

Statement of Faith

Introduction:

We are a group of Christians who gather together as a Cooperation with a focus on building friendships and worshipping God. Our hope is that one day the Lord will supply us a Pastor who can take this Cooperation and establish it as a church. We pray for a Pastor who will preach and teach to us God's Word in all sincerity, integrity and truth. The Cooperation believes the General Baptist Distinctives outlined below. In addition, this Cooperation follows closely the Unique Church Distinctives outlined at the end.

General Baptist Distinctives:

1. The Bible

- a. We believe the Old and New Testaments of the Bible in their original writings are inspired and therefore are inerrant and infallible. The Bible is complete, and no new revelations are to be added. The Bible is our final authority in faithful living and practice (2 Tim 3:15-17, 2 Pet 1:20-21, 1 Thess 2:13).

2. Dispensations

- a. We believe the Bible reveals successive ages throughout history called dispensations. The dispensations are not different ways to salvation but rather divine paths that God takes His people through for His glory. Three dispensations - 'The Law', 'The Early Church' and 'End Times' take up much of the Bible (Exodus 19-23, Luke 22:20, Daniel 9:24, John 14:16-26, 2 Cor 3:9-18, Gal 3:13-25, Eph 1:10, 3:2-10, Rev 20:2-6).

3. God

a. The Three in One

- i. We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut 6:4, Matt 28:19, John 14:10, 26, 2 Cor 13:14).
- ii. We believe God is good (Ps 107:1).

b. The Father

- i. We believe that the Father is eternal, omnipresent, immutable, omniscient and omnipotent (Gen 1:1, Ps 139:7-10, 1 Sam 15:29, Ps 147:5, Luke 1:37).
- ii. We believe the Father hears and answers the prayers of each Christian (Isa 65:24).

c. The Son

- i. We believe Jesus Christ the Son of God exists as the second member of the trinity and is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin and lived a sinless life. He was born with the intent of dying on the cross in our place as payment for our sins. After His death and burial, He rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven (John 1:1-3, John 8:58, Rom 10:9, Luke 1:34, 1 Tim 1:15, 1 Cor 15:4).

d. The Holy Spirit

- i. We believe the Holy Spirit convicts a person of their sin and shows them their need for a Saviour (John 16:8).
 - ii. We believe the Holy Spirit lives in the heart of every Christian. He empowers the Christian to live a good life and to have victory over sin (John 14:15-17).
 - iii. We believe the Holy Spirit gives each Christian unique giftings for the purpose of serving the Lord and others (Gal 5:22).
 - iv. We believe the Holy Spirit comforts Christians during times of hardship (John 14:26).
 - v. We believe the Holy Spirit intercedes (interprets and delivers) the prayers of each Christian to The Father (Rom 8:26, Eph 6:18-20).
- 4. Sin
 - a. We believe sin is the result of a person's disobedience to God (Rom 5:19).
 - b. We believe Adam and Eve were the first humans to sin when they disobeyed God and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17).
 - c. We believe that sin is inherited and passed down to all people by their parents (Ps 51:5).
 - d. We believe that sin can be a deliberate act or an accidental act (Lev 4:2-3, 1 John 3:4).
- 5. Salvation
 - a. We believe God calls all people to repent and be saved. Through observing God's wondrous creation and by the guilt our consciences give when we sin, no one has an excuse to not seek after God. God's creation reveals His might and power and our consciences reveal His moral character (Ps 19:1, Isa 45:22, Acts 17:30, Heb 4:13).
 - b. We believe Salvation (eternal life) is had by confessing one's sins and believing that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross as payment for those sins. Salvation is established through prayer by asking the Lord Jesus Christ to save us from hell and forgive us of our sins. Through prayer we ask God to become the ruler and master of our life and we choose to live for Him until the day we die (Rom 10).
 - c. We believe Salvation is a gift offered to all (Eph 2:8-9).
 - d. We believe Salvation once received cannot be taken away (John 10:28, Eph 4:30).
 - e. We believe every person has a free will to accept or reject the gift of Salvation (Ps 54:6, 119:108, Rev 3:20).
 - f. We believe that those who reject Salvation will spend eternity in Hell (Matt 25:46, John 5:28-29, Rev 20:5-6, 12, 13).
- 6. Satan
 - a. We believe that Satan is a fallen angel and that He is the Prince of this world. He is in opposition to God and His church (Luke 10:18, 2 Thess 2:1-12).
 - b. We believe Satan wishes to turn people away from God and from the message of Salvation (2 Cor 11:3).
 - c. We believe Satan wishes to attack Christians and tempt them to sin causing them to become ineffective in their Christian life (1 Pet 5:8).
- 7. Family & Social Issues
 - a. * (In the following statements a '*' means to have special circumstances that are unnatural, abnormal and/or unusual requiring professional and/or pastoral care. These circumstances often relate to a victim who has been impacted by another's sin or a life event that is out of their control.)
 - b. Sex
 - i. We believe that sex before marriage is a sin*.
 - c. Marriage

- i. We believe marriage is between one man and one woman for all of life*.
 - ii. We believe that because the legalized definition of marriage in Australia has been altered to allow for homosexuality then it is null and void. Therefore, we believe that marriage is to be a sacred ceremony before God witnessed by people. It is the choice of the married couple if they wish to legalize their marriage according to federal/state law or not. We accept their decision* (Gen 2:21-24, 1 Cor 6:9-10, 18-20, Eph 5:22-33).
 - d. Gender
 - i. We believe that a person should be born as either male or female and their genitalia should not change* (Matt 19:4-9).
 - e. Abortion
 - i. We believe abortion is a sin* (Gen 9:5-6, Deut 5:17, Ps 139:13-16, Jer 1:5).
 - f. Euthanasia
 - i. We believe euthanasia is a sin* (1 Cor 6:19-20, Ecc 7:17, Heb 9:27).
 - g. Dependences/Addictions
 - i. We believe dependences and addictions are a sin* (1 Cor 6:12, Titus 2:12, Gal 5:1).
- 8. Creation
 - a. We believe God created the world in seven, twenty-four-hour days and that it was good (Gen 1-3).
 - b. We reject the theory of evolution & the theory of creation-evolution.
 - c. We believe heaven and hell are real places (John 14:2-3, Luke 16:24).
- 9. The Church
 - a. We believe that the local church is made up of Christians (Acts 2:41-47, 1 Cor 12:12-14, 2 Cor 6:14, 11:2, Eph 1:22-23; 4:3; 5:25-27).
 - b. We believe that each local church is to be independent, autonomous and self-governing (Acts 6:1-5; 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28, Rom 16:1-4, 1 Pet 5:1-4).
 - c. We believe the church is to share and proclaim the Gospel message to all people (Mark 16:15, Rev 22:17, Matt 28:19-20).
 - d. We believe there are only two positions available in the local church:
 - i. The Pastor is to be a Christian man (1 Tim 3, Acts 20:17, 28-30, 1 Pet 5:1-4).
 - ii. The Deacon is to be a Christian man (1 Tim 3, Acts 6:1-7, Phil 1:1).
 - iii. We believe there are no other positions in the local church. The Pastor and Deacon may appoint people to organize and coordinate different ministries, but no official title is to be given them.
 - iv. We believe that the local church should seek fellowship with other congregations who have similar beliefs and practices and that it should separate and disassociate with congregations that do not have similar beliefs and practices. (Gal 2:9, 1 Tim 6:20, Acts 15:36-41).
- 10. Ordinances
 - a. Baptism
 - i. We believe that baptism is offered to a person who has accepted the gift of Salvation. Baptism is a testimony to others who have witnessed what Jesus has done in the life of the believer. (Matt 28:19-20, Acts 2:41; 8:36-38)
 - ii. We believe the mode of Baptism is to be by immersion with water only (Mark 1:10).
 - b. Communion

- i. We believe that Communion (The Lord's Supper) is a sacred ceremony where a Christian can remember the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Communion is a testimony to others of the life changing power of Salvation. (1 Cor 11:23-32)
 - ii. We believe that Communion is for all Christians who wish to participate.
 - iii. We believe the mode of Communion is by bread and grape juice only.
- 11. The Priesthood of the Believer
 - a. We believe that every Christian can go to God directly in prayer (Heb 4:16, 1 Tim 2:5, 1 Pet 2:5, 9).
- 12. Soul Liberty
 - a. We believe that religion of any type should be individual, personal and voluntary.
 - b. We believe that each person has the right to study the Bible for themselves (2 Tim 2:15).
 - c. We believe that each person will one day give an account to God of how they lived their life (2 Cor 4:2; 5:10, Rom 14:5, 12, Titus 1:9).
- 13. Return of Christ
 - a. We believe that in the future Jesus will return to earth and gather all Christians together to meet him in the air with the purpose of taking them to heaven. After this the earth will experience seven years of tribulation. Jesus will then once again return to earth and will establish His government where He will rule the earth for one thousand years. (1 Thess 4:13-18, Titus 2:13, 1 Thess 1:10, Rev 3:10, Zech 14:4-11, Rev 19:11-16, 20:1-6, Ps 89:3-4).

Unique Church Distinctives:

1. We believe that the 'sign' gifts given by the Holy Spirit to the early church believers in the book of Acts have ceased. We reject Pentecostal theology. We reject Charismatic theology.
2. We believe that the positions of Pastor and Deacon are to be held by men.
3. We believe in and follow the gospel message from that of a "Traditional Soteriological" perspective. We believe the Gospel is for all people and that God's desire is for all people to be saved. We reject all forms of Calvinism including Modern-Calvinism, New-Calvinism, Neo-Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism, Reformed Baptist Theology, Reformed Theology and any other such variety. We believe scriptures such as Eph 1:4, Rom 8:28-30, 2 Thess 2:13, 2 Tim 2:10 and 1 Pet 1:1-2 teach that God has chosen all of humanity to be His. All of mankind is special to God. He has made us different to that of nature and animals and He loves us in a special way. We are the only creatures of His creation that can call on Him for salvation and he invites us all to do so. Furthermore, we believe that God for all time has known who will and will not accept His Salvation. In Eph 1:5 God in His all-knowing power promises to adopt anyone who calls on His name to be saved. Those who call upon the Lord to be saved are God's elect and those who don't are forever separated from Him against His loving desire. God does not force or conscript a person to be saved but instead He gives each person a free will to accept or reject His gift. Once a person puts their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, they become a part of God's family. During life the Christian will be continuously transformed. At death the Christian will be instantly, completely and perfectly transformed to be like Christ. (John 3:16, Eph 1:4, Rom 12:1-2)

4. We believe the Bible, that being 66 books of cannon, is God's Word. Inspired and correct in its original writings. We do not believe that the King James Version is the only version that should be used by Christians. We do not believe that the Textus Receptus (or Majority or Received) texts are the only texts that should be used by Christians. We do not believe that the Alexandrian (Westcott & Hort) texts are the only texts that should be used by Christians. We believe that every Christian has the liberty to decide and reason (educate, evaluate, critique) for themselves what version of the bible they should use and that no Christian, Church, Mission, College or University has the right to impose their personal convictions about the matter on another. For continuity sake, we use the MEV in our services and preaching whenever possible.
5. We believe that any person who has sinned in the areas of child pedophilia, rape, incest, adultery and/or homosexuality or any person involved in covering up such a sin are disqualified from being a Pastor or Deacon. Any crime in these areas committed against the law of Australia will be reported to the police.
6. We believe in such a thing as well written and poorly writing music. This distinction encompasses areas such as rhythm, beat, melody, harmony, syncopation, composition and lyrics. In our meetings we strive to worship God with songs that are well written. Songs are to be respectful, meaningful, harmonious, God honouring and congregational (meaning that the regular everyday person can easily sing them). During our meetings we keep stage lighting to a minimum and we do not especially highlight or emphasize the musical talents of others. The volume of the music or individual instruments should not overpower the volume of the singing and the songs chosen should not be overly repetitive or simplistic. A balance of new and old hymns, psalms and choruses is favourable. As the Cooperation holds services in a formal setting/atmosphere it is requested that those representing the Cooperation are to dress appropriately for that type of setting.

Conclusion:

This Cooperation shall be called the 'Bulimba Bible Study Cooperation' or 'Bulimba Bible Study Co-op' for short, with an Acronym of 'BBSC'. When the Cooperation one day becomes a church, the name shall change to 'Bulimba Baptist Sanctuary Church', and it shall hold the same Acronym of 'BBSC'. This document shall not change during the lifetime of the Cooperation or during the lifetime of the Church that is to come, unless by a majority vote of the members by 90%. The senior pastor can veto any vote that passes 90% if he so wishes unless it is a vote to dismiss the pastor himself. All pastors and deacons shall adhere too and respect the intent of this document and are bound by it. All guest speakers, while not bound by this document, shall adhere too and respect the intent of this document during their stay.