again, we would remind all that Southern Baptists are on record by repeated action of the Convention in recognition of that spiritual union which exists among all believers in Christ, and in favor of their organic union as soon as it can be perfected on New Testament lines. We reaffirm these sentiments. We would have all our people recognize the bonds of brotherhood which unite Christians of every name, cultivate a large spirit of fraternity and strive together with others to secure the closest possible impact of our common Christianity upon the social order for the establishment of righteousness in the earth. We would, however, admonish our people at home and abroad to remain true to New Testament **principles** of faith and church polity, and by so doing, seek to preserve the unity of the denomination, enlist all of our forces for the holy cause of missions, and thus insure the integrity, support and success of this work.

<b>ACCESSION NUMBER:</b>	2692
<b>DATE:</b>	May 17, 1916
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Asheville, North Carolina
<b>TYPE:</b>	SBC

The Policies -- In the following report of a special committee the policy of the Board with reference to certain mooted questions is given:

"A STATEMENT OF THE ATTITUDE OF THE FOREIGN MISSION  
BOARD OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION  
TOWARD UNION EFFORT IN MISSION WORK

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Thinking it timely to issue a statement setting forth its attitude toward cooperation and union mission work, the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, at its Annual Meeting, June, 1915, appointed a committee charged with the duty of preparing such a statement. That committee herewith submits its report as follows:

We would, as the Southern Baptist Convention has already done, put ourselves on record as cherishing a very tender Christian regard for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and as desiring the most cordial Christian relationship with those who, like ourselves, are trying to make him known to a lost world. The dissent which this report affirms is made necessary by a general program of union and cooperation which conflicts at certain points with the policies of this Board, and with well-known **principles** of the denomination which it represents. We regret the necessity for this dissent.

The program which provokes it, threatens to hinder rather than help Christian unity. But the issues having been raised, it becomes us to deal with them candidly.

Before enumerating certain points of dissent, we would recite the action taken by the Southern Baptist Convention for the guidance of its mission boards and its missionaries, and to insure the unity of our people in their great missionary tasks:

'We believe that the highest efficiency of the Southern Baptist Convention in the propagation and confirmation of the gospel can be attained:

By the observance of strict loyalty to Christ as the head of the church, in a spirit of candor and Christian courtesy toward all who profess to be his disciples.

1. By preserving a complete autonomy at home and abroad, unembarrassed by entangling alliances with other bodies holding to different standards of doctrines and different views of church life and church order.
2. By devoting our energies and resources with singleness of heart to fostering and multiplying denominational schools and other agencies at home and abroad in full denominational control and in full harmony with the spirit and doctrine of the churches contributing funds to our Boards.
3. By a complete alignment of all our denominational forces, churches, schools, hospitals, papers, Sunday schools, women's and young people's societies, in purpose, spirit and practice with the program of Christ as set out in the great commission, avoiding the weakness of vagueness and the diffusion of denominational strength into channels leading away from the churches.
4. We believe also that in this way we can render the greatest service to other Christians and most surely and speedily promote their union on the Holy Scripture, the only possible base of real and abiding Christian union.'

The churches ought to be assured that their gifts to the Convention boards shall not be diverted to unauthorized enterprises, and misunderstanding, embarrassment and friction ought, if possible, to be avoided.

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Therefore, as interpretative of the above, and in the interest of mutual understanding and good will among all concerned, we offer the following, together with what has gone before, as the attitude of this Board to the proposed union and cooperation in mission work:

1. This Board has not and will not enter into nor be committed to any compact by which arbitrary territorial boundaries or divisions are fixed for its missionary operations. Such division of territory being a part of a general program of federation, and it being impossible for this Board to recognize this division thus arbitrarily made, we must decline participation in such program. The Board and its missionaries will in the future, as in the past, endeavor to exercise wisdom and Christian courtesy as well as conscience in such matters; will seek to conserve economy of labor and money in locating its forces, and with due regard to need, opportunity, and probable results, but cannot consent to have any limitations fixed upon the Commission under which it operates, nor be put in a position which would forbid its loyalty and faithfulness to any company of Christian converts who may now or hereafter profess a "like precious faith with us."
2. We cannot subscribe to any agreement providing for an interchange of church letters contrary to the recognized custom among the Baptist churches of the South. The churches, which are supporting the work of this Board, have a well-known standard of qualification for church this Board sends its missionaries.
3. This Board will not engage in any form of cooperation, hospital, publication, educational or other missionary activity, which is not fully reported to the Convention, and which does not meet the approval of the Convention, under the auspices of which it operates, and to the instructions of which it is subject. We esteem it to be a matter of primary importance that this Board be in a position to control, or control jointly with other Baptist bodies, the religious instruction which is given boys and girls entrusted to its care. This is necessary in order to safeguard what we believe to be our message to the world.
4. To avoid an exhaustive enumeration, and yet to make the statement comprehensive, we add, that we shall seek to foster a policy abroad which is consistent with the denominational policy at home, and no pressure will be allowed to swerve the Board from this course. We make these declarations for the information of our people at home, and with the view of saving the scattered missionaries of this Board all possible embarrassment or confusion from such pressure.

Again, we would remind all that Southern Baptists are on record by repeated action of the Convention in recognition of that spiritual union which exists among all believers in Christ, and in favor of their organic union as soon as it can be perfected on New Testament lines. We reaffirm these sentiments. We would have all our people recognize the bonds of brotherhood which unite Christians of every name, cultivate a large spirit of fraternity and strive together with others to secure the closest possible impact of our common Christianity upon the social order for the establishment of righteousness in the earth. We would, however, admonish our people at home and abroad to remain true to New Testament **principles of faith** and church polity, and by so doing, seek to preserve the unity of the denomination, enlist all of our forces for the holy cause of missions, and thus insure the integrity, support and success of this work.

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J. F. Love, R. B. Garrett, B. D. Gaw, B. C. Hening, Joshua Levering, William H. Smith, T. B. Ray, Committee."

The Needs Created by this Program -- The decision of the Board and the Convention to pursue an unentangled course in educational and other mission work calls for a constructive and heroic program, and for more workers and stronger support in order to render this policy effective. There is, of course, some plausibility in the contention that union effort in various lines of mission work is economical. Southern Baptists deliberately and of necessity forego this economy in the interest of denominational integrity, efficiency, and their distinctive **principles**, although by such a course they put themselves under the necessity of greater liberality in the support of their work. For the present, denominational control of educational and other mission work is more expensive in dollars and cents, but in the end the denomination will get its money's worth in the dividends which it is seeking. We shall get in quality, durability and productive value, all we pay for.

<b>ACCESSION NUMBER:</b>	2430
<b>DATE:</b>	Jun 11, 1919
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Richmond, Virginia
<b>TYPE:</b>	FMB

Brother Lloyd T. Wilson came in at this point.

The report of the Committee on Articles of Faith was read by Brother White by sections and adopted as follows:

Your committee finding the Statement of Belief submitted to be fully in harmony with our accepted Baptist **principles**, recommend that it be adopted; that a copy be presented to each applicant for appointment to mission field; that acceptance of this Statement of Belief is essential to appointment.

We also recommend that a copy of this Statement of Belief be sent to each missionary now on the field.

J. L. White  
F. F. Gibson - Committee  
T. W. O'Kelley

### A STATEMENT OF BELIEF

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All missionaries of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention are expected to read carefully and subscribe to the following statement of belief before they are appointed to missionary service under this Board.

I believe and am prepared to teach the following:

**ARCHIVES & RECORDS**  
**management**

10/28/2004

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### I.

I believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were written by men who were divinely inspired and that they are a sufficient and final authority in all matters of religious faith and practice;

### II.

That there is one and only one living and true God who is revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit;

### III.

That the virgin birth, the deity, the vicarious death, the bodily resurrection and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ are plainly taught in the Scriptures;

### IV.

That in his natural state, man is depraved and without true holiness;

### V.

That salvation is wholly of grace through Jesus Christ;

### VI.

That on condition of personal repentance for sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ any man can receive the forgiveness of sin and salvation unto everlasting life;

### VII.

That regeneration is necessary to spiritual life in Christ, and that this change is effected by the direct action of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of each individual who exercises personal faith in Jesus Christ;

### VIII.

That sanctification is the process by which, between regeneration and glorification, the spiritual life of the believer is deepened, and he grows in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ;

### IX.

That a church is a company of voluntarily, associated baptized believers in Christ, recognizing Him as the only Head of the church, exercising only such administration and disciplinary authority as He has committed to it, conducting holy worship, observing the ordinances as He has commanded, and seeking by cooperative effort to extend His Kingdom in all the world;

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### X.

I believe in the evangelical view of the ordinances. They were appointed to show the Lord's death and resurrection. They are not sacraments. They do not expiate sin; they exhibit the atonement. Baptism is not a means of salvation but a symbol of Christ's resurrection. The Lord's Supper is not a social feast, but a memorial of Christ's death. We are not to observe it to show our amiability, but do it in remembrance of Him. I will observe and teach these ordinances in accordance with the views and customs common among Southern Baptists;

### XI.

I believe that the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath should be sacredly observed by all Christian believers everywhere;

### XII.

That civil government being ordained of God, due obedience and subjection should be rendered to the government under which I may live and that prayers should be offered for rulers; but that God alone is Lord of the conscience and He has left the soul free to worship after its own dictates;

### XIII.

That there will be a resurrection and future judgment and that believers in Christ will go to a place of eternal happiness and unbelievers to everlasting condemnation.

I accept the following Pronouncement on Christian union and cooperation which has been adopted by the Foreign Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Convention, and will seek to promote harmony and unity in the denomination at home and in the mission to which I am sent, and cooperate with my fellow-missionaries in advancing the cause of Christ and the denomination along lines thus fixed for the Board and its missionaries;

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