

THE FAITH OF CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIANS

“WE BELIEVE AND THEREFORE SPEAK”

2 Cor. 4:13

The Bible

Cumberland Presbyterians accept the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We believe that the Holy Scriptures comprise the 66 books of the Old and the New Testaments, and that the best rule of interpretation of Scripture is the comparison of Scripture with Scripture. This means that we do not depend upon a particular verse as literal proof of all beliefs and practices, but we do seek the whole teaching and spirit of the Bible as our guide.

The Godhead

We believe in the divinity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit as well as in God the Father; the three persons making up the Trinity.

The Church

We believe in our denomination as a part of the Church of which Christ is the head and all believers in Christ are a part. We believe in cooperation with all who accept Jesus as Christ and Lord.

Salvation

We believe that every person needs regeneration and must make a personal commitment of his life to Christ in order to be saved, or lost regardless of their own will. All infants dying in infancy and all persons who have never had the faculty of reason are regenerated and saved through Christ.

Preservation of Believers

We believe that a person who is truly regenerated will not totally fall away from a state of grace, but will be preserved to everlasting life. Christ is as interested in keeping us saved as he is in saving us. This does not mean that one can “do as he pleases” after he accepts Christ, but that if he is truly regenerated, he will not be satisfied with less than a life which is pleasing to Christ.

We do not believe that good works will save our souls, but that good deeds are the result of a regenerated life.

Sanctification

We believe that every child of God will use every means possible to grow in grace. We do not believe that a state of sinless perfection is possible in this life. Sanctification does not mean sinless perfection, but it does mean a setting apart of life for sacred use, similar to the idea of consecration.

The Sabbath

We believe that after the resurrection of Christ the Sabbath was changed to the first day of the week, and that the same principles apply to the keeping of this day as were set forth in the Bible concerning the original Sabbath.

The Sacraments

We believe that there are just two sacraments of the Church.

WATER BAPTISM is one sacrament. It is a sign or symbol of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and a seal of the Covenant of Grace. Since the Holy Spirit is always represented in the Scriptures as being poured out

on the person, its renewal and cleansing is best symbolized by pouring or sprinkling water upon the head of the one being baptized. We believe that infant children of Christians should be given the seal of the Covenant just as Hebrew children were in Old Testament days. Infant baptism is now that seal, and represents an act of faith on the part of the parents and the Church as the child is dedicated to the Lord. Infant baptism is not an evidence of non-communicant church membership. Those who have been baptized in infancy must make a personal acceptance of Christ and concur in the prior act of their baptism before sharing in the full fellowship of the Church.

There is no saving power in water baptism, yet it is the duty of all believers not previously baptized to confess Christ in this solemn ordinance and to present their infant children for baptism.

THE LORD'S SUPPER is the second sacrament. The symbols to be used are bread and grape juice, which remain after consecration literal bread and juice. Since it the Lord's Supper and not an ordinance of a particular church, all who acknowledge Jesus as Christ and who have faith to understand the significant of this sacrament are invited to partake of it with us, regardless of their denominational affiliation.

Marriage and Divorce

We believe that although marriage is not a sacrament of the Church, yet it is a very sacred institution and should be so regarded by all people. The marriage relation should not be dissolved for any cause not justified by the teachings of the word of God. The question of marrying divorced people is left to the judgement of individual pastors.

Thing to Come

We believe that the bodies of men after death return to dust; but their spirits return to God who gave them. The spirits of the righteous are received into heaven, and the spirits of the wicked are cast into hell. The Scriptures speak of no other place for departed spirits.

We believe that God has appointed a time for the resurrection of the just and the unjust when he will judge the world in righteousness by Christ. Our Church has no statement in its doctrines concerning the Second Coming of Christ or the Millennium. Various ideas on this subject are held by individual members.

Church Attendance

We believe that Christians should take advantage of the opportunities provided for regular worship in the church. Church attendance is given special emphasis in the vows taken by the members because it is regarded as a means of spiritual growth as well as a means of Christian witness.

Form of Government

Individual congregations are governed by elders who are elected by the people. Each congregation, through its elders, calls its pastor. Pastors and elders of an area are formed into presbyteries. Ministers are received and ordained by presbyteries. Standards for ordination are established by the General Assembly and include educational requirements of at least a college education or its equivalent. Only ordained ministers receive members by profession of faith and baptism, conduct the communion and officiate at the marriage ceremony. Ruling elders may receive members by letter.

The official statement of doctrine of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is called THE CONFESSION OF FAITH, which the reader is invited to consult for a more complete statement and the Scriptural supporting texts. The above statements are partly in the words of THE CONFESSION OF FAITH and are in part an interpretation of it.

The denominational headquarters are located in the Cumberland Presbyterian Center at 1978 Union Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee.