

## 95 THESES FOR THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Out of a love and desire to see the denomination of our ancestors returned to its former glory and rightful place as first among equals within Protestant America. The following Theses are submitted to a candid audience in hopes that due consideration and adherence to the following will ensure that it is returned to said place.

God Be With Ye,

1. Jesus Christ, son of God and Savior, is the sole head of the church.
2. Being solely headed by Christ, the United Church of Christ must acknowledge as her kindred all who share in this confession.
3. All among the elect fall within this kinship.
4. The elect and the catholic church, that being the universal church, are one and the same.
5. The catholic church is invisible, and as such, it is not to be conflated with an institution of men.
6. As a body has but one head, and a head has but one body. Her kindred are not those who fail to share confession of Christ as Lord.
7. Providing a false sense of assurance to the fruitless and those who deny the gospel is spiritually damaging and contrary to pastoral care.
8. Therefore, as an act of grace, the church must unambiguously distinguish between fellowship and other charitable collaborations.
9. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, as such it remains legitimate to labor with those outside this body, and so to love them.
10. The godless, atheists, Muslims, Jews, Unitarians (our estranged cousins), and the fruitless are outside the covenant of grace.
11. We, His church, are nonetheless commissioned to make disciples of all nations.
12. This commission is at once personal, congregational, and catholic.
13. The operative, New Testament model for accomplishing this great commission is to be provided through local churches.
14. These churches in order to properly complete said commission must have an ecclesiastical government which conforms to the apostolic pattern.
15. Local autonomy and thus freedom of interpretation must be guaranteed to every congregation and member of the church.
16. The Congregation and each individual member derive their power directly from God not from any human or ecclesiastical organization.
17. Any fellowship among members or among congregations must be on an entirely voluntary basis.
18. Any structure, organization, or fellowship that is formed among congregations confers upon that organization no power or authority over any of the individual members.
19. Any structure, organization, or fellowship that is formed should be for the sole and exclusive purpose of encouraging spiritual growth, or furthering fellowship by building a stronger and more vibrant Christian Community.
20. A congregation without a Covenant is as a Christ without a cross.
21. Each person to become a full member of their respective church must voluntarily accept and assent to the Covenant of their church in order that they may more fully participate in the creation of Christ's kingdom on earth.

22. No Covenant created on grounds other than biblical or divorced from modern political or societal issues in its entirety may be deemed a valid covenant.
23. Scripture records sufficient material for the government of churches.
24. The name and number of the offices (such as Teacher, Pastor, Ruling Elder, Deacon) must be clearly defined in the government of each church.
25. The proper application of the biblical offices is not so perspicuous that one church will break fellowship with another over such disagreements.
26. No officer in any church may take said office without first being tried and shown to exhibit all those characteristics consistent with a good and virtuous person, and must be qualified according to the New Testament pattern.
27. No officer may assent to their position by any form other than being called by the congregation as a whole, nor may they retain that post by any other source.
28. No office may be made in any congregation for any reason beyond the maintenance of the church itself.
29. No person holding any office or position is of any higher authority or power than any other member of their congregation and may not act in any way contrary to their desires.
30. The church and all its associated land and property shall be in the sole and exclusive ownership of the congregation that it serves.
31. The practice of ordination must not be allowed to degenerate into a mere formality, nor function simply as a certification process.
32. All of these things being in place is to assure that no person may come between the priesthood of all believers and Christ, nor may any human institution do likewise, all being made of men and thus corruptible.
33. Thus having laid forth the foundation for all our efforts we, The United Church of Christ, must then reach out to our shared past and recommit the church to catholicity.
34. By catholicity, we mean the mature acknowledgement of Christ's folk outside of our own bounds.
35. We also mean the identification of our own visible church with the historic and organic church built by Christ upon the rock at Pentecost.
36. Further we as a denomination in order to rightfully call ourselves such must have and show to all a clear and concise set of beliefs and ideals that are unique to us.
37. Generic statements of faith that say nothing special are not statements of faith in any true sense of the phrase.
38. Instead we must show to all where we came from and the unique and historical perspective that we once offered.
39. The creeds must be said, sung and prayed in our churches.
40. The creeds active in the church must include the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian.
41. The creeds must be rendered faithfully and intelligibly.
42. Creeds contrary to our faith must not be tolerated in her churches.
43. The psalms must be said, chanted, sung and prayed in her churches.
44. Her churches should be encouraged to recover their distinctive practice of congregationally singing the metrical psalms.
45. The church must be continually reformed (*semper reformanda*)
46. By "reformed" we do not mean simply emphasizing our distinctive heritage.
47. We mean to say her doctrines, liturgies, and ministries must be continuously tested.
48. Innovation is therefore not to be a priority of the church and any attempt at renewing, reinterpreting, or updating of the views expressed in Scripture in order to satisfy a modern political agenda is wrong and shall be condemned.
49. Instead we must seek out our historically based beliefs and revive them so that all may revel in them.

50. We must acknowledge that there are but two Holy sacraments to be observed which are The Lord's Supper and Baptism.
51. No person shall be baptized more than once and baptism shall be administered when a person is an infant provided that the parents of the infant are believers.
52. If a person is not baptized as an infant they may partake in the sacrament if they profess a true and sincere faith in Christ and accept him as God.
53. The belief of Transubstantiation occurring during The Lord's supper is false. Rather a spiritual connection is established between the participant and God.
54. Non-believers are not to be offered the Lord's Supper, lest they bring "judgment upon themselves" (1 Corinthians 11:29)
55. All must know that Adam and Eve having broken the covenant he made with God by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, having been seduced by Satan, fell from the original righteousness and communion with God and became dead in sin. We through them have also become dead in sin both physically and spiritually. (Genesis)
56. We must further preach that those in mankind who "being predestined according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" shall carry themselves in such a manner as to show reverence and appreciation to God for their salvation. (Ephesians)
57. That salvation comes about though because Christ has paid the ultimate price in order so that "He will save His people from their sins." That price that can never be repaid to him extends to all among the elect on earth. (Matthew)
58. The Grace of God offered as a result of Christ's sacrifice is irresistible such that "Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me" (John)
59. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable;(Romans 11:29) as such those of whom God has called and accepted into his state of grace can neither totally nor ever fall away from that state and shall be preserved and eternally saved. Their saving depends not upon them or their own actions but rather upon their election by the unchanging and eternal love of God bestowed upon us by Jesus Christ through his voluntary sacrifice. (Savoy Ch. 17)
60. All these things being said it cannot be doubted that God is sovereign over all and is just and good to all those within his creation for he "is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and the Lord of lords" (1 Timothy).
61. We must acknowledge that Christ has purchased for all believers in him with his sacrifice a liberty of conscience that cannot be changed or altered by anyone but God himself whom it derives from. (Savoy Ch 21)
62. That liberty of conscience cannot be said to exist if one uses it to engage in acts or practices contrary to the Word (Savoy Ch 21)
63. As such Pastors or anyone who claims to be a teacher of the faith shall be held to a higher standard than congregates and shall be a model to all of Christian morals.
64. The Churches of Christ themselves as well as the pastors within them are not at liberty to invent their own activity, contrary to regulation by scripture.
65. Instead they must reject the impulse to reshape the church to the perceived desires of those outside of her.
66. They must not speak on topics other than those central to Christian Faith as doing so needlessly divides congregations and further fractures any efforts in furtherance of Christian Fellowship.
67. They must stop using the voice of the church as a means to further the goals of one political faction as it is equivalent to taking God's name in vain if those goals are not centered around Scripture.

68. They must reject the inappropriate intrusion of cultural and political issues into the life of the church as well as any attempt to subvert or change the theology or Scripture of the church in order to fit the worldview of a political faction.
69. It must be recognized that this intrusion takes varied forms and changes with the days, seasons and generations of human society awaiting the new heavens and new earth.
70. The United Church of Christ must therefore commit herself to the Barmen declaration in order to ensure that the church is not a means by which secular political goals are to be furthered.
71. She must, "reject the false doctrine that the Church could have permission to hand over the form of its message and of its order to whatever it itself might wish or to the vicissitudes of the prevailing ideological and political convictions of the day."
72. The church must avoid unyielding assent to prevalent convictions, as such submission must be regarded as an offense to Christ and spiritually damaging to his members.
73. To further prevent this unyielding assent synods should be restricted to those times and particular issues where there is significant disagreement between Congregations about core principles of Christianity. The convening should be used as a means by which all participating members may more fully understand God's Word and not to make the synods indistinguishable from a political party platform.
74. Additionally, the church must refrain from thoughtless rejection and a contrarian impulse to play the middle, as both approaches can hinder spiritual growth and unity.
75. Her positions on all things, whether that be salvation, faith, or life, must be dictated by the God-breathed word of God as expressly stated or otherwise reasonably deductible from Scripture.
76. Nothing beyond that which is already written in the Bible, whether that is new revelations or traditions of man, shall be used in any way to impart more meaning than that which is currently present in God's Word. (Savoy Ch. 1)
77. Today, racial and sexual issues have seized inappropriate status in the life of the church.
78. The United Church of Christ must repent of her blessing of sexual behaviors contrary to God's law, and instead shall condemn as sin all forms of sexual immorality.
79. Any endorsement of sexual or otherwise illicit behavior or activities not in-line with Scripture by a congregation shall condemn not only those who participate in it but by those who endorse it as well.
80. All pastors or ministers must convey to their congregation the judgment that God brings upon those who sin.
81. Marriages blessed by her churches must be regulated by scripture.
82. The sole domain of sexual activity permitted by scripture is the marriage bed.
83. The sole arrangement for marriage is that of one man and one woman.
84. Anything beyond that which is stated above is forbidden by the Word of God and may not be considered a marriage nor should be acknowledged as such. Nor can any law or opinion of mankind make that which is forbidden lawful or true. (Leviticus)
85. The church must acknowledge that all human life, whether in the womb or outside of it, at any stage of development or condition is made in God's image and is sacred and of inherent value.
86. Open ended affirmations of any sexual self identity, as in the expansive LGBT+ movement, are fundamentally incompatible with the Christian religion as they are inherently a political movement and not a theological one.

87. Her churches must therefore cease the welcoming of sexualized performances into the sanctuary as well as participation in outside organizations that celebrate unbiblical activity.

88. Any of her Churches proudly displaying that they are open and affirming are attempting to appease a secular mob of unrepentant sinners bent on their own destruction rather than attempting to follow God.

89. Additionally open and affirming is neither open nor affirming as those who do not agree with the secular ideology espoused by such words are neither welcome nor affirmed in their beliefs and will therefore separate themselves from any church which espouses such beliefs.

90. Churches joining forces or cooperating with organizations advocating for things such as gay pride or trans rights should no longer be considered churches but rather political organizations.

91. The United Church of Christ must repent of her endorsement of combative views and programs regarding race.

92. Scripture informs us that God has specially created the many nations (*ethnos*) from one man, so *that* the many nations may seek God.

93. They must exhibit grace befitting people forgiven by God, loved because he first loved us.

94. We therefore reject efforts to mend past racial wrongs in an ungracious, subjective, retributive manner.

95. The United Church of Christ has repeatedly endorsed and affirmed as true numerous beliefs and practices that are in direct and incontrovertible opposition to the historic traditions and beliefs of our theological ancestors, Scripture, and The Word of God.

The concerns noted above are but a short list of items that must be addressed by the United Church of Christ as a whole. The United Church of Christ stands among a long line of theological ancestors that paved the way to that "Shining City on a Hill" that was spoken of so long ago and that we all aspire to. The Church however has turned away from that, and we merely wish to turn the church back on the path that it by all rights out to be boldly leading others down. Not all congregations have lost sight of this grand aspiration and if you are among those who have not we merely ask you aid us in this mission. For those who have lost their way we hope that our words are heeded such that our denomination might once again become a leading force for good among Christians not only in America but around the world.

God Bless!

-A Historic Congregationalist

Those wishing to respond can do so by emailing [historiccongregationalist@gmail.com](mailto:historiccongregationalist@gmail.com) or by visiting Puritans of the UCC on Facebook.