

# Declaration of Faith

## Agape Evangelical Church, Poznań, Poland

### 1. Holy Scriptures (the Bible)

The Scriptures of the Old Testament (thirty-nine books) and the New Testament (twenty-seven books) were given by inspiration of God, and are the Word of God. The authority of the Word is derived from its Author and not from the opinions of men.<sup>1\*</sup> The Word of God is inerrant and infallible, and does not contain mistakes either in matters of faith, or in any other matters on which it touches on.<sup>†</sup> The Word of God is the only sufficient, certain, final and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith, practice and obedience.<sup>2</sup> Scripture is now complete, and additions, either by supposed revelations of the Holy Spirit, or the ideas of men, are inadmissible.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 3v15-17; 2 Peter 1v19-21; 1 Thessalonian 2v13; 1 John 5v9.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 8v20; 2 Timothy 3v15-17; Acts 28v23; Romans 15v4.

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 2v20; Hebrews 1v1-2; Deuteronomy 4v2; 12v32; Proverbs 30v5-6; Revelation 22v18-19.

### 2. God

There is only one living and true God.<sup>4</sup> He is dependent on none, self-sufficient, eternal, invisible, omnipresent, unchanging, almighty, omniscient, wise, sovereign, holy, righteous, just, terrible, personal, faithful, truthful, trustworthy, good, loving, merciful, long-suffering and gracious.<sup>5</sup> He is the Creator, who made the world and all things in it both visible and invisible in six literal days, and all very good. God upholds all things and rules over all.<sup>6</sup> God is revealed to us as one God in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup> All creatures owe God the highest love, reverence and obedience.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah 10v10; Corinthians 8v4-6; Deuteronomy 6v4.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 3v14; John 4v24; 1 Timothy 1v17; Isaiah 6v3; Nehemiah 9v32-33; Isaiah 46v10; Psalm 108v4; Romans 2v4; Exodus 34v6-7; Romans 11v36.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1v1-31; John 1v2-3; Hebrews 11v3; Colossians 1v16.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 28v19; 2 Corinthians 13v14; 1 Timothy 3v16; John 1v1; Acts 5v3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 95v3-6; Revelation 4v11; 5v12-14.

### 3. Man and sin

God made our first parents, Adam and Eve, perfect, holy and upright. They fell from their original righteousness into sin by disobeying God's commandment.<sup>9</sup> Adam as representative and head of the human race brought not only upon himself, but also on all his offspring spiritual and physical death, condemnation and a sinful nature.<sup>10</sup> Sin has so affected our original perfect nature that in our sinful nature we cannot, in our own strength, live as God requires or turn to God. We are spiritually dead. All of us have also sinned against God by choosing to break His commandments, and, guilty before God, we are subject to His judgement and wrath.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Genesis 1v26-31; 2v16-17; 3v1-24.

<sup>10</sup> Romans 5v12-19; 1 Corinthians 15v21-22.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremiah 17v9; Romans 3v10-19; 3v23; Ephesians 2v1-3; Matthew 15v19; Colossians 1v21; James 1v14-15; Romans 1v18-32.

### 4. The Lord Jesus Christ

God, in His great love and mercy, sent His Son into the world to be the only mediator between sinners and Himself.<sup>12</sup> The Son being the true and eternal God took a real human nature, being conceived of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit.<sup>13</sup> He lived a sinless life under the Law and thus in obedience to God the Father.<sup>14</sup> Christ died on the cross at the place called Golgotha as the Substitute for His chosen people, shedding His blood, and thus taking on Himself the wrath of God, bearing the full penalty for their sins.

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\* Bible references given in this Declaration are only a sample and therefore not an exhaustive selection of proof texts.

† Both history and science must follow the perfect Revelation and not come before it; else we will be led astray.

Christ effected propitiation, reconciliation, redemption and atonement for them.<sup>15</sup> God bore testimony to His acceptance of His Son's work by raising Him in the flesh from the dead. God's Son ascended in His resurrected body to the right hand of His Father and is enthroned in glory, where He intercedes on behalf of His people and rules over all things.<sup>16</sup> Jesus Christ, God's Son, is the only way to God.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 42v1; 1 Peter 1v19-21.

<sup>13</sup> John 1v1,14; Galatians 4v4; Matthew 1v20-25; Hebrews 2v14-18; Philippians 2v6-8.

<sup>14</sup> 1 John 3v4-5; 1 Peter 2v22-24.

<sup>15</sup> Hebrews 9v22; 1 Timothy 2v5-6; Isaiah 53v4-6; John 10:14-16, 26-28; Ephesians 1v4-7; Romans 3v23-25; 1 John 4v10; 1 Peter 2v24; Colossians 2v13-14; Hebrews 10v14.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 15v1-23; Acts 13v32-40; Romans 1v4; Luke 24v50-51; Hebrews 10v12-13; 1 John 2v1; Hebrews 7v24-25.

<sup>17</sup> John 14v6; 1 Timothy 2v5.

## 5. The Gospel and Justification

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ – He is God's very wisdom.<sup>18</sup> We have broken God's law and on the basis of that sin God as judge declares us guilty and unrighteous. We are condemned. The opposite of condemnation is justification – to be declared not guilty and considered righteous. It is only on the basis of Christ can we be justified. Christ is our justification in a twofold way – by His perfect life and by His death. God requires of man perfect obedience under the law. Christ was perfectly obedient under the law so He satisfied the just demands of God on behalf of His people. God justly should punish man for disobeying the law. Christ, by His sacrifice bore in man's stead the punishment due for man's sins.<sup>19</sup> We receive the benefit of this life and death by placing our faith only in Him and His righteousness and not in anything we have done – justification is by faith alone in Christ alone. Our sin has been placed on Him and in turn His perfect obedience, His righteousness, is reckoned as ours. On that basis – Christ's life and death – God justifies us. Only by forsaking one's sin and one's own good works, and coming to Christ in faith, can we be justified. This is the good news.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> 1 Corinthians 1v24, 30-31.

<sup>19</sup> Romans 3v23-26; 2 Corinthians 5v21; Romans 5v17-19; Titus 3v4-7; Romans 10v1-4.

<sup>20</sup> Romans 3v23-28; 4v5-8; Galatians 2v16; 3v6-14; Philippians 3v8-9; Matthew 11v28-30; John 3v16.

## 6. Salvation by grace

To be saved from the penalty of our sin and thus obtain eternal life is entirely the work of God's grace.<sup>21</sup> Because of our sinful nature there is nothing we can do to contribute to our salvation – we are dead to God. Because of our sins we deserve everlasting punishment in hell. From all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end He foreknew them and chose them. It was an act of grace, for there was nothing in anyone to deserve salvation.<sup>22</sup> God gave them to His Son, and Jesus came to die for them.<sup>23</sup> Such as are chosen are in turn brought to life by the work of the Holy Spirit, given faith and repentance, justified on the basis of Christ's work, and by the indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit in them enabled to persevere unto heaven. Good works and a changed life are the inevitable results and thus demonstration of salvation, and not the cause of salvation.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Romans 3v23; 4v16; 6v23; 9v16.

<sup>22</sup> Ephesians 1v3-12; 2v1-10; John 6v44; Titus 3v5-7.

<sup>23</sup> John 6v37; 15v16, 19; 17v2-10, 24; Matthew 1v21; Ephesians 5v25; 1 John 4v10.

<sup>24</sup> Philippians 1v29; Romans 8v28-39; John 10v28-29; James 2v14-26.

## 7. The Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply His work of salvation by working in His people.<sup>25</sup> By His all-powerful work those dead in sin are brought into spiritual life. He renews their natures and makes them alive, and so they hear the call of God through His Word and are given the desire and ability to repent of sin and believe in Christ as their Saviour and Lord.<sup>26</sup> The Holy Spirit

indwells every believer and further works in each of them, and strengthens them so that they are enabled more and more to obey God's law (which includes the Ten Commandments) and glorify Him in their lives and overcome sin and temptation within themselves. He brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. True believers are kept and preserved until they enter into the joys of heaven.<sup>27</sup> The Holy Spirit dwells and is active in the local church by giving it spiritual leaders and gifts to all its members.<sup>28</sup> The revelatory gifts of the Holy Spirit (tongues, prophecy and miracles) served to authenticate God's messengers who revealed the mystery of the Gospel and were used to bring forth the perfect Word of God.<sup>29</sup> The gift of tongues, as a form of prophecy and as real languages, served as a sign to show that Christ's kingdom is open for all nations and not only for the Jews.<sup>30</sup> With the Canon of Scripture complete, the foundation of the Church has been laid, and so these miraculous gifts have now ceased. Scripture is now sufficient and the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> John 16v7-14.

<sup>26</sup> John 3v5-7; John 1v13; Titus 3v5-7; 1 Peter 1v23.

<sup>27</sup> John 14v17, Romans 8v1-10; 1 John 3v6-9; Ephesians 3v16, Hebrews 13v20-21; Galatians 5v16-26; Jude 24-25; 1 Peter 1v3-5.

<sup>28</sup> 1 Corinthians 3v16-17; Acts 20v28; Romans 12v3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:7-16.

<sup>29</sup> Ephesians 2v20-22; 3v3-5; Hebrews 1v1-2; 2v3-4; Romans 16v19; Acts 2v1-21.

<sup>30</sup> 1 Corinthians 14v21; Isaiah 28v11-12; Acts 2v1-21; Ephesians 2v11-13.

<sup>31</sup> Ephesians 2v20-21; 1 Corinthians 13v8-10; 2 Timothy 3v15-17.

## 8. The Church

The Church is a gathering of called-out ones – those who have been called to faith in Christ and redeemed by Him.<sup>32</sup> The Church is built on the foundation of Christ and the Word. Christ is the Head of the Church and the Church is under the authority of Christ alone.<sup>33</sup> The authority of Christ, the Head of the Church, is exercised through elders fulfilling the roles of spiritual shepherds and leaders in local churches.<sup>†</sup> This distinctive leadership role within the local church given to qualified men is biblically grounded in creation, fall, and redemption.<sup>34</sup> A believer is to join himself to a local church to worship and serve God, and to be encouraged and built up in the Word.<sup>35</sup> The local church is distinguished by faithful adherence to all of the Word of God in preaching and practice: in its gospel message, in its worship, in its ordinances, in its discipline, in its great mission, and, above all, in its members' love for God and for one another.<sup>36</sup> God is worshipped in the meetings of the church in His appointed way, according to Scripture, only through the mediation of His Son, and anything not appointed by Him is to be excluded from worship.<sup>37</sup> It is the responsibility and privilege of the local church to be obedient to Christ's Commission to preach the gospel to all mankind, seeking to disciple and baptise believers, establishing them into local churches.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Hebrews 12v23; 1 Corinthians 1v2; Philippians 1v1.

<sup>33</sup> Colossians 1v18; Ephesians 1v22-23; 5v23-32; Matthew 16v16-18; 1 Corinthians 3v11.

<sup>34</sup> Acts 14v23; 1 Timothy 2v8-15; 3v1-15; 5v17; Ephesians 5v22-33.

<sup>35</sup> Acts 2v38-47; Hebrews 10v24-25; Ephesians 5v19-20; Colossians 3v15-17.

<sup>36</sup> Acts 20v25-31; 1 Timothy 4v13,16; 2 Timothy 1v13; 2v2; 4v2; Matthew 18v15-18; 1 Peter 5v1-5; Hebrews 13v7, 17; John 13v34-35; 15v1-17.

<sup>37</sup> Exodus 20v4-6; Leviticus 10v1-7; 1 Samuel 15v22; Matthew 15v9; John 4v24.

<sup>38</sup> Matthew 28v19-20; Luke 24v47; Acts 2v41-47.

## 9. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christ has instituted two ordinances – baptism and the Lord's Supper – as means of grace for the local church. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as with public reading and proclamation of the Word, singing together and corporate prayer, are means of grace by which believers are together spiritually nourished and strengthened in their daily walk. Baptism is an outward sign of what has already taken place. It is an act of obedience by a confessed disciple symbolizing union with a crucified, buried and risen Saviour,

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<sup>†</sup> The local church is the visible expression in a specific locality of the (worldwide) Church.

the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ. Baptism is by immersion in water and is the ordinary means of entrance into local church membership.<sup>39</sup> The Lord's Supper is an act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking together of the bread and the fruit of the vine, remember the death of the Redeemer, anticipate His second coming, and show the oneness of His body, the local church. The bread symbolizes the broken body of Christ on the cross and the cup symbolizes His shed blood.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Romans 6v1-7; Colossians 2v12; Matthew 28v19-20; Acts 2v38,41,47; 8v36-38.

<sup>40</sup> Matthew 26v26-30; Mark 14v22-26; Luke 22v17-23; Acts 20v7; 1 Corinthians 10v16-17; 11v23-29.

## 10. Man, woman and marriage

God created the first humans, Adam and Eve, male and female. Adam was created first and Eve was created to be his helpmate – they were created equal but with different roles. Marriage was instituted by God and can be only between one man and one woman. No intimate sexual activity is to be engaged in outside of such marriage between a man and woman.<sup>41</sup> Marriage is entered into by a public covenant and can only be broken by death or in certain circumstances by divorce.<sup>42</sup> The purpose of marriage is to provide loving companionship, to assist one another in serving God, to bring forth children, and to preserve morality.<sup>43</sup> Marriage is about faithfulness and reflects the relationship between Christ and the Church. The husband is to sacrificially love his wife as Christ loved the church. He is to lead, protect and provide for the woman – lovingly leading in the home and in the church. The wife is to willingly submit to her husband as the Church submits to Christ, manage the home and is not to have authority over her husband.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Genesis 2v18-25; Matthew 19v3-12; 1 Corinthians 6v15-20.

<sup>42</sup> Mark 10v1-12; Proverbs 2v17; Malachi 2v14; Deuteronomy 22v23-24; Romans 7v2-3; 1 Corinthians 7v12-16.

<sup>43</sup> Genesis 1v27-28; Malachi 2v15; 1 Corinthians 7v2-6; Proverbs 5v15-20; Hebrews 13v4.

<sup>44</sup> 1 Peter 3v1-7; Ephesians 5v22-33; 1 Timothy 5v14; Titus 2v4-5; Proverbs 31v10-31; 1 Timothy 2v9-15.

## 11. The Last Things

The bodies of men after death return to dust but their spirits return immediately to God – the righteous to rest with Him in heaven, the wicked to be reserved in hell until the judgement.<sup>45</sup> On that day, God will judge the world by Jesus Christ when everyone will receive according to his deeds. The Lord Jesus Christ, on that day, will return personally, visibly and bodily, and in power and glory in order to raise the dead and so judge all people, both righteous and unrighteous.<sup>46</sup> The wicked will go into everlasting punishment in hell with the devil and his angels, where they shall be separated from God's blessing and tormented eternally.<sup>47</sup> The righteous in Christ, with glorified bodies, will live and reign with Christ forever in the new heaven and the new earth. On that day, the church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ. Everything will be to the praise of God's glorious grace.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Genesis 3v19; Acts 13v36; Ecclesiastes 12v7; Luke 23v43.

<sup>46</sup> Acts 1v11; John 14v3; Revelation 1v7; 1 Thessalonians 4v16; Acts 24v15; Acts 17v31.

<sup>47</sup> Romans 2v6-11, 16; Matthew 25v46; John 5v28-29; Matthew 13v40-50; Mark 9v43-44.

<sup>48</sup> 1 John 3v2; Philippians 3v21; 1 Thessalonians 4v17; 2 Timothy 2v12; Ephesians 5v27.

A fuller expression of the Doctrinal position of Agape Evangelical Church can be found in the *London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689*.<sup>5</sup> We acknowledge that the inerrant Scriptures are the supreme authority in all matters of faith, morals, and order. However, Agape's Declaration of Faith, Covenant of Membership, Agape's Church Statute, and the aforementioned *1689 Confession* serve as a standard for safeguarding the truth, a confirmation in faith, a means of edification in righteousness and a basis for church unity.

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<sup>5</sup> This is with the exception that the Pope of Rome is the literal Antichrist and man of sin, although it must be believed that he is the servant of a church so-called, which is Antichrist in nature, and the enemy of the true Gospel [chapter 26:4].