

Faithbridge Convictions, Persuasions, and Opinions

1) CONVICTIONS – The following are the core Christian beliefs that we understand to be the essence of Christianity:

- ❑ **Authority of Scripture** – The sole basis of our beliefs is the Bible, the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is the Word of God, fully true; our final authority in all matters of faith, practice and lifestyle.
- ❑ **God** – There is One true God who exists eternally in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, who are of one substance and equal in power and glory.
- ❑ **Deity of Christ** – Jesus Christ is 100% God and yet 100% man, born of the virgin Mary.
- ❑ **Substitutionary Atonement** – Though all have sinned and deserve eternal separation from God, Jesus Christ died on the cross as our substitute – taking upon Himself the penalty for our sins.
- ❑ **Resurrection of Christ** – On the third day Jesus rose from the dead in the body which had been laid in the tomb, defeating sin and death.
- ❑ **Salvation by Grace through Faith** – A person can be saved from the condition of sin and spiritual death only by the grace of God, when that person experiences the free gift of new birth by placing his or her personal faith in Jesus Christ.
- ❑ **Second Coming of Christ** – Jesus Christ will return someday, at a date undisclosed by Scripture, to judge the living and the dead. Those who have received the gift of salvation will spend eternity with Christ. Those who have rejected the gift of salvation will be condemned to eternal separation from God.

2) PERSUASIONS – The following are beliefs about which we have persuasions, though recognizing many biblical Christians have drawn different conclusions:

- ❑ **Predestination** – All have sinned and cannot save themselves (Rom. 3:23). Jesus died for all, and God is drawing all people to Himself (John 12:31-33). Before the foundation of the world, God – who stands outside our continuum of time – foreknew who would place their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). His foreknowledge, though, does not logically necessitate His predestinated salvation of certain individuals. God has, indeed, predetermined that the Church will be saved (corporate election), but a person becomes a part of the Church through responding to His wooing, prevenient grace and choosing to place his or her faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9-10).
- ❑ **Assurance of Salvation** – Scripture makes clear that it is the privilege of all Christian believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation from the very moment in which they trust Christ as their Savior, and thereafter (1 John 5:11-12). This assurance is not based upon any kind of merit, but is produced by the witness of the Holy Spirit who confirms in the believer the testimony of God in His written Word (Rom. 8:15-16; 1 John 3:24).
- ❑ **Tongues** – The supernatural spiritual gifts still exist today. Speaking in tongues is a valid gift for the church today and should operate under the boundaries of 1 Corinthians 14. One such boundary: Tongues confuses unbelievers attending a corporate worship service (1 Cor. 14:23) and should therefore be expressed in believers' settings such as like-hearted prayer groups and personal prayer times. Tongues may accompany being filled with the Holy Spirit but are **not** "the sign" that a person has been filled with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 14:22).
- ❑ **Baptism** – We believe water Baptism is a sacrament to be observed by the Church today, a means by which we experience God's grace tangibly, though not a requisite to salvation or church membership. Faithbridge offers to those who have placed their faith in Christ any of three modes of water baptism which have been practiced throughout church history: immersion, pouring, and sprinkling. Faithbridge offers either infant dedication or infant baptism, leaving that decision to parents. Any prior baptism in a Christian church, including infant baptism, will be acceptable, although we have a strong preference for celebrating adult, believer's baptism.

- ❑ **Communion** – We believe the Lord’s Supper is a sacrament to be observed by the Church today, a means by which we experience God’s grace tangibly, though not a requisite to salvation or church membership. We believe that Communion is an outward sign or symbol of the broken Body and shed blood of Jesus Christ. While we do not believe that the bread and juice turn literally into the actual flesh and blood of Christ, we do believe that in Communion we experience the very real presence and grace of Jesus Christ with us.
- ❑ **Spiritual Warfare** – Satan and demons exist. They were defeated through the cross but will not be destroyed until the Second Coming. Believers have authority in Jesus’ name over demonic powers. Believers may be oppressed by demons but not possessed. Prayer is essential for the Church.
- ❑ **Women in Ministry** – God has established authority in the home based on gender, but He has established authority in the church based on office. God does call and equip women for pastoral ministry offices.
- ❑ **Church Government** – Several different church government configurations can fulfill the Bible’s description of church government. Faithbridge utilizes a hierarchical configuration involving the Senior Pastor as presiding elder, with a bishop as the overseer of that elder. The Faithbridge Staff drives ministry decisions at Faithbridge, and the Council of Lay Elders serves in an advisory and accountability role, primarily to the Senior Pastor.

3) OPINIONS – The following are the sorts of topics we would welcome opinions about, but would not even argue for:

- ❑ Which Bible translation is best for preaching
- ❑ Who wrote the book of Hebrews
- ❑ Various End Times scenarios and timelines

Faithbridge’s Position on Several of Today’s Social Issues:

- ❑ **Abortion** – We believe the life inside a mother’s womb is a living being (Ps. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:4-5) and, therefore, we believe that the act of abortion is incongruent with God’s will (Ex. 20:13). At the same time, ours is not a message of guilt for past choices, but of grace—knowing God offers full forgiveness to anyone who repents of their sin and turns to Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:13-15).
- ❑ **Alcohol** – Scripture never condemns the non-intoxicating consumption of alcohol; however, it does condemn drunkenness (see Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3). Inappropriately used, alcohol can damage one’s health, safety, job, and family functionality.

As followers of Christ, we must ensure that the exercise of our freedom to consume alcohol never becomes “a stumbling block to the weak” (1 Cor. 8:9), including those with a propensity towards intoxication, victims of alcohol-related tragedies, relatives of alcoholics, children and under-age students, Bible-belt teetotalers, and pre-Christian skeptics who assume alcohol is forbidden and seek to find faults in Christians. Our personal preferences are always of secondary concern to the reputation of Christ, since we have been crucified with Christ and thus no longer live, but rather, live by and through Christ indwelling us (Gal. 2:20).

Faithbridgers must do everything possible so as to create a safe place for “weak” people, while also preventing any and all potential legal and reputation controversies in a world thick with lawsuits and tabloids; therefore, we choose to abstain from serving or consuming alcohol at all Faithbridge-related functions, acquiescing to the *spirit* of the law over the *letter* of the law, when in doubt. We find no Scriptural basis to prohibit the temperate consumption of alcohol in non-Faithbridge contexts – where circumstances preclude a weak person from stumbling and a Christian from compromising his or her witness for Christ.

- ❑ **Cohabitation** – Scripture offers healthy guidelines for marriage between a man and a woman in terms of procreation (Gen. 1:27, 28), godly intimacy (Gen. 2:18), the nurture of children (Ps. 127:3), and sexual activity (1 Cor. 7:2). Outside of marriage, the potential negative consequences of living together are many: lack of commitment, confused intentions, physical and emotional damage, autonomy over sacrifice, abuse, and problems for children of cohabiters socially, behaviorally, and academically.

Though cohabitation doesn't destine a marriage to failure, couples decrease their statistical odds for success when choosing to live together first. Despite society's encouragement to do so, Faithbridge encourages resisting the temptation and choosing to live consistently with the counsel of Scripture. We at Faithbridge are here to encourage, not condemn. We invite those currently cohabitating or considering a cohabitating relationship to get involved in our premarital counseling program. We heartily advocate marriage and stand ready to help couples facilitate and celebrate that life-changing commitment.

- **Homosexuality** – God loves homosexuals ([John 3:16](#)), and we welcome and want homosexuals to attend Faithbridge ([Mark 2:17](#)). At the same time, we believe the practice of homosexuality falls short of God's plan for sexuality, and is thus a sin ([Lev. 18:22](#); [Rom. 1:26-27](#); [1 Cor. 6:9-11](#); [Jude 7](#)). After repenting of sin and turning to Christ, any person is encouraged to join Faithbridge. Any recovering homosexual interested in leadership at Faithbridge is welcomed and encouraged to explore the possibility, but we would ask this person to wait for a period sufficient to establish a pattern of freedom and victory, in light of ([1 Tim. 3:6](#)). (We ask this of all potential leaders, regardless of their prior hurts, habits, or hang-ups.) We do not believe the parameters of Scripture permit the ordination of self-avowed, practicing homosexuals, nor do we condone ceremonies celebrating same-sex unions.