

## THE VISION OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA

It is the vision of The Free Methodist Church in Canada to see healthy churches within the reach of all people in Canada and beyond.

## OUR MISSION

Following God's activity in our "Jerusalems, Judeas, Samarias and beyond," The Free Methodist Church in Canada (FMCIC) will...

- Find ways to engage unreached people and unreached communities with the gospel
- Mature congregations through developing healthy pastoral and lay leaders
- Commission prepared people to purposeful service
- Interpret life theologically through intentional reflection
- Invest human and financial resources strategically
- Communicate and celebrate through listening to and inspiring one another.

## CORE VALUES

### Persons

- All persons are made in the image of God and possess intrinsic worth.
- All persons have a need to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.
- All persons can be saved and begin a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.
- All persons have unique gifts to contribute to the kingdom.

### Church

- The Christian community is the foundation for the growth of the Kingdom of God on earth.
- The Christian community is the primary context for developing believers.
- The Christian community is to minister in Jesus' name to all people.
- The Christian community is to worship and serve God.

### Team

- Teamwork demonstrates the diversity of spiritual gifts and personal competencies within the church.
- Teamwork recognizes our dependence on God and each other.
- Teamwork maximizes the leadership resources of the church.
- Teamwork builds Christian community.

### Connection

- Free Methodists share a common theology, membership covenant, and leadership system.
- Free Methodists co-operate with other parts of the Christian church in redemptive endeavors and political response.
- Free Methodists build healthy inter-congregational cooperation, celebration and support.
- Free Methodists affirm diverse approaches to accomplish our common vision and mission.

### Integrity

- Integrity is grounded in the character of God.
- Integrity establishes a framework for all relationships.
- Integrity guides all strategies, actions and programs.
- Integrity ensures the appropriate use of time, money, and energy.

### Learning

- Learning leads to excellence.
- Learning leads to creativity.
- Learning leads to faithfulness to biblical essentials.
- Learning increases skill.

### Growth

- The Scriptures call for every church to grow.
- The Scriptures call for the evangelization of the unreached.
- The Scriptures call for every Christian to grow in grace and knowledge of Christ.
- The Scriptures call for every Christian to participate in the growth of the church.

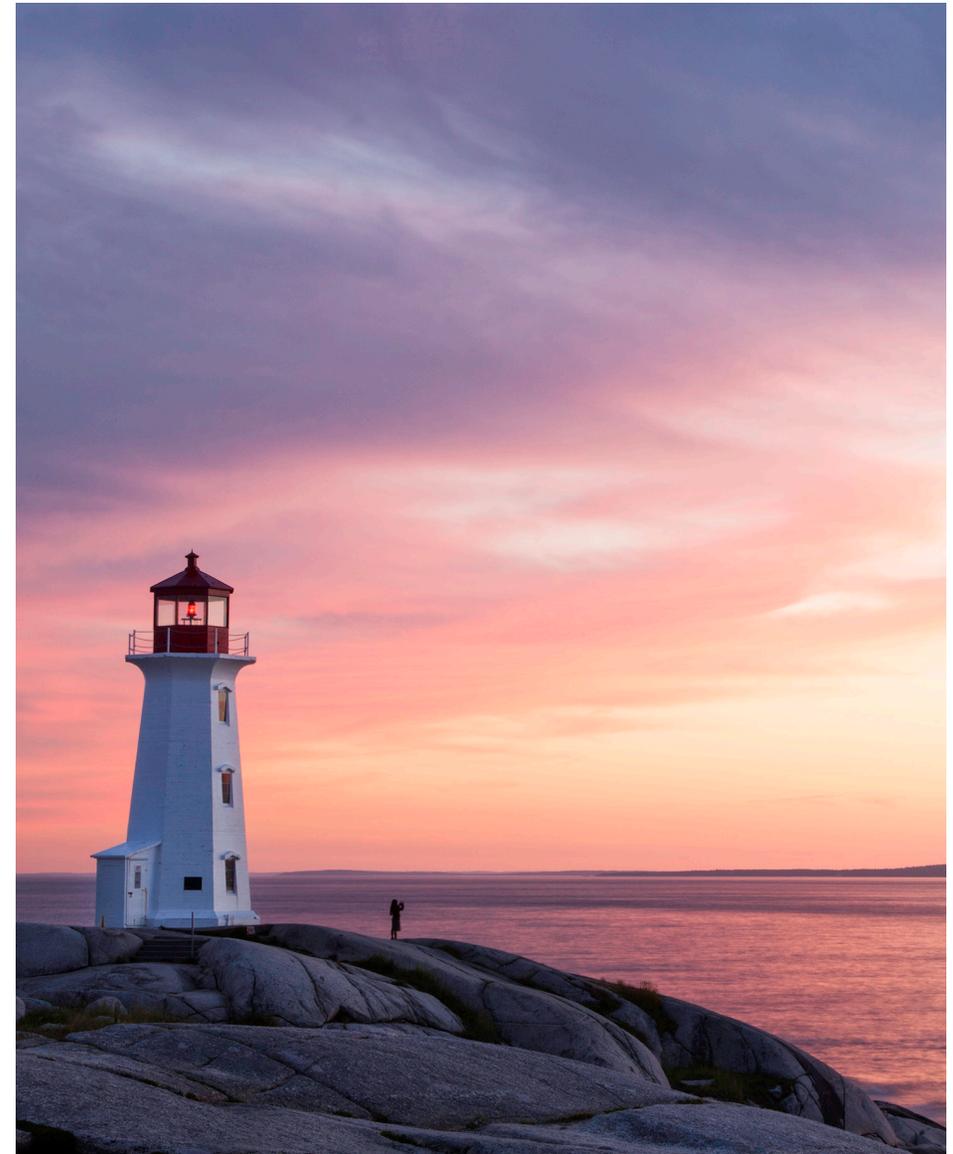
### Generosity

- God is generous to all. Becoming more like Him, we extend God's love through generosity to others.
- Generosity is grace-enabled as we trust God in all circumstances.
- Generosity is a source of joy and blessing as we join God in His ministry.
- Generosity glorifies God.

To find out more about The Free Methodist Church in Canada, visit our website ([www.fmcic.ca](http://www.fmcic.ca)) and look for these sections on our home page: **Who We Are**, **What It Means To Be Free Methodist**, and **What Compels Us**.

# WHAT WE BELIEVE: STATEMENT OF FAITH

also known as the Articles of Religion



[www.fmcic.ca](http://www.fmcic.ca)



This brochure outlines the Articles of Religion of The Free Methodist Church, which forms part of our internationally adopted Constitution. These Articles are a means of preserving and passing on the doctrine and principles of Christian living that we have received as evangelicals within the Arminian-Wesleyan family.

They help us to clarify church order through sound principles and policies, to help in the task of sharing the good news with our neighbours, and to enable more effective cooperation with other families in the church of Christ in the advancement of the reign of God.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT GOD

### The Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, the maker and preserver of all things. And 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.

## THE SON

### His Incarnation

God was Himself in Jesus Christ to reconcile people to God. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, He joined together the deity of God and the humanity of humankind. Jesus of Nazareth was God in human flesh, truly God and truly human. 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 Saviour, the one perfect mediator between God and us.



### 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 all His enemies shall be brought into complete subjection.

He will return to judge all people. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

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

**ABOUT GOD - The Holy Trinity** - Genesis 1:1-2; Exodus 3:13-15; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-3; 5:19-23; 8:58; 14:9-11; 15:26; 16:13-15; II Corinthians 13:14.

**Son - His Incarnation** - Matthew 1:21; 20:28; 26:27-28; Luke 1:35; 19:10; John 1:1,10,14; II Corinthians 5:18-19; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:17; 9:14-15.

**His Resurrection and Exaltation** - Matthew 25:31-32; Luke 24:1-7; 24:39; John 20:19; Acts 1:9-11; 2:24; Romans 8:33-34; II Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:1-4.

**Holy Spirit - His Person** - Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13-15. **His Work in Salvation** - John 16:7-8; Acts 15:8-9; Romans 8:9, 14-16; I Corinthians 3:16; II Corinthians 3:17-18; Galatians 4:6. **His Relation to the Church** - Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:14; I Corinthians 12:4-7; I Peter 1:21.

**THE SCRIPTURES - Authority** - Deuteronomy 4:2; 28:9; Psalm 19:7-11; John 14:26; 17:17; Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:21. **Authority of the Old Testament** - Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 10:25-28; John 5:39, 46-47; Acts 10:43; Galatians 5:3-4; I Peter 1:10-12. **Authority of the New Testament** - Matthew 24:35; Mark 8:38; John 14:24; Hebrews 2:1-4; II Peter 1:16-21; I John 2:2-6; Revelation 21:5; 22:19.

**THE CHURCH - The Church** - Matthew 16:15-18; 18:17; Acts 2:41-47; 9:31; 12:5; 14:23-26; 15:22; 20:28; I 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; I Timothy 3:14-15. **The Language of Worship** - Nehemiah 8:5, 6, 8; Matthew 6:7; I Corinthians 14:6-9; I Corinthians 14:23-25.

**The Holy Sacraments** - Matthew 26:26-29; 28:19; Acts 22:16; Romans 4:11; I Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-26; Galatians 3:27. **Baptism** - Acts 2:38,41; 8:12-17; 9:18; 16:33; 18:8; 19:5; John 3:5;

I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27-29; Colossians 2:11-12; Titus 3:5. **The Lord's Supper** - Mark 14:22-24; John 6:53-58; Acts 2:46; I Corinthians 5:7-8; 10:16; 11:20, 23-29.

**HUMANKIND - A Free Moral Person** - Genesis 1:27; Psalm 51:5; 130:3; Romans 5:17-19; Ephesians 2:8-10. **Law of Life and Love** - Matthew 22:35-40; John 15:17; Galatians 3:28; I John 4:19-21. **Good Works** - Matthew 5:16; 7:16-20; Romans 3:27, 28; Ephesians 2:10; II Timothy 1:8-9; Titus 3:5.

**SALVATION - Christ's Sacrifice** - Luke 24:46-48; John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:8-11; Galatians 2:16; 3:2-3; Ephesians 1:7-8; 2:13; Hebrews 9:11-14, 25-26; 10:8-14. **The New Life in Christ** - John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Acts 13:38-39; Romans 8:15-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 3:9-10. **Justification** - Psalm 32:1-2; Acts 10:43; Romans 3:21-26,28; 4:2-25; 5:8-9; I Corinthians 6:11; Philippians 3:9. **Regeneration** - Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 5:24; Romans 6:4; II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10; Titus 3:4-5; I Peter 1:23.

**Adoption** - Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:5-6; I John 3:1-3. **Sanctification** - 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; I Corinthians 6:11; 12:4-11; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; I Thessalonians 4:7; 5:23-24; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 10:14. **Restoration** - Matthew 12:31-32; 18:21-22; Romans 6:1-2; Galatians 6:1; I John 1:9; 2:1-2; 5:16-17; Revelation 2:5; 3:19-20.

**LAST THINGS - The Kingdom of God** - Matthew 6:10; 19:20; 24:14; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:19-23; I Corinthians 15:20-25; Philippians 2:9-10; I Thessalonians 4:15-17; II Thessalonians 1:5-12; II Peter 3:3-10; Revelation 14:6; 21:3-8; 22:1-5, 17. **The Return of Christ** - Matthew 24:1-51; 26:64; Mark 13:26-27; Luke 17:26-37; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 9:27-28; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:6-7, 12, 20. **Resurrection** - John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15:20, 51-57; II Corinthians 4:13-14.

**Judgment** - Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 11:31-32; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Romans 2:5-16; 14:10-11; II Corinthians 5:6-10; Hebrews 9:27-28; 10:26-31; II Peter 3:7.

**Destiny** - Mark 9:42-48; John 14:3; Hebrews 2:1-3; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:22-27.



## LAST THINGS

### The Kingdom of God

The kingdom of God is a prominent Bible theme providing Christians with both their tasks 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### Judgment

God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness in accordance with the Gospel and our deeds in this life.

### Final Destiny

Our eternal destiny is determined by God's grace and our response, not by arbitrary decrees of God. For those who trust Him and obediently follow Jesus as Saviour 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.

## 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.

### 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.

### 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.

## THE SCRIPTURES



### 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 humankind. 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.



### **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, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II 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

### **Authority of the 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 humankind, sin, and salvation, the world and its destiny.

The books of the New Testament are: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude, Revelation.



### **Sanctification**

Sanctification is that saving work of God beginning with new life in Christ whereby the Holy Spirit renews His people after the likeness of God, changing them through crisis and process, from one degree of glory to another, and conforming them to the image of Christ.

As believers surrender to God in faith and die to self through full consecration, the Holy Spirit fills them with love and purifies them from sin. This sanctifying relationship with God remedies the divided mind, redirects the heart to God, and empowers believers to please and serve God in their daily lives.

Thus, God sets His people free to love Him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love their neighbor as themselves.

### **Restoration**

Christians may be sustained in a growing relationship with Jesus as Saviour and Lord. However, they may grieve the Holy Spirit in the relationships of life without returning to the dominion of sin. When they do, they must humbly accept the correction of the Holy Spirit, trust in the advocacy of Jesus, and mend their relationships.

Christians can sin willfully and sever their 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.



## **SALVATION**

### **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.

### **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 people into a relationship with Himself as they repent and their faith responds to His grace.

Justification, regeneration, adoption, sanctification and restoration speak significantly to entrance into and continuance in the new life.

### **Justification**

Justification is a legal term that emphasizes that by a new relationship in Jesus Christ people are in fact accounted righteous, being freed from both the guilt and the penalty of their sins.

### **Regeneration**

Regeneration is a biological term which illustrates that by a new relationship in Christ one does 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 and is a new creation. The old life is past; a new life is begun.

### **Adoption**

Adoption is a filial term full of warmth, love, and acceptance. It denotes that by a new relationship in Christ, believers have become His wanted children freed from the mastery of both sin and Satan. Believers have the witness of the Spirit that they are children of God.

## **HUMANKIND**

### **A Free Moral Person**



God created human beings in His own image, innocent, morally free and responsible to choose between good and evil, right and wrong. By the sin of Adam, humans as the offspring of Adam are corrupted in their very nature so that from birth they are inclined to sin. They are unable by their own strength and work to restore themselves 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 humans to respond to His grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. By God's grace and help, people are enabled to do good works with a free will.

### **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 neighbour as yourself. These commands reveal what is best for persons in their relationships with God, others, and society. They set forth the principles of human duty in both individual and social action.

They recognize God as the only Sovereign. All people as created by Him and in His image have the same inherent rights regardless of sex, race, or colour. All should therefore give God absolute obedience in their individual, social, and political acts.

They should strive to secure to everyone respect for their person, their rights, and their greatest happiness in the possession and exercise of the right within the moral law.

### **Good Works**



Good works are the fruit of faith in Jesus Christ, but works cannot save us from our sins nor from God's judgment. As expressions of Christian faith and love, good works performed with reverence and humility are both acceptable and pleasing to God. However, good works do not earn God's grace.



## THE CHURCH

### 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 fulfill 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.

### 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 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.

## 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.

### 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 Saviour.

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, 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.

## 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.