



Chairo
Christian School

Statement of Faith

*Chairo Parent Governed
Christian Education Limited*



Statement of Faith

This *Statement of Faith* can be found in the Constitution of Chairo Parent Governed Christian Education Limited, which operates Chairo Christian School.

- 1 **Our Common Faith**¹ (Titus 1:4). As a community united in Christ for the education of students, we confess with the Church universal that:
 - (a) there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6), eternal (1 Timothy 1:17) and indivisible, in whom are three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which three Persons are really, truly and eternally distinct, each one truly God, yet without in any way destroying the unity of the one and only God, who is one and not three (Matthew 28:19; John 10:30; John 15:26; Romans 8:9-10);
 - (b) this one God is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3; Hebrews 11:3);
 - (c) God created humanity, both male and female, in His own image (hereinafter referred to as "man") (Genesis 1:27), with dominion over the creation (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8);
 - (d) man sinned by disobeying the express command of God (Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3:6-7), so repudiating his Creator and bringing God's wrath and curse upon himself and on the whole creation over which he rules (Genesis 3:17; Romans 1:18-23; Romans 8:20,22);
 - (e) by the curse of sin justly imposed every man is cut off from communion with God and is dead in sin, wholly corrupt throughout the whole man, and utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil (Genesis 6:5; Romans 3:10-23; Ephesians 2:1-3);
 - (f) God in His love for the world, sent His Holy Son (John 3:16), Jesus Christ and our Lord to be born of the virgin Mary, being conceived by His Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18), to live and suffer on this earth as a man under the curse of sin although Himself without sin, to endure the fullness of God's curse on sin in His death on the cross as a ransom for man (Isaiah 53:6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13), laying down His life for the sheep (John 10:10,28), so that all who believe in Him should receive without regard to their works or merit (Ephesians 2:8-9), full and free pardon, the riches of God's favour as His sons and heirs (Romans 8:15-17) and eternal life in Christ, being renewed by the Holy Spirit in Christ's likeness (2 Corinthians 3:16-18);
 - (g) the Lord Jesus Christ, having died for our sins, rose again the third day by the power of God (1 Corinthians 15:3-4), ascended to heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty who has put all things in subjection under His feet, appointing Him to be Head of all things (Ephesians 1:20-21) for the Church, which is His body (Ephesians 1:22-23);
 - (h) at the time appointed by God and known to no man, this very same Jesus shall come the second time in power and great glory to judge all men, living and dead, and, having destroyed this present world, to establish the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness has a permanent home; (Isaiah 65:17-19; Acts 1:11; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-8);
 - (i) when the Lord Jesus comes again all the dead shall be raised bodily, those who, by faith, have done well, to eternal life, and those who, through unbelief, have done evil, to eternal condemnation (Daniel 12:2; John 5:24-29; Acts 24:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18);

¹ The term "common faith" comes from Titus 1:4, where the Apostle Paul writes, 'To Titus, my true son in our common faith', meaning those core beliefs that are common to Christians as outlined in the Statements.

- (j) the risen Christ has sent the Holy Spirit into the world that by Him redemption might be effectually applied, the divine purpose of salvation accomplished, and the Church equipped for its mission on earth (Ezekiel 36:25-27; John 3:5-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11); and
- (k) the redemptive activity and gracious favour of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is essential for the fulfilment of man's life (Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 3:14-21).

2 The Word of God. We confess that:

- (a) the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, acknowledged in the confessions of the Reformation², is, in all things, our supreme standard by which all we do is to be judged (Hebrews 4:12-13);
- (b) this Scripture, written by men moved by the Holy Spirit is itself God's Word written, God himself being the author (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21);
- (c) Scripture is the integral Word by which God through his Spirit, draws us to and enlightens us in the truth, which is Christ Jesus our Lord the eternal Word of God (John 16:13-14; Romans 10:17);
- (d) the same eternal Word who reveals Himself in Scripture reveals Himself in all that He has created so that the revelation of God is one (John 1:1-3; 2 Peter 3:5); and
- (e) Scripture is indispensable and determinative for our knowledge of God, of ourselves, and of the rest of creation, and also for the whole educational task (2 Timothy 3:17).

3 Man's Life. We confess that³

- (a) man, as God's image-bearer, is given dominion over the creation to rule it, manage it, and develop it for God, who is King over Kings and Lord over Lords (Genesis 1:26-28; Revelation 4:11);
- (b) man's life is fulfilled only in a life of free, willing submission to God; a life lived in harmony with the law of God for His creation made known in the integral revelation of the Word of God (Genesis 1:26-28; Colossians 1:16; Colossians 3:23-24);
- (c) being now fallen into sin, man can attain this fulfilment only through renewal by the Holy Spirit after the image of His Creator (2 Corinthians 3:16-18; Colossians 2:9-10; Colossians 3:9-10);
- (d) for man to attempt anything at all in independence of God or in ignorance of God's revelation is inherently destructive of man and of the creation over which he is given dominion (Genesis 3:1-19⁴; Romans 8:22-23);

² Confessions of the Reformation: for example, The Belgic Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith.

These confessions, or statements of faith, follow the theological tradition of the 16th Century Reformation, with central theological points including the sovereignty of God, the authority of the Bible and that salvation is by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone and to the glory of God alone.

³ Statements 3 to 9, in particular, are philosophical in their language. Originally known as an Educational Creed, they are written in the tradition of Reformation philosophy. It traces back to Reformational thinkers, including Abraham Kuyper, who used his understanding of the Bible, and of philosophy, to respond to humanistic thinkers who elevate human reason above God and the Bible.

Other authors who write in this tradition include Stuart Fowler, a key contributor to our Educational Creed and to the book "No Icing on the Cake: Christian Foundations for Education in Australia," and Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, who wrote "The Drama of Scripture" and "Christian Philosophy: A Systematic and Narrative Introduction".

⁴ Genesis 3:8-19 reveals how Adam and Eve's sin was "destructive" in their relationship with God, with each other and with Creation, and was "destructive" on Creation itself.

- (e) the Bible teaches that families are formed through marriage and that marriage is a commitment between one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others, that is intended to last for life and is the rightful place for sexual activity and procreation (Genesis 2:22-25; Mark 10:1-12);
- (f) it is man's glory, as God's image-bearer, to do everything that the glory of God is revealed in his doing (John 15:8; 2 Corinthians 4:5-7); and
- (g) the development of the child as the image-bearer of God is a central concern of the educational task⁵.

4 Sin and Education. We confess that:

- (a) human life in its entirety is religion, unfolding itself as service to the one true God or of a God-substitute⁶ (Romans 1:25; 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10);
- (b) in sin man has repudiated God in favour of God-substitutes with the result that he is cut off from the knowledge of God, of himself, and of the meaning of the creation, so that the light that he supposes he has is darkness and his wisdom is folly (Romans 1:21-23);
- (c) apart from the man Christ Jesus, no man is emptied from this falsifying of knowledge⁷ through sin, but all alike grope in darkness, being blinded to the meaning of life, of the world, and of man himself (John 3:18-21; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6);
- (d) no area of human knowledge is free of this sinful falsifying (Ephesians 4:17-18);
- (e) true education is possible only where the fear of God is re-established by God's grace in the heart of man as the indispensable foundation of all wisdom and knowledge (Psalm 130:3-4; Proverbs 1:7); and
- (f) children have the same sin nature of rebellion against God and His laws deep within their heart and that discipline if required, when administered in love, is a commanded and vital part of such Christian education (Proverbs 19:18).

5 Redemption in Christ. We confess that:

- (a) God in Christ by the Cross has restored the whole creation to harmony with Himself, making all things new in Christ (Colossians 1:19-20);
- (b) although the fulfilment of this restoration awaits the future revelation of Christ in glory (Romans 8:22-23), yet, in principle, by the present work of the Holy Spirit in the world, it is a present reality to be reckoned with in faith in every area of life;
- (c) Christ in His redemption, by His Holy Spirit, is creating a new regenerated humanity (Titus 3:4-6) bound in covenant community (Acts 3:25; Luke 22:20)⁸ to Christ as Head (Colossians 1:12-20);

⁵ Bearing the image of God is central to our identity, value and purpose in God's world – before and after the Fall – as revealed in the Scripture verses highlighted in this Statement of Faith (3. Man's Life).

⁶ Stuart Fowler explains this as a "religious antithesis": "In principle, there are only two ways for human life to go: either the way of loving service to God in faith or the way of service of a creaturely substitute for God in unbelief." "No Icing on the Cake: Christian Foundations for Education in Australia," edited by Jack Mechelsen (page 10). So, by implication, the god we worship will impact the content and purpose of education.

⁷ In Genesis 3:1-5, Satan "falsifies" Adam and Eve's knowledge of God when he asks, "Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?" Then Eve "falsifies" truth when she says they couldn't even "touch" the fruit. Satan "falsifies" truth further when he says they wouldn't surely die but become like *God*, but they were already "like God" (Genesis 1:27).

⁸ In Genesis 17:7, God gave the promise of an "everlasting covenant" to Abraham and his descendants and through them blessing would come to all nations (Genesis 12:3).

- (d) this covenant community of God's appointed is the means, through the power of the Holy Spirit within the community, for communicating the redemption of Christ to the world (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 2:4-10); and
- (e) although, by the grace of God, men who reject the Word of God as the ordering principle of life provide many valuable insights into the common structure of reality, yet the religious direction of their thought remains radically opposed to that of the covenant community in Christ, so that there can be no possibility of a synthesis of their systems of thought with the scripturally directed thought which Christ's covenant community is called to pursue (Ephesians 4:17-24).

6 Man's Task. We confess that:

- (a) the whole cosmos is the creation of God remaining under His government, upheld by His power (Colossians 1:15-17), and existing for His glory (Psalm 19:1; Revelation 4:9-11);
- (b) the cosmos is neither chaotic nor meaningless, but ordered and pregnant with meaning by the creative act of God, graciously preserved and sustained by Him in spite of the disruptive effects of man's sin, and subject to the law of the Creator in all things (Genesis 1:1-31⁹; Hebrews 1:1-3);
- (c) it is man's task to unfold the meaning that God, the Creator, has given to the creation (Genesis 1:26-28; Matthew 28:18-20)¹⁰;
- (d) man can fulfil his task only as, dependent on the Holy Spirit; he functions in subjection to the law by which God orders the creation (Psalm 104)¹¹;
- (e) the law of the Creator ensures a rich diversity (Psalm 104:24) within the unbreakable unity¹² (Psalm 104:5; Colossians 1:17) of the cosmos;
- (f) the whole creation finds its coherence and meaning in Christ who is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End of the creation of God (Colossians 1:15-20);
- (g) although by God's grace, men who reject the Word of God are not left altogether without understanding of the order and structure of the creation without which fruitful living would be impossible (Acts 14:8-18, especially 15-17), man cannot truly know the creation in its God-given meaning without an obedient listening to Scripture as God's Word written in the light of which he studies the creation (Romans 1:19-20¹³); and

Jesus, in Luke 22:20, fulfilled the “everlasting covenant” to Abraham, establishing “the new covenant in His blood” and His “new covenant” community, the Church.

⁹ Creation is not chaotic or meaningless or a product of chance, because “God created” everything with order and purpose (Genesis 1:1). In verses 3-25, God creates ordered environments on days 1 to 3 and then, on days 4 to 6, He fills them with plant, bird, fish and animal life that are ordered “according to their kind”.

In Genesis 1:26-28, God creates “male and female in His image” with a meaningful task as His image-bearers.

¹⁰ Our original Creation mandate as God’s image-bearers, to fill the world and cultivate it, now includes a mission mandate: going into all the world to make disciples by sharing the Good News that Jesus died to reconcile sinners and Creation, and to bring all things under His Lordship.

¹¹ Psalm 104 describes all of Creation, and the life in it, functioning under God’s creation laws.

Note in verse 30, the role of the Holy Spirit, on whom we are dependent in our role.

¹² Another term used by Reformational philosophers for “rich diversity and unbreakable unity” is “irreducible complexity”, meaning that God’s Creation was diverse, complex and ordered from the beginning. See also footnote 10.

¹³ As Romans 1:19 and Psalm 19:1 point out, Creation is God’s general revelation of Himself to all people. However, we need Scripture – God’s special revelation – to explain Creation, Fall, Redemption and New Creation, and our place in it.

- (h) true education is the unfolding to the child of the creation in harmony, with the order and meaning it has in Christ, so that the child may be prepared and equipped for his office and calling in this world as God's image-bearer and steward (Genesis 1:26-28; Matthew 28:18-20 and see footnote 11).

7 The Special Task of Parents. We confess that:

- (a) God has given parents the responsibility for the nurture of children by discipline and instruction according to the Word of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4);
- (b) to enable them to carry out this responsibility, God has given parents authority over their children to guide and direct them in the way of righteousness and calls on children to honour, respect and obey their parents in the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-3);
- (c) faithful training of children means instructing them in the covenant¹⁴ revealed in Scripture by which God binds His people to Himself in wholehearted love, which covenant is the key to the fulfilment of all man's life (Luke 22:20)¹⁵; and
- (d) while parents may invite others to share with them in the nurture of their children, the responsibility for this nurture remains the responsibility of the parents whose task it always remains to determine the character and religious direction of the education of their children in every respect (like Israel in Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

8 The Special Task of the School. We confess that:

- (a) a school where Christ is confessed as Head of the educational task in harmony with Scripture is a valid expression of the life of the covenant community¹⁶ redeemed in Christ (Colossians 1:15-20);
- (b) the School is only one of several ways in which the covenant community expresses itself in this temporal world, each one displaying in a distinctive manner the rich fullness of Christ's redemption (Matthew 5:1-2, 14-16);
- (c) it is the special task of the School¹⁷ to open out to the child the meaning and structure of the creation under the guidance of the Word of God as part of the equipment of the child for his calling in life in subjection to Christ as King; and
- (d) the School, under Christ and by His Holy Spirit, is to advance the reign of Christ on earth in accordance with its special task so that His Kingdom may come to expression here and now (Ephesians 1:9-10), though with much imperfection and weakness, and so that our Lord may find us busy in His garden when He comes in glory (Matthew 24:36-51).

9 The Special Task of the School Community. We confess that:

- (a) parents, with their children, united in Christ in the special task of the School together with teachers and others who share with them a common confession of faith, constitute a Christian school community

¹⁴ For the Dutch founding parents of our schools in Australia, their covenant understanding included baptising their children as a sign of the promises in the covenant of grace fulfilled in Jesus, and they pledge to raise children in that hope. While baptism is not a matter of Common Faith in our schools, we can take our responsibilities to bring up our children in the Lord as seriously as they did.

¹⁵ Covenant is “the key to the fulfilment of all man’s life” in the sense that through the new covenant in Christ’s blood we are restored into relationship with God and renewed in His image and purposes.

¹⁶ Our Dutch founding parents used the illustration of a three-legged stool to explain the “Covenant Community” of Church, Home and School, with the three partnering together for a child’s education.

¹⁷ This statement finds its content from Statement 6 regarding Man’s Task.

that is not in subjection to city or state, or any other human authority as regards its special duties but is subject to Christ who only rules as King over all¹⁸;

- (b) while the School is entitled to expect freedom from interference in its special task, it is required to respect and uphold all legitimate authority in particular the authority of family, church and state to encourage this respect in the child, according to the Word of God (Romans 13:1-7);
- (c) the responsibility, and corresponding authority, of parents for the nurture of their children, including especially their responsibility of those aspects of this nurture that form the special task of the School, is to be fully recognised and safeguarded by the School at all times (Ephesians 6:4);
- (d) without diminishing the responsibility or authority of parents, the whole body of Christ, as one body in the Lord, shares responsibility for the task of the School (Psalm 78:1-8); and
- (e) the authority of the teacher, to which the student is subject within the School community and which is to be upheld by the whole School community, is given for the effective nurture of the child within the limit of the special task of the School, and is to be used only for this purpose with the recognition that all authority is of God to whom all who exercise authority must give account (1 Peter 2:13-17).

10 Confession. Confessing Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Redeemer and Renewer of all our life (Revelation 1:5-6; Revelation 19:11-16), we pursue the educational task together, with:

- (a) confident hope and humble reliance in God who, for Jesus sake, sends His Holy Spirit to lead us into the truth, which is Christ (John 15:26); and
- (b) glad submission to God's Word as the guide for all our endeavour (James 1:18-25), that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the Glory and the Dominion for ever and ever (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Amen.

¹⁸ Abraham Kuyper explained this with the term “sphere sovereignty”. Jesus is King and Sovereign over all, but He delegates “spheres of sovereignty” to government, parents, church and school. While they work together with regards to things like education, they are to respect the unique sphere of responsibility that each is delegated by God, with parents having the primary sphere of responsibility in their children’s education.