

Principles of the Baptist Faith

- a. Whilst holding many aspects of Christian truth, in common with other denominations, Baptists hold to an absolute conviction that Jesus must be first in our lives. This conviction shapes the way we express and live out our Christian faith, our life together and our attitude to the world around us. Baptists are also committed to the view that Jesus can only be truly first if people have the liberty, free of all human constructs, to freely acknowledge Him. The inevitable result of liberty and freedom under Jesus Christ is considerable diversity.
- b. Baptists believe every individual believer, being a regenerate person fully accepting the truth that Jesus lives within them and fulfils His divine ministry in and through them, is free to access God and serve Him in his or her own way, within biblical truth and the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- c. By practicing believer's baptism and gathering around the Table of Christ in Communion, Baptists signify their identity as the people of God, the Church, called to communal life and mission under Christ's lordship. With Christ as the head, Baptists collectively seek to follow the leading and direction given by Jesus to serve Him to their generation. Similarly, leadership amongst Baptists is based on Jesus' example of servant leadership; a leadership marked by a clear appreciation of the grace and forgiveness of God, a fervent desire to dwell in the presence of God and an abandonment of power and control in favour of love and servanthood. As a result, Baptist Churches, led by Jesus, are free to shape their own style, language and ministry and therefore can be very different from each other.
- d. However, in their diversity Tasmanian Baptists are united by a distinctive emphasis upon fundamental principles of the Christian faith, as revealed in the New Testament and summarised within the doctrinal statement contained within this Constitution.
- e. Baptists, since first emerging in the early 1600s, being convicted by the leading of Jesus to action, have been known as dissenters and nonconformists and have developed a heritage marked by:
 - i. a commitment to be an evangelical people with a conviction to share their faith in Jesus with others through Christian service and the Word, believing that the truth of the Gospel needs no protection and will become clear and evident through the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. a commitment to the priesthood of all believers, to the nurturing of the individual soul with the Spirit of Christ within, to an equality amongst believers, to a working out of individual calling through Christian service and missionary work.
 - iii. a commitment to the authority of scripture over all other human traditions and to the separation of church and state in all its forms, a recognition that God's Kingdom is wider than the Baptist denomination, to speaking truth in love trusting God to reveal Himself and draw His people to maturity.
 - iv. a commitment to seek justice, peace and equality, working to alleviate poverty and human suffering throughout the world, challenging the worldly structures that create economic and political bondage, and upholding an ecological perspective that focuses on the care and stewardship of God's total creation.