

What We Believe

Christiansburg Church of the Brethren

Christiansburg Virginia

1. THE SCRIPTURES

The Bible is the Word of God (Deuteronomy 4:1-2). It was written by men who were divinely inspired (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21), and it is God's revelation of himself to man. The New Testament is the last will and covenant of our Lord (Hebrews 9:15), and is our final authority for faith and conduct. If one is to have a true understanding of the will of God, he must always accept the New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament. What was seen only vaguely (in the Old Testament) in the dim starlight of promise and type, is now seen clearly (in the New Testament) in the bright sunlight of God's complete and perfect revelation in Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2; Matthew 5:43-44). The New Testament builds upon the Old, fulfills the Old, and reinterprets the Old.

The Bible is inerrant in the original writings, and is the supreme standard by which all human conduct and religious opinions should be tried (Acts 17:11; Psalms 19:7-11; Psalms 119:105)

2. GOD

There is one and only one living and true God (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:6; Ex. 20:3). He is an intelligent, personal, spirit Being (John 4:24). He is one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God as Father reigns with providential care over his universe (Acts 7:48-50), and the stream of human history moves according to the purpose of his grace. He is Father to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26), and he is fatherly in his attitude toward all men (Matthew 5:45).

God the Son was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18). He is true God and true man (Romans 1:3,4). In his death on the Cross, he made provision for the redemption of men from sin by becoming a substitutionary sacrifice (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 2:24). He was raised from the dead with a glorified body, ascended into heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God (1 Corinthians 15:1-25; John 16:27-28). He will return in power and glory to receive his disciples, and then to judge the world (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

God the Holy Spirit is a divine Person distinct from the Father and the Son, and yet united to both the Father and the Son in the mysterious oneness of the holy Trinity (Matthew 28:19,20). He enables persons to understand truth (John 16:7-13), he imparts new life to those who meet the conditions of salvation (Titus 1:5), and he imparts gifts for service to every member of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

3. MAN

Man was created by the special act of God, in his own image, and is the crowning work of God's creation (Genesis 1:26-30). In the beginning man was innocent of sin, and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice, through the temptation of Satan, man sinned against God, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also that spiritual death which is separation from God (Genesis 2:16). All human beings are born with a sinful nature (Psalm 51:5), and in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed (Isaiah 6:5; Romans 5:12, 19; Romans 1:18-32).

When David spoke of being conceived “in sin” (Psalm 51:5), he spoke not of the act of conception, but of the inherited bias to sin that is transmitted at conception. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in his own image, and in that Christ died for human beings, and therefore every individual is worthy of respect and Christian love (1 Peter 2:17).

4. SALVATION

Salvation is the entire work by which God rescues people from their sinful state. It is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (John 3:3-21; Revelation 3:20). Regeneration is a work of God’s grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:8,9; 2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

Justification is the gracious and full acquittal which is wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23-25), and is symbolized by trine immersion baptism (Romans 6:4-5). In the early church, those who believed were baptized immediately (Acts 16:33). Jesus spoke of the necessity of water baptism, when he said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God’s purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence of the Holy Spirit who dwells in him (1 Corinthians 6:19,20; 2 Peter 3:18). Holiness is God’s standard of living for his people (Luke 1:74-75; 1 Peter 1:15).

Glorification is the culmination of salvation, and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed (Romans 8:16-18; 1 Peter 1:3-4). Jesus spoke of the final glory of the saved, when in figurative language he said the reapers will “gather the wheat into my barn” (Matthew 13:30).

5. THE CHURCH

A New Testament church is a local body (1 Corinthians 1:2) of baptized believers, composed of bishops (elders), deacons, and the saints (Philippians 1:1), who operate through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Each member of the congregation is equally responsible for its ongoing work, although there are those who are called to special responsibilities (Ephesians 4:11-12). The Church is also the Body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all ages (Matthew 16:15-19; Ephesians 1:22-23).

Evangelism: It is the duty and privilege of every believer, and of every congregation, to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20). Each child of God should seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort (Acts 1:8).

Ordinances: Ordinances are commandments that require more than one Christian to perform, and are essential factors in the development of the Christian life. The Scriptures teach the three part love feast — footwashing, supper, communion — (John 13:1-20; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34), the anointing with oil for healing (James 5:14-18), the laying on of hands (Acts 8:17; 1 Timothy 4:14), the assembling together for worship (Hebrews 10:25),

The Church of the Brethren is one of the three historical peace churches.