

Association of Confessional Baptist Churches in the United Kingdom Inaugural Assembly March 7th 2023 Report

We rejoice and give thanks to our glorious God for the establishment of a confessional association of churches in the United Kingdom. On March 7th we held our inaugural assembly at Countesthorpe Baptist Church, Leicestershire, to formally establish the Association of Confessional Baptist Churches in the UK. We praise our God for hearing and answering our prayers in uniting our churches together in a formal association. This new association of churches is the fruit of many years of prayer, deliberation and discussion, and the fervent desire of our churches to see the restoration of confessional reformed Baptist theology, piety and practice among us. Nine Churches sent messengers to the assembly, with three formally constituting at this time; Living Hope Bible Church, Lydd, Stanley Park Church, Liverpool, and Trinity Grace Church, Ramsbottom. A messenger from each church agreed to *hold communion among themselves* under the 2nd London Baptist Confession of Faith 1677/89 according to our constitution and signed a copy of the constitution committing to the following words:

We hold tenaciously to the inerrant and infallible word of God as found in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments in the Holy Bible. This is the one, only, full, final, and sufficient authority in all saving knowledge, faith, and practice. We embrace as our subordinate standard the 2nd London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 as an accurate expression and summary of that system of doctrine taught in the Holy Bible. We are committed to associate with all other member churches according to the attached constitution, with prayerful and loving support.

We began the assembly by hearing the preaching of the word of God and prayer. Nathan Tarrant, pastor of Living Hope Bible Church, exhorted us from 2 Timothy 4:1-5 to continue to *“preach the word.”* He charged our churches to continue to remain steadfast in our ministry by preaching the whole council of God regardless of our circumstances. The Lord has entrusted the church with the sacred Scriptures and established the church as the pillar and buttress of the truth. We have the only hope for humanity and must proclaim the gospel freely to all. Therefore, our churches need to *“keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist and discharge all the duties of your ministry.”* In these last days we will see continual resistance against God’s word and yet we can place our full confidence in the preaching of the word of God as the primary means of grace for salvation and sanctification of sinners. As our confession states, *“The grace of faith whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word.”* (2LCF 14.1)

The assembly spent significant time receiving reports from the churches on their spiritual state and how they are living out their confessional life. We believe these reports enable us to gain a greater knowledge of the churches and to develop a closer communion and deeper love for one another Christ. It was a time of great encouragement, as were able to rejoice with what the Lord was doing among us. We sought to do what Paul did in Acts 21:19, *“After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.”* Each of our churches expressed the encouragements and sorrows of ministry. We praised God for the overall spiritual growth we have seen in our members expressed in a greater love for the word of God and a sweetness in corporate prayer. We rejoiced together in recent baptisms as the Lord was adding to our churches, in the Lord bestowing gifted brothers and adding deacons in a few of our churches. We also mourned the effects of sin in members of our churches, as a few churches have dealt with difficult cases of church discipline in recent days and other members have become dissatisfied with the ministry. And yet, we rejoiced in how the mercy of Christ was displayed and the purity of the

Church maintained through biblical discipline. We give thanks to God that our churches are Reformed and always reforming according to the word of God.

In the afternoon, we discussed the practical business of the association and how we can promote the good of all our churches and cooperate in the spread of the gospel. Various messengers spoke of works we may be engaged in in the coming year and how we might use our gifts, graces and resources for the sake of the gospel. Our churches were united in our desire to see the Lord glorified in the building up of our churches and to extend the kingdom of God through missions and church planting. Living Hope Bible Church spoke of their desire for someone to assist them in the work of evangelism. By God's grace they have the funds to support an intern who can utilize their gifts in Lydd and contribute to their training for ministry. Living Hope has also been involved in the training of pastors in Serbia and desire for our churches to assist in the work of teaching confessional reformed Baptist theology with them. Ridley Hall Church spoke of their desire to support a reformed Baptist Church in Portugal and the possibility of our association assisting them in a church plant. The association also voted to prayerfully support a new church plant in Warrington. Tim Hughes is leading this work under the oversight of Trinity Grace Church. An afternoon service began in January, and by the grace of God have seen a great response. Trinity Grace Church also spoke of God's providence in uniting with a few churches in Poland who are in the process of reform, of their desire to partner with the teaching of our youth in a joint youth conference, and to work together with the publications of confessional reformed Baptist material. Broken Wharfe Resources reported on their work of promoting sound theology through the publications of books, podcasts and other online resources. The Lord has laid before us many great opportunities for the gospel and for the building up of our churches. It was evident that our churches desire an association which is to assist one another in the fulfilment of the great commission that the glory of our God might extend to the ends of the earth.

The assembly voted for our next meeting to be held in June. It was also voted upon that Trinity Grace Church will be the first moderating church, and as per the constitution to organize and carry out the administration of the association for 2023.

We closed the day in corporate prayer for our churches, in giving thanks to God and in seeking his grace. We prayed for the good and prosperity of all the churches of Christ and particularly the good of our new association of churches and their members. We also prayed for our unity to be displayed for the glory of Christ and for our churches to continue to testify of our faith in Christ.

We join with our forefathers in their joy and love when they held communion together in London in 1689 and wrote of their first meeting, *"that with no little Joy we declare unto you how good and gracious the Lord hath been to us, in uniting our Hearts together in the Spirit of Love, and sweet Concord, in our debates, consultations and resolves."* We declare the same goodness of our God who has knit our churches together in communion for our peace, increase in love and mutual edification, which we pray will continue to grow for generations to come.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Trinity Grace Church

On behalf of the Association of Confessional Baptist Churches UK

Churches represented:

Living Hope Bible Church, Lydd - Pr. Nathan Tarrant

Stanley Park Church, Liverpool - Pr. Eddie Roberts, Mr. Steve Estabrooke, and Mr. James Jackson

Trinity Grace Church, Ramsbottom - Pr. Oliver Allmand-Smith, Pr. Tony Flanders, Mr. John-Mark Allmand-Smith, Mr. Matthew Flanders, Mr. Joshua Lee, and Mr. Darrin Gilchrist

Christ Church, Loughborough - Pr. Nick Pollock

Countesthorpe Baptist Church, Countesthorpe - Pr. Aubrey Vaughn and Pr. Joe Baily

North Church, Leicester - Pr. Pete Petra

Warrington Reformed Baptist Fellowship, Warrington - Mr. Tim Hughes

Ridley Hall Church, Battersea - Pr. Fabio Silva

Trinity Baptist Church, Charlesworth - Pr. Brett Shaw

