

Resolution concerning Our Connection to Christ

The messengers of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting together in regular conference, June 29–July 3, 2015, in Omaha, Nebraska,

Believing that a person's connection to Christ is essential for both salvation and sanctification, and believing that this relationship is entered through faith in Christ alone, at which time the believer is placed in Christ through Holy Spirit baptism (1 Cor. 12:13),

Understanding that a person's connection to Christ is sometimes referred to as "union with Christ" and is developed chiefly in the New Testament by the use of the phrase "in Christ," a concept Jesus Himself referred to, "you in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20),

Asserting that one's justification is vitally related to being "in Christ," as evidenced through the linking of this uniting with a believer's heavenly calling (Phil. 3:14), redemption and forgiveness (Eph. 1:7), freedom from condemnation (Rom. 8:1), life (Rom. 6:23), new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:22),

Declaring that a believer's union with Christ is foundational to that believer's sanctification, uniting him with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3–5); crucifying the "old man" and releasing the believer from the dominion of sin's power (Rom. 6:6, 7); and giving him entrance into the new sphere of resurrection life (Rom 6:8–10),

Affirming that this connection to Christ provides rich resources for progressive sanctification, because in Christ the believer is rooted and built up (Col. 2:7), taught (Eph 4:21), guarded by peace (Phil. 4:7), led in triumph (2 Cor 2:14), given boldness and access to God (Eph 3:12), and made complete (Col. 2:10),

Admitting that enabled by God, repositioned for victory, and allowing the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to freely operate in the activities of his life (Rom. 8:1–17), the believer actively works out the implications of his new position (Phil. 2:12, 13),

Noting that some are minimizing the exclusivity of faith in Christ alone as the means of salvation, and some have turned from a Christ-focused spirituality to approaches that may both distract and lead astray from the simplicity in Christ, methods that may include an experience-centered life, a Spirit-centered life, asceticism, over-dependence on the disciplined life, mysticism, sinless perfectionism, syncretism with philosophy or folk religion, we

Reject methods of salvation and spiritual growth that are not built upon the foundation of a person's need to be united with Christ,

Reaffirm a commitment to salvation by faith in Christ alone,

Urge our people to understand and put into practice their "in Christ" position, reckoning themselves dead to sin but alive to God, becoming active servants of righteousness; abiding in Christ, living in vital communion and responsiveness to Christ; taking off the dirty garments of sensual practice and social vice and putting on the kindness, love, and peace of the new man; drawing strength from the Lord for spiritual battle and putting on His victorious armor; and obeying the teachings to which we have been delivered,

Rejoice in a new relationship with Christ that effectively repositions us for victory; that opens the door to a vital, functioning hope and new life; and that agrees with J. S. Stewart, "He has been transplanted into a new soil and a new climate, and both soil and climate are Christ" (*A Man in Christ*), and

Exhort all people in Christ to continue to make progress toward holiness, with the goal of being transformed into the image of Christ.