

From time to time individuals searching for a church home or ministry position within CBWC want to know more about our denomination. The list below provides a window through which you can see who we are, what we believe, and how we approach ministry.

We believe the following three statements represent our core beliefs as Canadian Baptists of Western Canada.

1. The Carey Theological College Statement Of Faith endorsed by CBWC Assembly in 1982 & 2007

We accept wholeheartedly the revelation of God given in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and confess the faith therein set forth. We here explicitly assert the doctrines which we regard as crucial to the understanding and proclamation of the Gospel and to practical Christian living:

- The sovereignty, love, and grace of God, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit in creation, providence, revelation, redemption and final judgement.
- The divine inspiration of Holy Scripture and its entire trustworthiness and supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- The value of each human being as created by God. The universal sinfulness of humankind since the fall, which alienates all from God and subjects all to condemnation.
- The full deity and humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, whose substitutionary sacrifice is the sole ground of redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin.
- The justification of the sinner by the grace of God through faith alone in Christ crucified and risen from the dead.
- The illuminating, regenerating, indwelling and sanctifying work of God, the Holy Spirit, in the believer.
- The church as set forth in the New Testament and understood historically by the Baptist community.
- The expectation of the personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ, our participation in the resurrection, and the hope of eternal life.

2. The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

### 3. The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

We are a community of vibrant Christ-centred churches being God's love and hope among our neighbours.

As a Christ-centered community of churches we value:

1. Inviting faith
2. Acting in mercy
3. Cultivating leaders

In recent history church groups have emphasized one, and at times, two of these values. Yet Canadian Baptists of Western Canada recognizes that each value is equally important and interdependent. In order to grow invite faith, conversions, congregations and church plants must increase in number. Critical to this increase is the development of strong lay and pastoral leadership that is responsive to the needs of others. In order to act in mercy, we must compassionately respond to those in need, which in turn will introduce people to Jesus Christ. These three areas are intertwined, bringing balance to ministry. Significant resources are provided to assist congregations and train pastors to provide meaningful ministry and community impact within the neighbourhood/region of the congregation.

We foster ministry expansion and health co-operatively

While congregations remain autonomous they choose to engage in ministry together. The congregations "in Assembly" (assembled church representatives and pastors) entrust to elected CBWC leadership and appointed staff the fulfillment and development of the above ministry values. Local churches and the denomination enter into annual covenantal agreements to foster ministry.

We believe that ministry advancement is the responsibility of the whole congregation

Pastors and other ministry staff are called to lead congregational ministry. However the vitality, mission, and growth of that ministry are dependent on each member's (staff included) response to the continuing work of God's Spirit within the congregation and community. Using the Apostle Paul's metaphor, the Church is one body made up of equally important parts to fulfill one corporate function - to genuinely love God, to sacrificially serve Him, to generously respond to needs beyond our own, and to, by faith, live out and teach the truths of Scripture.

## We affirm the role of women and men in ministry

Women and men are recognized as equal servants in the work of the Lord. CBWC seeks to recognize the gifts of all individuals whether they are female or male. Both may serve on all boards, fulfill the responsibilities of a chairperson, and may be called to pastor a congregation and ordained to Gospel Ministry.

## We expect pastoral leaders to participate in cluster groups for mutual support

Within western Canada the majority of our churches fall into fourteen geographic clusters. The purpose of these regional clusters is to bring the ministry staff together to uphold one another in prayer, to encourage each other in difficult times, to engage co-operatively in new ministries, and to encourage ministry skill development. It is also understood that regional congregations will support each other in good and difficult times. In cases where pastors are geographically isolated they are expected to participate in clusters within their particular community and/or through telephone, email or video conferencing.

## We require all ministry staff to adhere to CBWC Assembly approved ministerial protocol

Firstly all pastors are to commit themselves to and exemplify the moral and spiritual values reflected in God's Word as referred to in our statements of belief. Specific standards regarding requirements for and behaviour within ministry are found within the Ministerial Polices, Procedures and Protocol manual which is approved by a vote of Assembly. Any revisions must be accepted by an Assembly vote. Each pastor is expected to have read, be familiar with, and agree to adhere to this protocol.

## We hold to clear statements on marriage & sexual behaviour

CBWC defines marriage as a "publicly recognized covenanting together for life, between a woman and a man who live together in a relationship, characterized by truth and fidelity, and for the purpose of lifelong companionship, mutual interdependence and responsibility for each other, and potential procreation. It is symbolic of God's relationship to his people and Jesus Christ's relationship to his church."

The position of the CBWC with regard to any sexual behaviour outside of monogamous heterosexual marriage behaviour is that it is not affirmed. That is to say, homosexual activity, bisexual sexual activity, adultery, fornication, pedophilia, would all be called sin.

## We expect every credentialed ministry staff member to practice life-long learning

CBWC encourages all pastors and other ministry staff, no matter what their level of education or expertise, to practice continuing education. William Carey Institute and Carey Theological College provide a number of offerings for this purpose, on the UBC campus in Vancouver, as well as in regional settings accessible to local congregations. Courses are also offered through distance learning. Financial assistance is available to all credentialed ministry personnel. New pastors are required to participate in a Graduate Internship programme for a minimum of one year.

<sup>1</sup> The contents of this document describe decisions that have been made by BUDF/CBWC Assemblies through the years. The inclusions do not necessarily reflect the practice of each individual congregation because of local church autonomy. The document itself has not yet been approved by Assembly.