

The Leeds Creed

(A) Divine Revelation¹

Clause 1: On the Existence of Scripture²

I/We believe: -

- 1.1 In the existence of divinely revealed Jewish Scripture³
- 1.2 The only infallible⁴ Word of God,
- 1.3 Commonly known as the Bible.
- 1.4 It nurtures our souls
- 1.5 And presents a neo-dualistic,⁵ theistic⁶ world view⁷
- 1.6 As opposed to the foolish delusions of Atheism⁸ and Monism,⁹
- 1.7 This biblical view offers no compromise
- 1.8 With any other world view
- 1.9 Because the differences between them are irreconcilable

- 1.10 Written by a variety of human authors,
- 1.11 The Bible's non-scientific language
- 1.12 Has accommodated itself¹⁰
- 1.13 To limited human understanding.
- 1.14 Under divine direction,
- 1.15 Its many teachings have been presented
- 1.16 In a manner that can be understood
- 1.17 By both its original and present-day hearers.

- 1.18 Through many forms of literature,
- 1.19 It reveals the presence of absolute,
- 1.20 Unchanging, objective truth,
- 1.21 Though it leaves many matters,
- 1.22 Including the observation of Jewish Festivals or Dietary Laws¹¹
- 1.23 To individual conscience
- 1.24 And to personal choice

- 1.25 The Bible can still speak today,
- 1.26 As a *'living word,'*
- 1.27 To guide and encourage those

¹ This section had originally been placed immediately after the section on salvation. However, on Tuesday 13th February 2007, it was moved to the beginning of the Leeds Creed, due to the writer having been influenced by the early chapters of Grudem (1994) which suggested that it was more logical to define how truth was revealed before showing exactly what truths were revealed.

² The clause titles are for private reference and need not be recited. However, should readers wish to recite them, then this is perfectly acceptable.

³ Jewish scripture refers to what the Church would call the 'Old' and 'New' Testaments. Both were entrusted mainly to Jewish people (Romans 3:2), most of the authors being Jewish themselves or greatly influenced by Jewish thought-forms.

⁴ 'Infallible' means having 'a final authority' and to be 'without error in matters pertaining to faith and practice.'

⁵ 'Dualism' is the worldview which stresses that all reality is divided into two completely opposing domains, one run by a good and the other a bad 'spiritual being.' Absolute dualism (of the kind associated with the Ancient Persian religion) assumed that these two 'beings' were morally opposite but equal in power. In contrast, the neo-dualistic world view of Christianity assumes that God and Satan are moral opposites but not equal in power or knowledge, (God being the more powerful). This means that God will overcome Satan.

⁶ 'Theistic' refers to Theism, the belief that an infinite-personal God, who is distinct from His creation, can both pervade and relate to that creation in a deeply loving way

⁷ 'World view' is a fundamental outlook on life, where particular assumptions are deeply held, which then prompt individuals, groups, institutions or whole societies to interpret reality in a distinctive way. *I.e.* an atheistic world view would attempt to interpret the activities of evil spirits in a purely scientific way.

⁸ 'Atheism' disbelief in the existence of God and other spiritual entities like angels or demons

⁹ 'Monism' the worldview which stresses that all reality is an undivided 'one,' distinctions are all viewed as unreal and will ultimately merge into one 'substance' or 'principle.' Monism is the prevailing worldview of Eastern Religion and is directly opposed to any form of dualism. (It is not to be confused with 'Monotheism' which is the belief in one God.)

¹⁰ This point is made to safeguard scripture from being treated as a scientific text book. The original hearers would not have understood basic scientific concepts and it would therefore have been senseless of God to have spoken in scientific language. Extreme Christian Fundamentalists in America tend to ignore this rather obvious point.

¹¹ See Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 8-9:22 & Colossians 2:16-17

- 1.28 Whose minds and hearts
- 1.29 Have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit¹²

Clause 2: On the Authority of Scripture

I/We believe: -

- 2.1 In the fulfilment of all of scripture's unconditional promises
- 2.2 And in its sole authority in matters of faith and practice
 - 2.2.1 In relation to tradition,
 - 2.2.2 Culture,
 - 2.2.3 Reason,
 - 2.2.4 Experience
 - 2.2.5 And earthly rulers¹³

Clause 3: On the Interpretation of Scripture

I/We believe: -

- 3.1 In the need for a rightful interpretation of scripture
- 3.2 That neither adds to God's word,
- 3.3 Takes away from God's word
 - 3.3.1 Nor confuses God's word, by intermingling it
 - 3.3.2 With false human philosophies
 - 3.3.3 And the attractive deceptions of Satan

Clause 4: On Midrash Interpretation

I/We believe: -

- 4.1 In the continued validity of Midrash interpretation,
- 4.2 As used by Jesus and the Apostles
- 4.3 And in its ability to get to the heart of divine revelation
- 4.4 And to help interpret all human affairs¹⁴

(B) God Almighty

Clause 5: On God's Creative Holy-Love

I/We believe: -

- 5.1 In a whole variety of ways,
- 5.2 That scripture reveals you¹⁵
- 5.3 As Almighty Lord, as Yahweh,¹⁶
- 5.4 The eternal, one true God of holy-love,
- 5.5 The maker and upholder of all of Creation
- 5.6 Who has chosen to delegate to Mankind
- 5.7 The responsibility of properly managing it
- 5.8 In an attitude of love and care
- 5.9 Known also as El or Elohim,¹⁷
- 5.10 The only majestic God;
- 5.11 You know everything
- 5.12 And you are everywhere,

¹² Clauses 1:25-29 were inserted on Monday, 7th January 2008

¹³ '*Earthly rulers*' refers to those human authorities (like the state and the media) who have no right to dictate what Christians should or should not believe, in relation to matters pertaining to their faith.

¹⁴ '*Human affairs*' refers to all past, present and future human attitudes, behaviours and events

¹⁵ God is personally addressed throughout this document in order to turn what may well have been a somewhat dry recitation of truth into an act of worship. It is hoped that this Creed will amount to something far more than a '*shopping list*' of correct beliefs. Christians are encouraged to personally interact with it, in a private, family or congregational setting.

¹⁶ The name '*Yahweh*' means '*absolute Lord or enduring Master, whose existence should never be doubted.*'

¹⁷ '*El*' and '*Elohim*' are respectively, the singular and plural forms of '*most high God/s*' or '*majestic, awesome God/s.*' The plural form does allow scope for the doctrine of the Trinity.

- 5.13 Displaying your presence in many ways.
- 5.14 To give you praise and reverence
- 5.15 Is, most assuredly, the beginning of wisdom

Clause 6: On the Trinity

I/We believe: -

- 6.1. You are the God of Israel,
- 6.2 The faithful giver of binding covenants and laws.
- 6.3 You consist of three united, loving Persons;
 - 6.3.1 Father,
 - 6.3.2 Son
 - 6.2.3 And Holy Spirit;
- 6.4 Each possessing, to a limitless degree
- 6.5 All of the attributes¹⁸ of God,
 - 6.5.1 Both shared and unshared,
 - 6.5.2 Known and unknown.
- 6.6 Yet, one God most high, and not three,
- 6.7 Full of grace and mercy

(C) God the Father

Clause 7: On Divine Election

I/We believe: -

- 7.1 You, God, Our Heavenly Father,¹⁹
- 7.2 Are revealed as Father and not as Mother,²⁰
- 7.3 You are worthy of awe and respect.
- 7.4 You ordained your Elect²¹ to do good works
- 7.5 From before the foundation of the World,
- 7.6 Whilst leaving wilful reprobates²² to perish in their sins

Clause 8: On Common Grace

I/We believe: -

- 8.1 In you, gracious Father
- 8.2 And in your universal love
- 8.3 Which holds everything together by your common grace
- 8.4 And in your fervent desire to see the salvation of all people

Clause 9: On Divine Authority

I/We believe: -

- 9.1 Abba²³ Father, in your special love
- 9.2 For us, your children by redemption,
- 9.3 And in your right to claim total obedience
- 9.4 In every area of our lives;
- 9.5 For obedience to you,
- 9.6 Brings true freedom and peace

¹⁸ The word 'attribute' means 'personal characteristic.' The 'shared' attributes are those which God and Mankind have in common, *i.e.* creativity; whereas the 'unshared' attributes are those which God alone possesses, *i.e.* the ability to be everywhere at once (omnipresent). A fuller discussion of the divine attributes may be found in the writer's book, 'About God,' first published in 2007.

¹⁹ This term stresses the Father's loftiness, mystery and independence from His Creation

²⁰ Here, a deliberate tilt is made against extreme Feminist Theology

²¹ The 'elect' are those chosen by God to be saved from their sins through belief in Christ

²² 'Reprobates' are those whom God leaves to their own sinful devices. However, given what is revealed about divine justice, it does seem likely that, at a particular point in their lives, people are given the grace to choose whether they belong to the saved elect or to the doomed reprobates. This is particularly the case when the Gospel is being preached.

²³ Meaning 'dear' or 'most revered Father;' a term of intimacy, denoting our complete dependency upon God as our Father

(D) God the Son

Clause 10: On the Person of Jesus

I/We believe: -

- 10.1 In you, Lord Jesus Christ,
- 10.2 The Father's only begotten Son,
- 10.3 Fully God and fully Man,
- 10.4 Harmoniously united in One Person,
- 10.5 Without alteration, division or confusion

Clause 11: On the Incarnation

I/We believe: -

- 11.1 When sent by the Father,
- 11.2 You, Lord Jesus, descended from Heaven,
- 11.3 Restraining, but not losing your deity.
- 11.4 You were conceived by the Holy Spirit
- 11.5 And born of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
- 11.6 Into a poor carpenter's family
- 11.7 A Hebrew of the tribe of Judah
- 11.8 Descended from King David, Abraham and Adam

Clause 12: On Jesus and Judaism

I/We believe: -

- 12.1 Whilst growing to manhood,
- 12.2 Amidst the fanaticism, immorality
- 12.3 And hatred of the Ancient Middle East
- 12.4 You were tempted in every possible way,
- 12.5 Yet you did not sin
 - 12.5.1 In either thought,
 - 12.5.2 Word
 - 12.5.3 Or deed
- 12.6 So that you could offer a perfect, unblemished sacrifice

- 12.7 As a good teacher and *'prophet like Moses'*
- 12.8 You actively participated in the Jewish religion,
 - 12.8.1 Attending its liturgies,
 - 12.8.2 Celebrating its festivals,
 - 12.8.3 Interpreting its scriptures,
 - 12.8.4 Fulfilling its Laws
 - 12.8.5 And confronting its abuses.
- 12.9 You exposed the lie of anti-Semitism
- 12.10 By showing that Christianity is firmly rooted within Ancient Judaism

Clause 13: On the Suffering of Jesus

I/We believe: -

- 13.1 When under the tyrannical, religious-political authority
- 13.2 Of Jerusalem and Rome²⁴
- 13.3 You, the Word made Flesh,
 - 13.3.1 Were betrayed,
 - 13.3.2 Unlawfully arrested,
 - 13.3.3 Tortured
 - 13.3.4 And Crucified

²⁴ Note how both the religious and political authorities united to *'gang up'* against Jesus. The scourging He endured at the hands of the Roman soldiers would have acted as a severe form of torture.

Clause 14: On the Atonement

I/We believe: -

14.1 Whilst enduring the worst kinds of suffering

14.1.1 You paid the price for all of our sin,

14.2.2 Fully pacifying God's righteous anger,

14.3.3 And fully revealing His boundless love.

14.4.4 You completely destroyed the curse of the Mosaic Law,²⁵

14.4.5 Endured the worst sufferings of Hell

14.5.6 And utterly routed the powers of evil

Clause 15: On the Victory of Jesus

I/We believe: -

15.1 After being bruised, wounded, killed and buried,

15.2 You descended to preach to the spirits in Hades,²⁶

15.2.1 To announce their doom,

15.2.2 To release the righteous dead

15.2.3 And to demonstrate the completeness of your victory at Calvary,

15.3 Leaving those in Hell with no excuse to complain against God's justice

Clause 16: On the Resurrection of Jesus

I/We believe: -

16.1 On the third day, in fulfilment of scripture

16.2 You, Jesus, rose bodily from the dead

16.3 Leaving behind an empty tomb.

16.4 You displayed your almighty power,

16.5 Vindicated your claims

16.6 And demonstrated what our own resurrection will be like

Clause 17: On the Priesthood of Jesus

I/We believe: -

17.1 After comforting and teaching your followers

17.2 You triumphantly ascended with angels into Heaven

17.3 There to be seated in divine majesty

17.4 At the Father's right hand,

17.5 Our Great High Priest

17.6 And only mediator between God and humanity

Clause 18: On the Continual Work of Jesus

I/We believe: -

18.1 That, in Heaven, as the only Head of the Church,

18.2 You are watching over us, your people,

18.3 Praying constantly on our behalf

18.4 And giving out many blessings,

18.5 Whilst judging faithless individuals, groups and nations

Clause 19: On the Return of Jesus

I/We believe: -

19.1 When the wickedness of Mankind

19.2 Has, under the anti-Christ

²⁵ These refer to all of the 613 legal injunctions given in the Pentateuch (the first five books of scripture: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). They are a curse in the sense that, whilst they can expose sin, they cannot cure it. As a result, people fall short of what the Mosaic Law requires and receive the punishments for disobedience which are described in Leviticus 26:14f, Deuteronomy 28:15f & Romans 7:7f

²⁶ The word '*Hades*' means '*place of the dead*.'

- 19.3 Brought the whole of the human race
- 19.4 To the brink of extinction,
- 19.5 You will, in God's time and not Man's,²⁷
- 19.6 Come again to this World
- 19.7 With all of your angels and saints,²⁸
- 19.7.1 To display your glory,
- 19.7.2 To overthrow evil
- 19.7.3 And to rescue a globally persecuted remnant of believers²⁹

- 19.10 You will begin judging
- 19.11 The living and the dead
- 19.12 Before ruling the nations with 'a rod of iron'³⁰
- 19.13 And establishing a millennial kingdom³¹
- 19.14 Of love and justice

- 19.15 I/We repudiate any impatient folly
- 19.15.1 Which attempts to predict the date of your return
- 19.15.2 Or which strives to bring forward the time of your coming
- 19.15.3 By attempting to install your kingdom through human effort alone.³²
- 19.16 Such folly gives power to evildoers³³
- 19.17 And brings your people into disrepute

Clause 20: On the Final Triumph of Jesus

I/We believe: -

- 20.1 After ruling on earth for one thousand years
- 20.2 You will crush Satan's final great rebellion
- 20.3 Then reign in triumph forever
- 20.4 Over a new heaven and a new earth

(E) God the Holy Spirit

Clause 21: On the Person of the Holy Spirit

I/We believe: -

- 21.1 In you, God the Holy Spirit,
- 21.2 Third Person of the Trinity³⁴
- 21.3 The preserver of all of creation.
- 21.4 You willingly proceed from the Father, through the Son
- 22.5 With no loss of deity

²⁷ This point is of great importance because it's meant to actively discourage that bloodthirsty fanaticism which seeks to install God's Kingdom by force. It was inserted (along with points 19.15-19.17) on Saturday, 8th December 2007, following a reading of Hedges' (2007) chilling description of the 'apocalyptic violence' sweeping American Evangelical Christianity. Passages like Matthew 24:36, Mark 13:32 and Acts 1:7 show that Christ Himself stated clearly and unambiguously that the bringing in of the apocalypse (end time disasters) was God the Father's prerogative alone. Those attempting to usurp this divine role are presumptuous deceivers.

²⁸ 'Saints' a term meaning 'sanctified ones,' i.e. those made holy by God. Throughout this document the word 'saint' is used interchangeably with 'believer.' It does not refer to someone who has been canonised (officially recognised as being especially 'holy') by particular branches of Christianity.

²⁹ Here the collective noun 'believers' refers both to Jewish and gentile believers.

³⁰ See Revelation 12:5

³¹ 'Millennial Kingdom' means a kingdom lasting one thousand years (a 'millennium')

³² Examples of forcible attempts to bring in God's Kingdom include the Medieval Crusades, the Anabaptist uprisings in sixteenth century Reformation Europe and the activities of late twentieth century Roman Catholic Liberation Theologians like Camilo Torres in Latin America. The Kingdom Dominion Theology pervading much of Evangelical Christianity risks repeating the same mistake. Attempts by Man to install God's Kingdom, always end in bloodshed and failure.

³³ Evildoers can readily make use of the chaos and negative group dynamics engendered by all of this human striving to seize power. The evidence of history would suggest that virtually every violent political and religious upheaval has ended in dictatorship. Violent revolutions tend to create those conditions in which the scum of society can rise to the surface. Innate human sinfulness can thwart the endeavours of even the most zealous and well meaning of revolutionaries. This was something that the French revolutionary leader Robespierre (1758-1794) discovered to his cost (Scurr, 2007).

³⁴ The word 'Trinity' refers to the TRI-UNITY of God, meaning One God but three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- 21.6 You are to be worshipped and obeyed
- 21.7 But not invoked,
- 21.8 Neither to be under the control of men
- 21.9 Nor given orders as if you were a slave.

Clause 22: On the Work of the Holy Spirit

I/We believe: -

- 22.1 In the creativity of you, the Holy Spirit,
- 22.2 Whose common grace inspires
- 22.3 All that is good in the arts, humanities and sciences;
- 22.4 Giving a measure of joy and encouragement
- 22.5 In this sin-wrecked world.
- 22.6 You continually work in human history,
- 22.7 To accomplish God's purposes
- 22.8 And to restrain the works of Satan

- 22.9 As life-giving Lord,
- 22.10 You generously give much grace,
- 22.11 You regenerate the human heart
- 22.12 And illuminate the human mind,
- 22.13 Providing much knowledge, insight and wisdom

- 22.14 You also deal with all of our many sins,
- 22.15 Bringing the self-control needed
- 22.16 To restrain our selfish, unrighteous passions

Clause 23: On the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

I/We believe: -

- 23.1 In the baptism of the Holy Spirit,³⁵
- 23.2 That can be followed by many subsequent re-fillings³⁶
- 23.3 Not to bring about sinless perfection
- 23.3.1 But to empower for service;
- 23.3.2 To enable personal sanctification³⁷
- 23.3.3 And to make us bold witnesses for the Gospel

- 23.4 You deal with our many sins
- 23.4.1 By cleansing our hearts,
- 23.4.2 Guiding our conscience

³⁵ *'Baptism of the Spirit'* is an event in which a believer is totally immersed in the Holy Spirit (who has been sent by God the Father to empower believers to serve God the Son). The inner and outward manifestations of this blessing are feelings of great joy, a boldness of heart and a lucidity of mind which appreciates the full meaning of the Gospel. It may or may not be accompanied by other manifestations of the Holy Spirit's *empowerment* i.e. speaking in tongues or the giving of prophecy, (1 Corinthians 12:30). *'Baptism of the Spirit'* may be experienced as part of salvation or constitute a second, third, fourth or *'umpteenth'* blessing some time after it. John 3:8 demonstrates that the Holy Spirit *'blows where He wills,'* choosing to deal with individuals (with their differing needs) in His own way and in His own time. Also, as *'the Spirit of wisdom'* (Isaiah 11:2) He alone knows the most opportune time to confer this blessing; in some cases instantly – at the moment of conversion, or when time has passed, allowing for a greater maturity in the faith. A *'one size fits all'* theology (regarding the timing of spiritual baptism) places unnecessary restrictions upon the Holy Spirit's work, completely disregarding the fact He works to His own unique agenda and not to our set wishes and plans. This means that the Calvinist who argues *'we receive this blessing only at conversion'* can be just as misguided as the Pentecostal who insists that *'baptism of the Spirit'* is *'always a second blessing'* totally distinct from salvation. Both parties may be right in different instances. Many Christians the world over enjoy a healthy relationship with Christ whilst holding to very different views upon this subject. All we need to know is that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity and will always work in accordance with scriptural guidelines.

³⁶ Sometimes, the term *'anointing'* is used to describe these subsequent re-fillings. In terms of subjective experience, they are often identical to the initial baptism. (They may even be more powerful in their effects.) However, as the *'baptism of the Holy Spirit'* is the first major filling, it does have an added element of initiation. In the writer's experience, a re-filling of the Holy Spirit often precedes some new opening of service and/or a period of trial. By way of balance, it's worth emphasising that the Holy Spirit is always operating inside the believer's heart and mind even when there's no obvious infilling. At such times, He's often working quietly in a way that Christians may not be consciously aware of.

³⁷ Sanctification means *'growth in holiness'*

23.4.3 And by enlightening our understanding,
23.5 To enable us to make right decisions
23.6 And become more like Jesus in our characters.

23.7 I/We are thankful for the '*gifts of the Spirit*'³⁸
23.8 Along with the '*fruit*'³⁹ you produce in each of our characters.
23.9 We rejoice in your continuous, indwelling presence
23.10 Which blesses us with much love
23.11 Joy and peace.
23.12 Let us celebrate your presence
23.13 And please you by honouring the Father and the Son,
23.14 Both in our worship and in our in lives

(F) Mankind

Clause 24: On Human Sin

I/We believe: -

24.1 The first Human Beings were created in God's image
24.2 And were precious in His sight –
24.3 Although not fully divine.⁴⁰
24.4 Tempted by Satan
24.5 They fell, through wilful disobedience,
24.5.1 Into a state of total depravity,⁴¹
24.5.2 Continual rebellion
24.5.3 Domination by selfish passions,
24.5.4 Vulnerability to deception
24.5.5 And guilty separation from God.

24.6 We, as human beings are wretches, enslaved to the idols
24.7 We manufacture to put in the place of God
24.8 Truly, "*our hearts are restless, until they find their rest in you*"⁴²

24.9 Languishing helplessly under divine wrath,
24.10 Every Human Being is born
24.11 With an overwhelming inner drive to sin
24.12 An often subconscious urge to think, say or act in a sinful way.
24.13 Easily manipulated by destructive social and spiritual influences,
24.14 We have become utterly incapable
24.15 Of receiving the truth
24.16 Without a special, prior work of the Holy Spirit.
24.17 It has also become impossible for us to please God
24.17.1 Through either good works,
24.17.2 Intellectual speculation,
24.17.3 Or religious practices.
24.18 Also lost has been any ability to construct a society full of love, peace and justice.

³⁸ '*Gifts of the Spirit*' are the special abilities given to believers who have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, (Romans 12:3-8 & 1 Corinthians 12)

³⁹ '*Fruit*' refers to those positive character traits which the Holy Spirit develops in every believer, over their lifetime, (Galatians 5:22)

⁴⁰ Although Man shares some attributes in common with God he can, in no sense, be thought of as a '*mini god*' in his own right. There is no such thing as Man's own personal deification. (The term '*Man*' is used in its generic sense to cover '*Woman*' also.)

⁴¹ The term '*total depravity*' does not mean that people are as bad as they can be but rather that sin has seriously warped every area of their lives. It is used here because it conveys the ugliness of the human condition without God.

⁴² This quote is from Book 1 Chapter 1 of Saint Augustine's '*Confessions*.' It was taken from the Cyber Library at web site <http://www.leaderu.com/cyber/books/augconfessions/bk1.html> (retrieved Monday, 10th December 2007)

- 24.19** Death and decay has also affected the whole of Creation.
24.20 The natural order is not how it should be⁴³
24.21 The original intelligent design
24.22 Has become obscured and distorted by a strong element of chaos
24.23 And often remains hidden from our weak understanding⁴⁴
- 24.24** All this has been worsened by human greed
24.25 Which has severely damaged the environment
24.26 And inflicted much suffering
24.27 Upon many living creatures.
24.28 We have failed to see that God cares for the welfare of animals
24.29 And expects us to treat them with kindness

Clause 25: On Human History

I/We believe: -

- 25.1** Despite many great achievements
25.1.1 In culture
25.1.2 Economics
25.1.3 Science
25.1.4 And technology
25.2 The whole process of historical and social change has become deranged
25.3 By Mankind's persistent rebellion against God.
25.4 Lawless greed has led to much suffering
25.5 And many cruel persecutions,
25.6 Truly, human history has consisted of little more than
25.7 "*a register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of Mankind*"⁴⁵
- 25.8** The '*law of sin and death*'⁴⁶ means that,
25.9 Despite offering many blessings,
25.10 Every human society,
25.11 No matter how civilised,
25.12 Is prone to anarchy and tyranny,
25.13 Possessing within itself forces
25.14 That will lead to its eventual destruction
- 25.15** Such incessantly negative forces
25.16 Pose a continual challenge to believers,
25.17 Prompting them to avoid conforming to the world
25.18 By their rejection of bad influences within it.
25.19 Yet, they must continually discern and work alongside the good
25.20 Or, at least, the neutral influences within a given society,
25.21 For every culture has something of value to offer Mankind
- 25.22** I/We accept that Christianity should never be too closely identified
25.23 With one particular class, nation or civilization;⁴⁷
25.24 But should be able to move seamlessly from one society to another
25.25 Whilst remaining both vibrant and gospel-orientated

⁴³ Clauses 24.11-24.12 were inserted on Saturday, 22nd December 2007

⁴⁴ The implication being that, basing an argument for God's existence upon intelligent design is not the best way to prove God's existence. All this tends to do is to point back to some impersonal '*first cause*' which need not necessarily be the God and Father of Jesus Christ, as revealed through scripture. A better starting point in any debate would be the person and work of Jesus Christ.

⁴⁵ An observation made by the Eighteenth Century historian, Edward Gibbon (1737-1794). Although an unbeliever, he neatly summarised a key biblical teaching concerning the wider social effect of sin. For examples of the Apostle Paul's use of pagan authors to illustrate a point, please refer to Acts 17:28 & Titus 1:12.

⁴⁶ See Romans 7:23 & 8:2

⁴⁷ At those times when such over-identification has occurred, the Church has often '*gone down*' with the class, nation or civilization in question. This mistake has been made by a succession of Christian Churches throughout the ages, including those of Roman North Africa, the Byzantine Empire, Tsarist Russia and Victorian Britain. Hedges' (2007) study would suggest that evangelical Christianity in America risks repeating this same mistake of over-identification with a particular civilization.

(G) Salvation

Clause 26: On the Means of Salvation

I/We believe: -

- 26.1** In only one way to salvation⁴⁸
- 26.2** Through predisposing grace,⁴⁹
- 26.3** Enabling us to accept the perfect-finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross
- 26.4** And in our complete justification, by faith in Christ alone,⁵⁰
- 26.5** Our only true Saviour, Lord and God,
- 26.6** Mercifully forgiving our many sins

- 26.7** I/we confidently trust that every child who dies prematurely
- 26.8** Will go to be with Jesus;
- 26.9** From Him, they will receive eternal blessing, love and care⁵¹

Clause 27: On Water Baptism

I/We believe: -

- 27.1** In the dedication of children,⁵²
- 27.2** Not in infant water baptism⁵³
- 27.3** Also in adult, full immersion water baptism⁵⁴
- 27.4** Which identifies already regenerate believers⁵⁵
- 27.5** With the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.⁵⁶
- 27.6** Adult water Baptism provides public testimony to the Gospel,
- 27.7** Vividly demonstrating, but not creating, true personal faith

⁴⁸ 'Salvation' is being 'saved' from the ruinous consequences of our own sins and the resulting eternal separation from God. In scripture, salvation also means that we are rescued from our sins in order that we may become free to serve God and to enjoy a loving relationship with Him as Father. There exists both negative and positive aspect of salvation: negatively we are saved from eternal death; positively, we are saved for eternal life.

⁴⁹ 'Predisposing grace' refers to the gradual, secret work of the Holy Spirit within the human heart, preparing (predisposing) a person to accept and commit himself (herself) to Christ. It represents a 'softening up process' before conversion takes place.

⁵⁰ 'Justification' refers to the 'once and for all' event wherein a person is brought into a right relationship with God due the complete forgiveness of all of their sin through Jesus Christ's work upon the cross. That person's faith in Christ has 'justified' them in God's sight. It's a gift and not something that can be earned.

⁵¹ 26.7-26.9 was inserted on Friday, 14th March 2008 – the morning after the writer heard that his granddaughter Penelope Jemima had died unexpectedly in her mother's womb, despite the pregnancy coming to full term

⁵² Dedication of children involves verbally and prayerfully committing a child (usually a baby or young child) to Jesus, usually in the context of a public church service. This may, with parental consent, be accompanied by 'the laying on of hands' (Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16 & Luke 18:15-17). Such a dedication is not to be confused with infant water baptism; whether dedication is to be accompanied by any 'signing of the cross' over the infant is again something which is to be determined by the parents.

⁵³ Infant water baptism usually amounts to a sprinkling of water and 'signing' of the cross upon the child's forehead.

⁵⁴ For a biblical defence of adult baptism please refer to Masters (1994). A more balanced view will be found in Bridge & Phybers (1977)

⁵⁵ The writer has (over a thirty-three year period) encountered various problematic outcomes directly related to the rite of Infant Baptism. Those having been baptised as children (whether baby, infant, toddler or older child) have then (often many years after the event) mistakenly assumed that this has automatically bestowed upon them a real relationship with Christ. (This has been especially the case with those brought-up in highly traditional churches.) However, this assumed relationship has then inevitably faltered due to it having a basis in a non-scriptural rite. Those thinking of themselves as Christians because their infant baptism have then become more easily enmeshed in some form of deception or have driven themselves to a near nervous breakdown by working hard to live out the Christian Life upon human strength alone. Theologically, the writer's main objection is that the rite of infant baptism attempts to place the act of spiritual regeneration into the hands of men rather than God. The Lord alone conveys this blessing – no amount of outward ritual will accomplish it. By 1990, the writer had finally and decidedly realized that infant baptism was simply not (and never had been) a valid scriptural practice. (From 1976, the year of his own adult baptism, until about 1990 he'd viewed both infant and adult baptism as being of equal validity.) It cannot be found in the pages of the Bible. Also, it repeatedly failed to produce positive fruit, either in his personal life or that of other people. To him, it became 'the magic that failed.' An excellent, bible-based criticism of infant baptism is found in Beresford Job, chapter five which is aptly sub-titled 'The Great baptism Fiasco!'

⁵⁶ The rite of adult water baptism does not automatically bestow spiritual regeneration but acts as a powerful visual symbol of that regeneration. It is a false teaching to assert otherwise.

Clause 28: On Good Works

I/We believe: -

- 28.1 In the necessity of practical good works⁵⁷ –
- 28.2 Performed in obedience to God,
- 28.3 Under the guidance⁵⁸ of the Holy Spirit: -
 - 28.3.1 To show divine mercy
 - 28.3.2 To bring about the reality of God's Kingdom in everyday life
 - 28.3.3 To meet legitimate human needs and
 - 28.3.4 To reinforce and witness to the Christian faith
- 28.4 However, even the best of works
- 28.5 Can never act as a means of earning salvation
- 28.6 Because within each work remains some influence of sin
- 28.7 Even the best of saints
- 28.8 Are unprofitable servants
- 28.9 Finding freedom only through
- 28.10 Their humble dependency upon divine mercy

Clause 29: On Eternal Security

I/We believe: -

- 29.1 In the preservation of us, your saints,
- 29.2 From many human and spiritual evils
- 29.3 But not in our immunity from suffering
- 29.4 Nor from severe chastisement, should we knowingly sin

(H) Love

Clause 30: On the Importance of Love

I/We believe: -

- 30.1 God's love for us is the bedrock
- 30.2 Upon which many true virtues are built.
- 30.3 Christians are encouraged to display this love⁵⁹
 - 30.3.1 Toward God,
 - 30.3.2 Toward their fellow human beings
 - 30.3.3 And toward all other living creatures
- 30.4 Love finds its best expression in a methodical lifestyle
- 30.5 Which follows a balanced '*middle way*'
- 30.6 Between legalism at one extreme
- 30.7 And laxity at the other
- 30.8 Through love Christians witness to their faith,
- 30.9 And attract others to it

⁵⁷ Exactly what '*good works*' Christians are called upon to perform will vary from one person to another. For some they will be the traditional '*works of mercy*' i.e. visiting the sick or those in prison, whilst for others they will involve following a particular vocation. Prayer and Bible Study may also be classified as '*good works*' – as may the discharge of legitimate responsibilities e.g. providing for one's family, (1 Timothy 5:8).

⁵⁸ Unlike unbelievers who accomplish '*good works*' through God's common grace operating upon their conscience, Christians can deliberately engage in those works to which God has specifically called them; their '*good works*' being classified as '*Godly*' or '*God-inspired works*'. Both types of '*good works*' are clearly distinguishable from those '*dead works*' based upon human initiative alone. Such works may well achieve practical results in the short term, but will eventually fail due to a lack of divine blessing. In relation to human affairs their impact will have been either negligible or totally damaging.

⁵⁹ The characteristic of '*Love*' is that freely given, selfless compassion, wholly taken up with the welfare of others. It should never be confused with a superficial sentimentality, which tries to pass itself off as a genuine outworking of divine love

(I) The Jewish People

Clause 31: On the Restoration of the Jewish People

I/We believe: -

- 31.1 That God, in faithfulness to His Covenant promises
- 31.2 Will reconcile⁶⁰ a remnant of Jewish people to Himself.
- 31.3 After enduring a period of terrible suffering
- 31.4 They will begin to realize that obeying the Mosaic Law through human effort alone
- 31.5 Has never been able to confer righteousness;
- 31.6 They will then, in great anguish, recognise the true Messiah.⁶¹

- 31.7 The nation of Israel
- 31.8 Will be returned to a place of reconciled blessing
 - 31.8.1 With God as their Father,
 - 31.8.2 With Jesus as their promised Messiah
 - 31.8.3 And with Gentile believers as their brothers and sisters in Christ.
- 31.9 The Gentile Nations will be greatly blessed by this restoration,
- 31.10 *"For the Earth will be filled*
- 31.11 *With the knowledge of God's glory,*
- 31.12 *As the waters cover the sea"*⁶²

(J) The Church

Clause 32: On the Universal Church

I/We believe: -

- 32.1 In the existence of one Church⁶³
 - 32.1.1 Apostolic,⁶⁴
 - 32.1.2 Holy⁶⁵
 - 32.1.3 And universal,⁶⁶
- 32.2 Visibly represented by a diversity
 - 32.2.1 Of imperfect large institutions
 - 32.2.2 Middle-sized organizations and
 - 32.2.3 Small gatherings;
- 32.3 Consisting of a remnant of Jewish and Gentile believers –
- 32.4 All adopted⁶⁷ children of God,
- 32.5 From every nation and social background,
- 32.6 All given talents for the benefit of others,
- 32.7 And all aiming for complete obedience to their Father's will
- 32.8 In every known area of their lives

Clause 33: On the Purpose of the Universal Church

I/We believe: -

- 33.1 The Church is to accomplish its unique mission by: -
 - 33.1.1 Preaching the Gospel,⁶⁸
 - 33.1.2 Encouraging daily repentance,⁶⁹

⁶⁰ Sadly, Zechariah 12-14 reveals that this reconciliation will only take place following a period of immense suffering by the Jewish people. (To see what this could mean please refer to Part B, *'The Rescue of Israel Liturgy.'*)

⁶¹ For further details please refer to the *'Rescue of Israel Liturgy'*

⁶² Habakkuk 2:14 (slightly paraphrased) – when undertaking some early revisions in 1983, the writer envisaged the Leeds Creed as representing one means whereby this prophecy could be fulfilled

⁶³ *'Church,'* means a gathering of Christians actively wishing to serve Christ

⁶⁴ *'Apostolic,'* founded upon the teaching of the apostles and their mission to proclaim Christ to all nations

⁶⁵ *'Holy,'* to be *'set apart'* from the world to accomplish a special service for God

⁶⁶ *'Universal,'* including all types of people from every sort of background

⁶⁷ Christians become sons and daughters of God their *'Father,'* a relationship characterised by both a loving yet firm and a consistent discipline and caring provision.

⁶⁸ *'The Gospel'* is that glorious good news where all of one's sins are forgiven and eternal life received as a free gift by placing one's faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

⁶⁹ *'Repentance'* is a turning away from sin and a turning toward God in an attitude of humble dependence

- 33.1.3 Offering sound, Bible-based teaching,
- 33.1.4 Exercising spiritual discernment,
- 33.1.5 Encouraging the living of a consecrated lifestyle,⁷⁰
- 33.1.6 Promoting secure family relationships,
- 33.1.7 Alleviating suffering
- 33.1.8 And nurturing a creative variety of ministries⁷¹

- 33.2 I/We affirm the Churches responsibility
- 33.3 To act as *'salt and light'* in the world.⁷²
- 33.4 This is achieved by its preservation
- 33.5 Of knowledge, education and Godly values
- 33.6 Amidst a dark age characterized
- 33.7 By ignorance, violence and irrational thinking.⁷³
- 33.8 Those who misuse Christianity as an excuse
- 33.9 For ignorance and mental laziness dishonour the truth⁷⁴

- 33.10 I/We accept the need to plant viable local congregations,
- 33.11 Each governed by wisely appointed Elders and Deacons
- 33.12 Able to exercise a compassionate authority,
- 33.13 And not a tyrannical power, in all of their dealings,
- 33.14 Especially when safeguarding against wrong influences

- 33.15 I/We view as unbiblical
- 33.16 Those forms of organization
- 33.17 Which allow elders or
- 33.18 Any other Christian ministers⁷⁵
- 33.19 To exercise a permanent authority
- 33.20 Over more than one congregation⁷⁶

- 33.21 This hierarchical and worldly model of leadership⁷⁷
- 33.22 Has brought little but error⁷⁸
- 33.23 Corruption and ungodly power struggles⁷⁹
- 33.24 Into the life of the Church

- 33.25 I/We firmly deny that *'Bishops'*⁸⁰
- 33.26 Can ever be anything more
- 33.27 Than local leaders, overseeing
- 33.28 One particular congregation

⁷⁰ *'Consecrated lifestyle,'* is a lifestyle dedicated to God. It involves a consistent daily dependence upon God and an outworking of this in daily life.

⁷¹ These include apostolic, prophetic, teaching, evangelistic and pastoral ministries, (Ephesians 4:11)

⁷² Matt 5:13-14

⁷³ The book of Judges highlights the cruelty and superstition present in any *'dark age'*

⁷⁴ Clauses 33.2-33.8 were inserted on Saturday, 23rd February 2008. This was after the writer had seen (during the previous evening) *'You Tube'* videos of some very silly American Fundamentalists whose fanatical behaviour made him to cringe in embarrassment. They offered a sad example of a pseudo-Christian faith which had abandoned any pretence to reason.

⁷⁵ Including those with the ministry of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist or Pastor-Teacher

⁷⁶ Elders may exercise authority over another congregation on a temporary basis alone i.e. when a new work is being established. Also, in the case of serious pastoral breakdown then temporary outside support may well be needed. However, following a period of, at most, four years should a congregation still be lacking any capacity to produce its own eldership then its actual viability should be questioned (Luke 13:6-9). Once a local congregation has established its own leadership any outside elder's role should then diminish, becoming only advisory in nature. The local congregation must be allowed to lead itself.

⁷⁷ To be specific, this model of leadership was derived from the Roman Empire with its hierarchically arranged system of governors. Hence the system of Bishops, Archbishops and Patriarchs in the Church owes more to Pontius Pilate than to the Apostle Peter.

⁷⁸ These include the use of icons, belief in the assumption of Mary and the dogma of papal Infallibility

⁷⁹ One historic example was the fifth century struggle between Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria (c.375-444AD) and Nestorius the Patriarch of Constantinople (c.428-451AD). It ended only after much violence and the latter's exile in 431AD.

⁸⁰ In New Testament passages such as Acts 20:28, Philippians 1:1, 1Timothy 3:1, and Titus 1:7 the word used for Bishop *'Episkopos'* is simply another designation for church elder with no hierarchical authority implied. It simply means *'overseer'* or *'guardian.'*

- 33.29** The idea of *'Territorial Bishops'*
33.30 Being responsible for a number of congregations
33.31 Is an abomination to God
33.32 Because it represents a *'worldly'* form of authority
33.33 That originates in the proud wiles of men⁸¹
- 33.34** Unless toughened by persecution and hardship⁸²
33.35 Most *'Territorial Bishops'*
33.36 Within any given Church Tradition
33.37 Are ineffective guardians of truth
33.38 Due to self-interest
33.39 And a cowardly desire to preserve
33.40 An outward show of unity.
33.41 They often fail to uphold true doctrine⁸³
33.42 Or to drive away false doctrine
33.43 From the life of the Church
33.44 As representatives of corrupt, man-made systems
33.45 They have, at times, guarded their own imaginary status
33.46 By actively *'covering-up'* particular abuses⁸⁴
33.47 Destroying the faith and ruining the lives of
33.48 Vulnerable people, including children
33.49 Any hierarchical model of Church Government
33.50 Is deeply flawed
33.51 Because it stands in opposition to scripture
33.52 And the bible-based freedom
33.53 Which Christ gives to all believers
33.54 It ignores the way apostolic doctrine
33.55 Is to be upheld by each and every member of the Church
33.56 And not just by some exclusive elite
- 33.57** Every single believer who faithfully adheres
33.58 To apostolic doctrine
33.59 To the degree they understand it⁸⁵
33.60 Is a successor to the apostles
33.61 Apostolic succession is not something confined
33.62 To a narrow caste of priests

Clause 34: On the Role of Local Congregations

I/We believe: -

- 34.1** In the self-government of local congregations
34.2 Who are expected to make all the decisions
34.3 By a godly consensus⁸⁶
34.4 Having first discerned the will of the Holy Spirit
34.5 Rather than by human dictate
- 34.6** They will often, but not exclusively meet in houses⁸⁷

⁸¹ Some of these include Early Church Fathers like Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage who did much to provide the intellectual justification for Episcopal (hierarchical) forms of Church government, (200-258AD).

⁸² As is the case with Anglican Bishops in parts of Africa and Roman Catholic Bishops in Latin America during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century

⁸³ During the Lambeth Conference of July-August 2008, most Anglican Bishops (including the majority of supposed traditionalists) failed to uphold true doctrine in relation to the Eucharist. They also broke their ordination vows. Further details of this tragic development can be found in the writer's controversial article, *'United to What?'*

⁸⁴ Most notoriously, this was the case with the Catholic child abuse scandals which, from the late 1980s, exposed serious corruption within the Roman Catholic Church of America.

⁸⁵ This point emphasises that what matters in the Christian life is not so much the amount of spiritual understanding we possess but whether we are faithful to that understanding. This means that a believer possessing only a limited understanding of Christian truth can still bear *'good fruit,'* as long as that understanding is faithfully applied.

⁸⁶ *'Consensus'* means a group agreement, reached upon the basis of free discussion and prayerful decision-making

⁸⁷ It's assumed that local congregations can meet in private houses, hired halls or any other form of building that God calls them to use. They may also meet outdoors.

- 34.7 And will be responsible for preserving
- 34.8 An outward-looking witness in their local community,
- 34.9 And an active interest in overseas work.

- 34.10 They are to continually nurture and develop
- 34.11 Each believer's personal Christian maturity,
- 34.12 Encouraging each individuals use of God-given talents
- 34.13 In order to serve others,
- 34.14 Both inside and outside the Church.
- 34.15 Each congregation should be a place of learning
- 34.16 Where scripture is venerated and studied

Clause 35: On the Characteristics of Faithful Congregations

I/We believe: -

- 35.1 All faithful congregations should be characterised
 - 35.1.1 By their adherence to apostolic doctrine,
 - 35.1.2 Their discerning respect for the Jewish roots of Christianity,
 - 35.1.3 Their care for vulnerable people
 - 35.1.4 And by their commitment to God-centred evangelism,
- 35.2. They should also be characterised
 - 35.2.1 By their frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper,
 - 35.2.2 As well as by regular prayer
 - 35.2.3 And joyful worship.
- 35.3. Such devotion may make use of candles⁸⁸ and incense,⁸⁹
- 35.4 But not icons, images or statues
- 35.5 Every congregation is to endeavour to remain free
- 35.6 From the tyranny of an unaccountable hierarchy
- 35.7 And especially from those leaders who would shelter evildoers⁹⁰
- 35.8 And attempt to issue infallible decrees,
- 35.9 Or spurious prophecies and threats,
- 35.10 Darkly discouraging anyone to assess their claims.⁹¹
- 35.11 Such leaders exercise a false spiritual authority
- 35.12 Even if they claim to be Christian believers
- 35.13 With no basis whatsoever in scripture.
- 35.14 To blindly follow them
- 35.15 Is to risk being deceived, deluded and damned for all of eternity
- 35.16 They are to avoid any spiritual apartheid⁹²
- 35.17 Which creates an oppressive division
- 35.16 Between leaders and people
- 35.19 Supposed leaders
- 35.20 Who accumulate vain⁹³ and pompous⁹⁴ titles⁹⁵ for themselves

⁸⁸ This stipulation allows for the celebration of Jewish festivals which do make use of candles. They can also be legitimately used by non-Jewish Christians (particularly in poor countries where there are no regular power supplies).

⁸⁹ Incense is a visual and sensory representation of the prayers of believers ascending to heaven, (Revelation 8:3-4). One could well argue that if incense is good enough to be used in heaven then it's good enough to be used on earth. The use of candles and incense should not be associated solely with Roman Catholic practice, their roots actually lying in Old Testament temple worship. They are commonly seen in contemporary Jewish Festivals and are best viewed as '*optional extras*,' to be used as long as they are deemed personally helpful and there is consent within the congregation or group.

⁹⁰ As has been the case with those leaders who have sheltered child molesting priests; given Christ's dire warning in Matthew 18:6, Mark 9:42 & Luke 17:2 such leaders have clearly nullified their authority, no matter how venerable their '*church office*' may be. They have come to share in the sins of those they were trying to protect. The same would apply if they willingly give shelter to terrorists.

⁹¹ This applies to authoritarian leaders throughout every Christian Tradition

⁹² '*Apartheid*' is an artificially imposed system of separation and discrimination, wherein one group exploits and thinks itself superior to another. Apartheid in the Church had its beginnings in the second century whereby elders first began to view themselves as sacrificial priests – and so came the hierarchical forms of Church Government (which would blight Christianity for centuries).

35.21 Are in error⁹⁶

35.22 Having sinned through pride or inner weakness⁹⁷

Clause 36: On Congregational Discipline

I/We believe: -

36.1 In the responsibility of every congregation

36.1.1 To discipline or remove its corrupt leaders,⁹⁸

36.1.2 False Ministers

36.1.3 And lawless members,⁹⁹

36.2 Thereby protecting vulnerable people

36.3 From their confusing and damaging influence

36.4 But not in that congregation's right

36.4.1 To use slander,

36.4.2 Theft,

36.4.3 Intimidation

36.4.4 Or violence to fulfil this role¹⁰⁰

36.5 Within any given congregation, the heretical and divisive

36.6 Are to be excluded *'after one or two warnings'*;¹⁰¹

36.7 For God's people are under no obligation

36.8 To endlessly listen,

36.9 Or to engage in perpetual dialogue

36.10 With those telling lies

36.11 Or talking nonsense in the name of Christianity,

36.12 No matter how eminent their position.

36.13 Should any of these people be leaders

36.14 Then they will have nullified their own authority

36.15 And must still be excluded.

36.16 They are not to be given the attention

36.17 They so selfishly crave

36.18 Those who teach sound doctrine

36.19 Yet incite hatred or violence, should also be excluded as heretics,

36.20 For the maintenance of truth requires no bloodshed.

36.21 Those who murder *'in the name of God'*

36.22 Profane His Holy Name;

36.23 Their condemnation will be especially severe

36.24 On the Judgment Day

36.25 Except for investigative purposes¹⁰²

36.26 Christians should never provide an audience

36.27 For preachers of hatred and violence

36.28 They are to turn a deaf ear to their rhetoric

⁹³ In this context *'vain'* means *'useless'* and *'inducing to pride.'*

⁹⁴ *'Pompous'* means long winded and self-important

⁹⁵ These may include apparently biblical titles like *'Apostle'* *'Bishop'* *'Father'* *'Prophet'* *'Teacher'* or *'Rabbi'* and openly unbiblical ones like *'Archbishop,'* *'Patriarch,'* *'Pontiff,'* *'Pope,'* *'Reverend'* or *'Right Reverend.'* The biblical ones describe a ministerial function – they were never meant to be viewed as a title or *'badge of office.'*

⁹⁶ Over time, this error may lead to overt heresy if people wilfully become entrenched in it.

⁹⁷ Those who adopt such titles on the grounds that *'the people wanted me to have them'* simply show just how shallow and full of their own self-importance they really are. Such people shouldn't be entrusted with any position of responsibility. (It was the kind of excuse Aaron made after the Israelites had sinned through worshipping the golden calf, Exodus 32:21-24).

⁹⁸ *'Corrupt leaders'* are those having turned aside from God; evidence for this being seen in either their aberrant teaching or their questionable behaviour (or both) over a given period of time.

⁹⁹ *'Lawless Members,'* are those within any congregation who lead lifestyles which openly and persistently defy biblical standards of morality and behaviour, thereby setting a bad example which could distress and influence others

¹⁰⁰ Recognised here is that *'dirty tricks'* like making slanderous accusations can never serve the cause of truth

¹⁰¹ See Matthew 18:15-20 & Titus 3:10

¹⁰² Such an activity can be very risky and should never be undertaken unless exceptionally clear direction from the Lord has been given.

36.29 No matter how appealing
36.30 Or apparently true their message¹⁰³
36.31 Such preachers are agents of Satan
36.32 Sent to discredit the Gospel
36.33 And to inflict harm upon God's people
36.34 By providing justifiable grounds for others to persecute them¹⁰⁴

36.35 Those parties exercising any kind of ministry
36.36 And are in irregular sexual relationships¹⁰⁵
36.37 Having deserted or divorced their married partners
36.38 Should cease practising the aforesaid ministry
36.39 Should they choose to continue
36.40 Then their complete lack of integrity and self-control
36.41 Will have become self-evident
36.42 They will have nullified their own authority.
36.43 Should they actively persist in ministry
36.44 They are not to be given a welcome anywhere
36.45 Lest God's people become complicit in their sins

36.46 Those with a proven history of abusing children
36.47 Are to be permanently excluded from all public ministries
36.48 So as not to corrupt the little ones
36.49 In such cases no restoration
36.50 To any position of responsibility will ever be possible¹⁰⁶
36.51 Those who would allow for such a restoration
36.52 Are guilty of pastoral negligence¹⁰⁷
36.53 A woeful lack of basic common sense wisdom
36.54 And, worst of all, of stumbling little children

36.55 Marriage is a voluntary arrangement
36.56 To be freely entered into
36.57 By both men and women¹⁰⁸
36.58 It is to be treasured as a wonderful gift
36.59 One designed to bring a joyful union
36.60 Between a man and a woman
36.61 Providing friendly companionship
36.62 And a stable environment
36.63 Which restrains sin and
36.64 Helps in the rearing of children
36.65 A good marriage illustrates the loving relationship
36.66 Between Christ and His Church
36.67 No religious authority has the biblical warrant
36.68 To impose celibacy upon any of its members
36.69 To do so is to enslave them to a corrupt religious system¹⁰⁹
36.70 And to breed those damaging frustrations that
36.71 Express themselves in deceitful and perverse forms of behaviour¹¹⁰
36.72 Celibacy is a special gift, a divine calling
36.73 Entered into voluntarily,
36.74 The presence of which is shown by its good fruit

¹⁰³ Such preachers may use real and well documented grievances to justify their hate-filled stance. Factually, some of what they say may well be correct; but they will be facts used in the service of an evil purpose.

¹⁰⁴ This is because the public will mistakenly believe that all Christians are advocates of hatred and violence

¹⁰⁵ These may be either hetero, or homosexual relationships

¹⁰⁶ This is in contrast to other sins like adultery, where (as the example of king David has shown) some form of restoration can be possible

¹⁰⁷ And also of despising Christ's warnings, given in such passages as Matthew 18:5-10, Mark 9:42 & Luke 17:2

¹⁰⁸ These words are designed to rule out any '*forced marriages*' which, in reality, are a form of rape. (However, '*forced*' marriages are not to be confused with '*arranged*' marriages where mutual consent has been freely given by all parties.)

¹⁰⁹ As has been the case with Roman Catholicism and also some Protestant sects like The Shakers

¹¹⁰ As with certain Roman Catholic Priests having housekeepers who would also act as mistresses; in addition, imposed celibacy tends to attract those with deviant sexual tastes.

Clause 37: On the Integrity of Faith

I/We believe: -

- 37.1** Every Christian is constantly mandated
- 37.2** To guard and develop the integrity¹¹¹ of their faith
 - 37.2.1** By reflecting their Father's love,
 - 37.2.2** By glorifying Jesus in their life and ministry,
 - 37.2.4** And by walking in obedience to the Holy Spirit.
- 37.4** They are to witness to the teachings of scripture
 - 37.4** And to strengthen their fellow believers
 - 37.4.1** Through effective teaching,
 - 37.4.2** Fervent exhortation
 - 37.4.4** And practical encouragement

(K) Church and State

Clause 38: On the Church's Role in Society

I/We believe: -

- 38.1** In the responsibility of the Church
 - 38.1.1** To influence society by teaching good citizenship,
 - 38.1.2** By encouraging realistic socio-economic and political reform
 - 38.1.4** And by being resolute but non-violent
 - 38.1.4.1** In the struggle against individual,
 - 38.1.4.2** Corporate,
 - 38.1.4.4** National
 - 38.1.4.4** And Global evil
- 38.2** Also, by the Church resisting the temptation to: -
 - 38.2.1** Worship earthly rulers,
 - 38.2.2** Exercise tyrannical political power¹¹²
 - 38.2.4** Or to tolerate acts of mass murder;
 - 38.2.4** Especially if committed in the name of God or Jesus
- 38.4** God's people should contribute to the betterment of society
 - 38.4** Through such legitimate activities as political campaigning,
 - 38.5** Faithful public service
 - 38.6** And the passing of wise legislation;
 - 38.7** However, they are not to waste time
 - 38.8** By attempting to create a perfect society¹¹³
 - 38.9** By these means or through violent armed struggle.
 - 38.10** All such endeavours are a distraction
 - 38.11** From witnessing to the Gospel
 - 38.12** Which alone brings true freedom.
 - 38.13** A political cause must never become more important than Christ

¹¹¹ 'Integrity,' is the unalterable wholeness or 'completeness of the Christian faith.' It also refers to the seamless union between doctrine, practice and experience

¹¹² 'Political power' means possessing the power to govern society and, if necessary, to curb the behaviour of evildoers by imprisonment and other legal penalties

¹¹³ Christians may engage in legitimate and beneficial political or socio-cultural activities. They are, after all 'in the world' (John 17:11) to act as 'salt and light' (Matthew 5:13-16) and not to do so would represent a serious abdication of responsibility. A Christian's positive participation within any given society can provide a foretaste of what God's kingdom will be like, but it should never be as a means of building a perfect society – that blessing awaits the Second Coming. In the meantime, they may act as a witness to divine mercy, thereby encouraging receptivity to the Gospel.

Clause 39: On Resistance to Tyranny

I/We believe: -

- 39.1 In the separation of Church and State;
- 39.2 In our duty to obey the State and to pray for its leaders
- 39.4 But also in our duty to resist the State
- 39.4.1 Should it 'deify' its leaders,¹¹⁴
- 39.4.2 Restrict the free proclamation of the Gospel,
- 39.4.4 Incite mass murder,
- 39.4.4 Violently extort money, goods and private property,
- 39.4.5 Indulge in large-scale financial corruption
- 39.4.6 Or pass unjust legislation which defies the laws of God

Clause 40: On the Duty of the State

I/We believe: -

- 40.1 God has given the state
- 40.1.1 A mandate to gather taxes,
- 40.1.2 Reward good behaviour,
- 40.1.4 Provide justice,
- 40.1.4 Punish evildoers,
- 40.1.5 Secure external freedom,
- 40.1.6 Prevent or relieve natural or man-made disasters,
- 40.1.7 Provide basic services for the material welfare of its people
- 40.1.8 And to wage just wars against aggressive nations, organizations and criminal gangs.
- 40.2 Where the main role of the Church is to display God's mercy,
- 40.4 The main role of the State is to display God's justice.
- 40.4 Those officials who oppress the poor
- 40.5 And accept bribes to pervert justice
- 40.6 Will be cursed on the Judgment Day.
- 40.7 They are to be excluded from any congregation
- 40.8 As are State leader's who incite, organize or commit mass murder

- 40.9 I/We also acknowledge the duty of the State to prudently control its spending
- 40.10.1 By preventing the spread of unnecessary bureaucracy
- 40.10.2 And by curbing any waste.

- 40.11 I/We value the division of political, economic and cultural power
- 40.12 In order to prevent despotic government

(L) The Hereafter

Clause 41: On the Eternal Destiny of Believers

I/We believe: -

- 41.1 In the resurrection of every human physical body
- 41.2 In the fellowship¹¹⁵ of believers, in this world and the next,
- 41.4 In the assessment of every believer's practical service,
- 41.4 And in their joyful, everlasting life in a new Creation
- 41.5 Where they will be recipients of God's unlimited blessings
- 41.6 And will see Christ 'face-to-face'

Clause 42: On the Eternal Destiny of Unbelievers

I/We believe: -

- 42.1 In the eternal damnation
- 42.2 Of those who actively reject or carelessly ignore Jesus;

¹¹⁴ To view or treat (or even worship) its political leaders as 'mini-gods'

¹¹⁵ 'Fellowship' refers to that close, loving relationship which Christians enjoy through their sharing of a common interest (bond) in Christ

- 42.4 In their deserving condemnation before God,
- 42.4 In their endless torment in Hell,
- 42.5 Where, weeping and wailing,
- 42.6 They will share in Satan's eternal misery
- 42.7 And in the hopeless terror of his demons

(M) The Devil

Clause 43: On the Origin of Satan

I/We acknowledge: -

- 43.1 As a sobering fact, the existence of Satan,
- 43.1.1 Proud rebel against God,
- 43.1.2 Fallen angel,
- 43.1.4 Leader of many foul demons,
- 43.1.4 Lying tempter
- 43.1.5 And provoker of idolatrous worship

Clause 44: On Satan's Ambition

I/We acknowledge: -

- 44.1 Satan's restless ambition to replace God,
- 44.2 And his desperate craving
- 44.4 To receive the worship due to God alone

Clause 45: On the Work of Satan

I/We acknowledge: -

- 45.1 Satan's work
- 45.1.1 In disrupting the nations,
- 45.1.2 Blinding unbelievers to the truth of the Gospel
- 45.1.4 And in hindering believers;
- 45.2 Also in his opposition to Gospel truth
- 45.2.1 Through such things as beguiling heresies,
- 45.2.4 The proclamation of 'different' Gospels¹¹⁶
- 45.2.4 And elaborate systems of philosophical-religious deception¹¹⁷

Clause 46: On the Murderous Activities of Satan

I/We acknowledge: -

- 46.1 Satan's work
- 46.2 Of confusion and lies,
- 46.4 Of oppression and demon possession
- 46.4 And of his infliction of widespread harm and destruction
- 46.5 As he restlessly "roams throughout the Earth"¹¹⁸
- 46.6 Seeking "whom he may devour"

¹¹⁶ These 'different Gospels' suggest alternative ways of obtaining salvation other than a simple faith in Jesus Christ. Often, they suggest that salvation can be earned by observing external religious practices or by doing 'good works.' Alternatively, they may suggest (as in Ancient Gnosticism) that salvation is to be gained through acquiring a special form of esoteric knowledge which will somehow bring enlightenment and release from a creation which is regarded as being fundamentally evil.

¹¹⁷ Philosophical systems like Marxism and religious systems like ancient or modern forms of Gnosticism (often manifested in areas like alternative medicine or practices like Eastern meditation); perhaps all false belief systems represent a covert way through which Satan can lure people into a worship of himself. The devil will use any lie to draw people away from Jesus.

¹¹⁸ See Job 1:7, 2:2 & 1 Peter 5:8

Clause 47: On the Hatred of Satan

I/We acknowledge: -

- 47.1 Satan's implacable and persecuting hatred
- 47.2 Toward God,
- 47.4 The Jews,
- 47.4 The Church
- 47.5 And all of the Human Race

Clause 48: On the Ruin of Satan

I/We believe: -

- 48.1 In Satan's
- 48.2 Condemnation by the Father,
- 48.4 In his total defeat by Christ at Calvary
- 48.4 In his restraint by the Holy Spirit,
- 48.5 In his terror at the thought of his own inevitable judgement
- 48.6 In his imprisonment in a bottomless pit
- 48.7 And in his continual destruction in the lake of fire that burns forever¹¹⁹

Clause 49: On Spiritual Warfare

I/We believe: -

- 48.1 In the need to engage in Bible-based spiritual warfare,
- 48.2 Employing only those '*weapons*'¹²⁰ clearly recommended in God's Word
- 48.4 And avoiding those devised by the foolish wiles of men

Clause 50: On Deliverance Ministry

I/We believe: -

- 50.1 That any '*deliverance ministry*'¹²¹
- 50.2 Must be conducted decently and non-violently
- 50.4 By those called to be involved in it;
- 50.4 And in the need for a genuine, heartfelt concern
- 50.5 Toward those needing such a ministry

(N) *The importance of Creeds*¹²²

Clause 51: On the Role of Creeds

I/We believe: -

- 51.1 In the necessity of sound doctrine,
- 51.2 In the Biblical basis for creedal statements,
- 51.4 Which can be used to effectively apply scripture by witnessing
 - 51.4.1 To the truth,
 - 51.4.2 Challenging error,
 - 51.4.4 Assessing spiritual occurrences,
 - 51.4.4 Promoting realistic and honest unity,
 - 51.4.5 Providing a clear sense of group identity,
 - 51.4.6 Encouraging worship
 - 51.4.7 And nurturing congregational life

¹¹⁹ Note how all these clause have shown the devil sinking to ever-lower levels. He is truly a doomed foe.

¹²⁰ Some '*weapons*' of which are listed in Ephesians 6:10-18

¹²¹ The ministry through which demons are cast out of people

¹²² This section was inserted in July 1998 to help ensure that the Leeds Creed ended on a resounding and positive note (and not, as previously, on the rather negative note of Satan). It also enabled the links between '*orthodoxy*' (right belief), '*orthopraxis*' (right practice), '*orthospiritus*' (right spirit or spiritual experience) and '*orthoeclesia*' (right forms of church organisation) to become more firmly established.

Clause 52: On the Blessing of Creeds

I/We believe: -

52.1 In the crucial link between doctrine and love,

52.2 Acknowledging that true believers

52.4 Should cultivate a genuine and lively interest in doctrinal matters.

52.4 With the Holy Spirit's guidance, sound doctrine can lead to: -

52.4.1 Sound practice,

52.4.2 Sound experience,

52.4.4 Sound worship,

52.4.4 Sound ways of sharing the Gospel,

52.4.5 And sound forms of organisation;

52.5 All clearly showing God's love for a sinful world

(O) Epilogue¹²³

Praise you, Dear Father! Bless you, Jesus! Adore you, Holy Spirit!

You are the Eternal Trinity of Love!

May we dwell with you forever, Amen

¹²³ This epilogue establishes a firm link between a complex doctrinal statement and a simple heartfelt worship