

## Doctrine of Ordinances, Mission, and Relation to Government

Last week we studied the Doctrine of the Church. Our goal under that head is to describe what the church is. However, there are several corollary doctrines relating to the church in what it does and where it has its place in the world. Today we turn to the “Doctrine of Ordinances, Mission, and Relation to Government.”

### Doctrine of Ordinances

| Our statement  | FBFI statement   | Toronto Baptist Seminary statement  |
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| <p>Unfortunately, we neglected to include anything on this in our doctrinal statement.</p> | <p><b>Section 10. The Ordinances:</b> We believe there are two ordinances, baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water and is properly called “believer’s baptism.” It sets forth, in a beautiful and solemn way, our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, and the resultant responsibility to “walk in the newness of life” (Rm 6.4). Baptism is a prerequisite to church membership. The Lord’s Supper is the commemoration of the Lord’s death until He comes, is a reminder of our continual fellowship with Him, and should be preceded by careful self-examination (Mt 28.19-20; Acts 8.36-39; Rm 6.3-5; 1 Cor 11.23-32).</p> | <p>X. Of Baptism and The Lord’s Supper</p> <p>We believe that Christian baptism is (a) the immersion in water of a believer, (b) into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; (c) to show forth our union with the crucified, buried, and risen Christ, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; (d) that it is a condition of church membership and of the observance of the Lord’s Supper (e) in which the members of the church by the sacred use of bread and wine are to commemorate together the love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self-examination.</p> <p><b>Explanatory</b></p> <p>By the statement that baptism is a condition of church membership and of the observance of the Lord’s Supper, we take the same position as all evangelical believers, differing only from our brethren in our insistence that scriptural baptism consists only in the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and since the Scripture requires that baptism shall follow immediately upon faith in Christ, and that this was the invariable practice of the apostolic church, we conceive it to be an obligation involved in our Lord’s Commission to teach men to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded them to maintain a testimony to the authority of New Testament precept and practice; and we further believe that to take any other than the position stated in this article would be to reverse the scriptural order of the ordinance, and to magnify the importance of the Supper above that of Baptism, and would involve the taking of a position at variance with that taken by all other bodies of evangelical believers in respect to the order of the ordinance. This statement is intended to ensure a clear testimony to the supreme authority of Christ as His will is revealed in the Scripture (1 Cor. 11:26).</p> |

### Observations

1. The fact that we left out a statement on the ordinances is the primary motivator in considering updating our statement. It was a mistake to leave it out.
2. Both the FBFI and Toronto statements state the position well, except that the Toronto statement requires baptism before partaking of the Lord’s Supper. They are dogmatic in their explanation that to hold otherwise is to be “at variance with that taken by all other bodies of evangelical believers in respect to the order of the ordinance.” The word “all” is problematic, as is the reliance on what others hold – the only matter that is decisive is, “What does the Bible say?”

<sup>1 Cor 11.28</sup> But a man must examine **himself**, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

3. The Scriptures require the **individual**, not the church, to examine someone concerning taking the bread and the cup. For this reason, we don’t hold to the Toronto Baptist view on this question.
4. As a suggestion for us, the FBFI statement on the ordinances seems exactly correct on the doctrine, no need to change anything of significance in it.

**Doctrine of Mission**

| Our statement   | FBFI statement   | Toronto Baptist Seminary statement   |
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| <p><b>Missions</b></p> <p>We believe that it is the responsibility of the Church and each individual believer to be concerned with the evangelization of the lost through every means possible, including personal efforts and the support of others through money and prayers.</p> <p>Matthew 28.19-20, Acts 1.8, 2 Timothy 4.2.</p> | <p><b>Section 11. The Great Commission:</b> We believe the Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned us to take the Gospel to the world, and evangelism and church-planting at home and abroad should be primary in the program of the local church, which includes baptism and instruction of believers (Mt 28.19-20; Acts 1.8).</p> | <p>From their statement on “Of the Local Church”</p> <p>(f) we believe that the true mission of the church is found in our Lord’s commission: First, to teach, or disciple, all nations, i.e., to preach the gospel in all the world, to make individual disciples, second to baptize, third, to teach and instruct as He has commanded, and thus to build up the church; (we do not believe in the reversal of this order);</p> |

**Observations**

1. Each of these statements are commendable, our statement could be enhanced by adding a few details from the other two.
2. From the FBFI statement, the primacy of evangelism and church-planting is important: the church is not a social agency.
3. From the Toronto statement, the step-by-step delineation of the Church’s mission is helpful.

**Suggestion:**

**Mission**

We believe that the primary mission of the Church and each individual believer is the evangelization of the lost through every means possible, including personal efforts and the support of others through money and prayers. The church fulfills its mission by preaching the gospel, making disciples, and then baptizing and teaching the disciples in order to build up the church in the image of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28.19-20; Acts 1.8; Ephesians 4.11-16; 2 Timothy 4.2

**Doctrine of Civil Government**

The Toronto statement has a helpful statement concerning Civil Government:

We believe that civil government is (a) of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; (b) that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed; (c) except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ; (d) Who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth.

In support we would add the following passages:

Acts 4.19-20, 5.29; Romans 13.1-7; 1 Peter 2.13-17