

Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington (Thomas Campbell)

Thirteen Propositions

Let none imagine that the subjoined propositions are at all intended as an overture towards a new creed, or standard, for the church; or, as in any wise designed to be made a term of communion;--nothing can be farther from our intention. They are merely designed for opening up the way, that we may come fairly and firmly to original ground: upon clear and certain premises: and take up things just as the Apostles left them.--That thus disentangled from the accruing embarrassments of intervening ages, we may stand with evidence upon the same ground on which the church stood at the beginning--Having said so much to solicit attention and prevent mistake, we submit as follows.

1. **That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one;** consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures...
2. That although the Church of Christ upon earth must necessarily exist in particular and distinct societies, locally separate one from another, **yet there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions among them...** And for this purpose they ought all to walk by the same rule... and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind...
3. That in order to do this, nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion, but **what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God.** Nor ought anything to be admitted, as of Divine obligation... but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles upon the New Testament Church; either in express terms or by approved precedent.
4. That although the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inseparably connected... one perfect and entire revelation of the Divine will... [and] therefore in that respect can not be separated..., the **New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament Church,** and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was for ... the Old Testament Church....
5. That with respect to the commands and ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ... no human authority has power to interfere... by making laws for the Church; **nor can anything more be required of Christians in such cases, but only that they observe these commands and ordinances...** Much less has any human authority power to impose new commands or ordinances upon the Church, which our Lord Jesus Christ has not enjoined. **Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the Church, or be made a term of communion among Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament.**
6. That although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, **when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word,** yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians farther than they perceive the connection.... Therefore, no such deductions can be made terms of communion... Hence, it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the Church's confession.
7. That although doctrinal exhibitions of the great system of Divine truths... be highly expedient, and the more full and explicit they be for those purposes, the better; yet, as these must be in a great measure the effect of human reasoning... **they ought not to be made terms of Christian communion;** unless we suppose, what is contrary to fact, that none have a right to the communion of the Church, but such as possess a very clear and decisive judgment... whereas the Church from the beginning did, and ever will, consist of little children and young men, as well as fathers.

8. That as it is not necessary that **persons should have a particular knowledge or distinct apprehension of all Divinely revealed truths in order to entitle them to a place in the Church**; neither should they, for this purpose, be required to make a profession more extensive than their knowledge; but... having a due measure of Scriptural self-knowledge respecting their lost and perishing condition... and of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ... is all that is absolutely necessary to qualify them for admission into his Church.
9. That all that are enabled through grace to make such a profession, and to manifest the reality of it in their tempers and conduct, should consider each other as the precious saints of God, should love each other as brethren, etc....
Whom God hath thus joined together no man should dare to put asunder.
10. **That division among the Christians is a horrid evil, fraught with many evils. It is antichristian**, as it destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ; as if he were divided against himself, excluding and excommunicating a part of himself. **It is antisciptural**, as being strictly prohibited by his sovereign authority; a direct violation of his express command. **It is antinatural**, as it excites Christians to contemn, to hate, and oppose one another, who are bound by the highest and most endearing obligations to love each other as brethren, even as Christ has loved them....
11. That (in some instances) a partial neglect of the expressly revealed will of God, and (in others) an assumed authority for making the approbation of human opinions and human inventions a term of communion... **are, and have been, the immediate, obvious, and universally acknowledged causes of all the corruptions and divisions that ever have taken place in the Church of God....**
12. That all that is necessary to the highest state of perfection and purity of the Church upon earth is, first, that none be received as members but such as having that due measure of Scriptural self-knowledge described above... nor, secondly, that any be retained in her communion longer than they continue to manifest the reality of their profession by their temper and conduct. **Thirdly, that her ministers, duly and Scripturally qualified, inculcate none other things than those very articles of faith and holiness expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God.** Lastly, that in all their administrations they keep close by the observance of all Divine ordinances, after the example of the primitive Church, exhibited in the New Testament; **without any additions whatsoever of human opinions or inventions of men.**
13. Lastly. That if any circumstantial indispensable necessary to the observance of Divine ordinances be not found upon the page of express revelation, such, and such only, as are absolutely necessary for this purpose should be adopted under the title of human expedients, without any pretense to a more sacred origin, **so that any subsequent alteration or difference in the observance of these things might produce no contention nor division in the Church.**