

The Baptist Union of Norway

Proposal for Foundational document

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Introduction

Though a background consisting of key historical events, theological core points and the life of the church community, the Basis Document aims to introduce, and describe the main features of the Norwegian Baptist Community's identity.

[The following sentence will be inserted in the document following a decision in the national meeting:] The congregations in the Baptist Union of Norway have agreed to the Basis Document and believe that it expresses how we understand ourselves to be and what we stand for.

Chapter 1 The origins and development of the Baptists

1.1 Historic developments

Norwegian Baptists are part of an international context with a history that stretches back four hundred years. The Baptist movement began with a group of separatists from the 17th-century Anglican Church in England. From the 14th century onwards, there was significant religious unrest in Europe, which first resulted in the Lutheran Reformation and other Reformation movements in the 16th century. Later, 17th century English separatists argued for a separation between state and church and in their understanding of the congregation they emphasized that a true biblical congregation should only consist of born-again believers. Their radical preaching and practices led them to be persecuted by the authorities which resulted in their fleeing to Amsterdam, a European haven for dissenters. During their stay in Amsterdam, they began to practice believers' baptism based on their personal confession of faith. This was partially due to the influence of Dutch Anabaptists, but also due to their earnest desire to restore New Testament practices. When they returned to England several years later, this separatist group had become the first Baptist church. Their return to England resulted in continued persecution, which motivated them to seek refuge and religious liberty in North America. Within a few decades, Baptist churches were established both in the British Isles, and in North America. Baptists gradually developed into a worldwide movement with congregations on every continent. This means that Norwegian Baptists are connected to a worldwide family of Baptist churches in almost every country in the world.

However, it took a considerable time before Baptists were established in Norway. This was due to the political conditions in Norway. Until 1845, denominations other than the Lutheran state church were not permitted. It was only after Parliament in 1845 had passed the Dissenter Act that other denominations were allowed to establish themselves. Baptist work in Norway was initiated by the Danish sailor Fredrik L. Rymker (1819 - 1884). While in the United States, Rymker became a Christian as the result of Baptist mission work among sailors. He returned to Denmark as a salesman and preacher. With financial support from American Baptists, Rymker came to Norway in 1857 and began the work of evangelizing and spreading Baptist teaching in the Grenland district. On Christmas Day 1858, the first baptism among Norwegian Baptists took place in the Porsgrunn river. The following year, more people were baptized. On April 22, 1860, the "Baptist Church in Porsgrund and Solum" (now known as Skien Baptist Church) was founded with nine members. Thus, the first Baptist church in Norway was a reality.

From 1860, on average, a new congregation was established each year until 1870. This was not accomplished without meeting resistance. Local Priests warned congregants against this

new movement, both from their pulpits and in writing, and there are examples of people being chased from places where outdoor baptismal services were conducted.

Congregations in the big cities served as centers for the work in the surrounding districts. In the 1870s, several district associations were founded. As the Baptists grew to become a national entity with congregations in both the North and the South, a need arose for greater cooperation that could strengthen the fellowship of churches. National bodies were required to enable congregations to cooperate and support each other with evangelism, missionary work, education of pastors and other practical tasks.

An important event for Norwegian Baptists was thus the establishment of the "Baptist Union of Norway" in 1879. The union was intended to strengthen the unity between the local congregations through facilitating their cooperation in ministry and regular meetings. From this point on, Norwegian Baptists were given a central leadership that represented them nationally and internationally. This union, which is today called the Baptist Union of Norway, contributed to a strengthened cohesion and loyalty between the congregations and has shaped a common understanding of Baptist faith and practice.

From 1860 until 1902, 35 congregations were planted as Baptists worked to establish new churches and to reach people with the gospel. In the years between 1910 and 1920, and throughout the 1930s, there was significant growth. Towards the end of the 1940s the highest number of baptized members was approximately 7,500. From the post-war period until the year 2000, the union experienced a decline. Few new congregations were planted, and consequently, at the beginning of the millennium, there were 4,930 members in sixty-six congregations.

From the year 2000, there has again been growth, and many new congregations have become part of the Baptist Union of Norway. Of the new congregations, a large majority are congregations consisting of migrants. In 2020, there were 105 congregations with a total of 11,700 members which included approximately 6,700 baptized members. Today, the Baptist Union of Norway is a multicultural church community with members from many different nations.

1.2 The development of joint work

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Norwegian Baptists have conducted extensive missionary work. Their greatest missionary work has been done in the Bas-Uele region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Several missionaries have served in the country. They have primarily worked with health, education, and church activities in very poor areas. Even today, there is a vibrant church continuing its work on the site where Baptist missionary work was first started. The work is currently carried out by the local population. Norway contributes with financial support from the congregations, public assistance funds, project follow-ups and mutual visits.

The Baptist Union of Norway has also conducted missionary work in other countries, in the form of providing support for missionaries and for mission projects. Health, education,

evangelism, and church work have been the main areas for the work. This has partly been their own involvement, partly in collaboration with other organizations such as the European Baptist Mission International (EBMI) and others.

Children and young people have been an important focus area in all local congregations. In 1922, a separate children's and youth organization was formed within the Norwegian Baptist Community. Over the years, the organization has brought together a diversity of groups adapted for different ages. Today the organization is entitled "Young Baptist" (Ungbaptist) and is an independent organization.

The Norwegian Baptist Women's Association (now known as the Baptist Women in Norway) was founded in 1916. They have been very active in supporting the Baptist Union of Norway's mission commitments and have also created their own mission projects.

Theological competence for pastors has been assigned high priority from the very beginning. In the early years pastor candidates were encouraged to travel to the United States (primarily Morgan Park in Chicago) to study theology, while work was focused on starting a separate education program in Norway. A college was established in Oslo in 1910 under the name *Baptistenes Misjonsskole* (The Baptist Missionary College). In 1958, the Baptist Theological Seminary was established at Stabekk, just outside of Oslo. In 2008, a new chapter in college development began with the establishment of the Norwegian School of Leadership and Theology (HLT). The school is owned and operated jointly by the Baptist Union of Norway and Filadelfia Church Oslo on behalf of the Pentecostal movement in Norway.

Oslofjord Folkehøgskole (Oslo Fjord Folk High School) is a separate school at the Baptist center at Stabekk which provides a variety of creative and socially engaging subject curriculums.

The Baptist Union of Norway belongs to a large international church family. We are members of the European Baptist Federation (EBF) and the Baptist World Alliance (BWA). Our membership in the EBF enables us to enjoy extensive collaboration with other European Baptists. Through affiliation with BWA, we are part of a worldwide community consisting of an estimated fifty million Baptists in nearly 250 Baptist communities in over 120 countries. Although we are a comparatively small movement in Norway, we belong to one of the largest Protestant denominations in the world.

Chapter 2 The ecumenical commitment of the Baptists

The Baptists see themselves as part of the worldwide Christian church. We believe that a diversity of different denominations is an enrichment for the church. At the same time, we have had to battle for our own justification as a national denomination. At times, Norwegian Baptists have been in sharp debate with other denominations, especially the Lutheran Church of Norway. The historical struggle for religious freedom fronted by our Baptist predecessors has challenged us to be accommodating to other fellow believers. Consequently, with the passage of time, confrontation has been replaced by dialogue. This is also because the political conditions in society have changed and now the state to a lesser extent discriminates against free churches and other denominations.

Baptists have always been actively involved in National ecumenical dialogue. Baptists were involved in the establishment of The Norwegian Free Church Council in 1902 (previously known as the *Dissenter ting*). Baptists have held several leadership positions in the Norwegian Free Church Council. In 2006, the Norwegian Free Church Council merged with the Norwegian Council of Churches, which now brings together most Christian denominations. The Baptists have held leadership positions here as well.

In the search for greater understanding between the churches, the Baptists are active contributors to theological discourses both nationally and internationally. The Baptist Union of Norway regularly participates in the Norwegian Theological Discussion Forum under the auspices of the Norwegian Council of Churches. In the 1980s the Baptist Union of Norway participated in bilateral discussions with the Church of Norway, and in the early 2000s also with the Methodist Church in Norway. These conversations led to increased understanding between the denominations.

The ecumenical attitude of the Baptist Union of Norway has also had specific significance in relation to our church community's pastoral education. From 2008, we have collaborated with the Pentecostal movement in the establishment and development of HLT.

Baptists have also frequently been the driving force behind ecumenical cooperation, with frequent participation in ecumenical services in local communities. Pastors participate in inter-church pastoral gatherings and collaborate in proposing, arranging and participating in other inter-church initiatives. This varies from place to place.

Chapter 3 Baptist faith and practice

The religious foundation of the Baptist Union of Norway has much in common with all other Christian denominations. We share the belief in the Triune God, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

As part of the worldwide Church, we stand behind the content of the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

Because of our historical origins and developments over the centuries, there are certain themes that are of central importance to us. This means that the Baptist understanding of Christianity has certain special features that have been and will continue to be important for Baptists in Norway. Below are key themes and aspects of Baptist faith and practice.

3.1 Christ as Lord for the believer and for the church

The core of the Christian faith consists of the person and deeds of Jesus. As Baptists, we profess the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the whole world. We maintain that Jesus suffered, died, and rose for our salvation, and that by his resurrection he has overcome sin, death and evil. Jesus reveals to us who God truly is. Therefore, we cannot speak the truth about God without preaching Jesus Christ. Central to Jesus' message is grace and the call to repentance and a new life. As our Savior, He is also Lord. That Jesus is Lord means that as Christians we are called to follow him in all areas of life, with our words and in our actions, thoughts, and emotions, - in good times and in bad. As Lord, Jesus' message and teachings guide the Christian. This means that he, Jesus Christ, is also the Lord of the church. As Christians, we are participants of a church community where Christ is the highest authority and where his teachings become binding for the church's beliefs and practices.

Bible texts: John 17: 20-23 and Ephesians 1,17-23

3.2 The Bible as an authority

Baptists have always argued that the Bible should be the supreme authority for the church and in the life of the believer. As part of Protestantism, we maintain that the Bible alone (Sola Scriptura) provides sufficient knowledge about salvation and who God is.

In the Old Testament we find the story of God's salvation story where God intervenes to save the fallen human race and gives promises of a savior. The New Testament shows us how Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all these promises of salvation. Thus, the Bible is the grand narrative of God's salvation, where both the Old and New Testaments point to the same center: Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God, Savior and Lord.

What sets the Bible apart from other scriptures is that it is inspired by God. The Bible is written by people led and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Bible contains eternal truths.

The Bible is at the same time a historical document. It is written over a period of several hundred years and consists of several types of literature, such as gospel narratives, wisdom and poetry, law, prophetic messages, and letters. Because the Bible is a historical document, it must be interpreted in the light of the historical context in which the scriptures were created. At the same time, we believe that the Holy Spirit can help us make the historical texts relevant to our own time, but the current interpretation must take consideration to the literary and historical context of the text.

We use several criteria when interpreting Bible texts. Because the Bible is the story of God's plan of salvation, we must read the Bible in the light of salvation history. This is important for the interpretation of a number of Old Testament texts. The texts are to be interpreted in the light of Jesus Christ and the New Testament. Furthermore, obscure Bible words should always be interpreted considering the Bible's basic message. The texts must also be interpreted from the context in which they stand. Knowledge of the political, cultural, and religious conditions in which the various texts were written are also important when we interpret the Bible.

Against this background, the individual believer can read and interpret the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the believer never stands alone with his interpretation, because the work of interpreting the texts of the Bible takes place within the congregational community. When we are gathered as God's people under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with Jesus as Lord, we can trust that Jesus is in our midst and helps us to discover what the Bible's message is to us in our day. We also believe that God calls and equips people with gifts of grace to be pastors or teachers and who thus have a special responsibility for the preaching and teaching in the congregations and in the church community.

Bible texts: Psalm 119,160, John 16,12 - 15, 2 Tim 3, 16 – 17

3.3 View of Human Nature

The biblical account of creation tells us that mankind was created in the image of God as man and woman. Being created in the image of God means that we possess infinite value. The value of man is not defined by society or by other people, but by God. That we are created in the image of God makes human life inviolable, from conception to natural death. Being created in the image of God means that we are created in fellowship with God and with other people. As God's creation, man is given a special position by God as steward of all

that has been created. This gives us a responsibility for the world that goes beyond being mere consumers.

All people can respond to God's indictment. This means that man has an ability to respond to God's call for repentance and obedience. This ability therefore presupposes that we can answer yes or no to God's call. No one can be forced into personal faith, not even by God. It is therefore fundamental for Baptists that freedom of conscience should apply to all, both those who believe and those who do not believe. This freedom is a consequence of man being created by God with a free will.

The Bible tells us that Adam fell into sin. With the fall of Adam, evil, sin, and death became part of human reality. The whole relationship of creation to God was changed. All human beings are therefore born into a reality that is no longer paradise, but which is also marked by evil. We are not born with personal guilt because of Adam's fall, but we inherit the reality that his fall brought with it. The consequence is that man's relationship with God was broken. When we sin, we break with God's will and desires for our lives, and thus we inflict personal guilt on ourselves. Therefore, all people are dependent on salvation.

All people have an inherent ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Being created in the image of God means that we can and must reflect on our ethical choices and that we are responsible for our actions, both towards God and our fellow human beings. As morally responsible people, we can also seek knowledge about how God wants us to live, but because of the Fall, we do not always seek to do God's will.

Baptists believe that children are children of God from birth. When you come to the realization that you are responsible for your own choices and actions and can take a stand on God's call to repentance and compliance, you are responsible for making that choice.

Bibeltekster: 1 Mos 1,27, Salme 139, Jn. 1,12 - 13, Rom 6, Rom 12,2

3.4 The Baptist vision of the local church

An important feature of the Baptist understanding of Christianity is the view of the church. The Baptists began as a separatist movement in 17th century England. Their struggle for religious freedom and their passionate belief in the Bible as the basis for faith and church organization were two key elements in the development of their view of the church. They did not want to reform the existing, but to find and restore the congregation that was described in the Bible. From the time of their origins, Baptists have maintained that the church can only consist of believers who are baptized with confessional baptism, and that the church is detached from the power structures of society. That is why Baptists have always rejected the state church system. At the same time, Baptists have always recognized the importance of fellowship for Christians and have sought together and organized themselves in fellowship with one another to both facilitate cooperation and for mutual support in the Lord's work.

Baptists would argue that faith is personal, but it is not individualistic. The church in the New Testament shows us how we Christians live in a co-dependence with other believers.

No one can be a Christian alone, but one's faith must always be lived out within the church community. The congregation therefore consists of those who come together for worship. The registration of members is necessary for the sake of formal requirements from the state,

but basically the congregation is the community of believers who gather around the communion table. A church community is something other than a community of interest. We do not choose each other, but God has chosen us. By virtue of our faith in him, we are gathered together.

A Christian community always emerges in the form of a local church; therefore, the local church is the basic unit in the Baptist vision of the church.

As a church community, believers are united with God and with one another in a covenant relationship. God has called us out of the world and into a whole new community where Christ is Lord. Being a member requires a voluntary affiliation and commitment to the congregation. It can therefore not be forced but is based on the individual's personal and independent relationship with God. In the Bible we find many pictures and expressions that describe the church. Among other things, Christians are described as God's people, a temple of living stones and as a body. These pictures describe different aspects of being a church. Common to all the descriptions is that faith is personal, but not individualistic. It must always be lived out in community with others.

The church community (congregation) is arranged with the congregation meeting as the supreme body where all the members of the congregation have an equal vote. Baptists claim that the individual believer in a church community is part of the body of Christ and therefore has the capacity to discern God's will. Consequently, the congregation meeting is the place where believers seek the mind of Christ together, and together arrive at a conclusion about what God's will is. Congregational democracy differs in this way from a political democracy. It is based on a biblical human view and an emphasis on the personal responsibility of each believer within the life and ministry of the congregation. There is no room for authoritarian and hierarchical forms of leadership within the church, but authority and trust are given to those who the church community chooses as leaders.

Baptist understanding of church community is vitally connected to their understanding of church order. Church order determines how congregations are governed and relate to other congregations. Baptists have always advocated a congregationalist church system where each congregation is independent and governs itself. How this has actually been practiced has differed in different Baptist contexts. However, the Baptist Union of Norway has practiced a moderate congregationalism, which means that local congregations have voluntarily joined the union for the purposes of supporting and facilitating work in congregational work both locally and nationally. This means that congregations within the union work in a binding and intimate relationship with each other, where the national assembly is the supreme authority. All congregations have the right to vote in the national assembly and have a common obligation to follow up on decisions that are made. Other branches, councils and committees within the Baptist union are also involved in carrying out and supporting the work. The responsibility and authority to manage and administer this work is delegated to church representatives.

Baptists believe that all believers are part of the universal priesthood. This means that we do not need a special priesthood to mediate between God and the church. Various services in the Baptist community are based on the equipping, the gifts of grace, and the confirmation of calling from local churches. Both women and men can serve as pastors and leaders in the Baptist union and in the local church. All believers are called to serve in the church and God

equips individuals with gifts of grace for service. The gifts of grace are to be used to strengthen the believers to do God's service in the world.

Norwegian Baptists have different forms of worship. Common to them all is preaching, prayer and praise, and the practice of baptism and communion.

Bible texts: Matt 18,20, Acts 2,42 - 47, 1 Cor 12, Eph 4,1 - 16, 1 Pet 2,9 - 10

3.5 Baptism

Baptism has been central to the Baptist understanding of Christianity. Baptists have practiced baptism differently from other church denominations from the very beginning. The Baptists rejected infant baptism and argued instead that baptism could only take place on the basis of one's personal and conscious confession of faith in Jesus Christ.

The word *baptist* comes from the Greek word "*baptizein*" which means "to baptize". Baptists baptize in the name of the Triune God in accordance with Jesus' command.

The Baptists perform baptism through full immersion based on the individual's personal repentance and confession of faith. In baptism, the individual gets a share in both the victory that Christ won for us at his death and the new life that his resurrection brought. This is expressed in the act of baptism. When a person is buried in the water of baptism, sin and death are not allowed to reign, for the believer has been raised by Christ to a new life. This resurrection is also a sign of the bodily resurrection that we believe will take place in the new kingdom of God. He who comes to faith and is baptized receives the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism presupposes that a personal faith is present in the person to be baptized. No one can be baptized on the basis of the faith of others. Baptism is important for life. This new life is lived out in fellowship with other believers. Baptism is also a baptism into the body of Christ, which is manifested within the local church. Thus, baptism is the gateway to the Christian church and always performed in the realm of the church community.

Bible texts: Matt 28,19 - 20, Mark 16,16, Acts 2,41, Rom 6,1 - 11, Col 2,12,

1 Pet 3,18 - 21

3.6 Communion

Central to the life of the church is Communion – the Lord's Supper. This is a meal that has three dimensions. Backwards it points to the meal that Jesus had with the disciples before he was to suffer and die. In the present, we celebrate fellowship with one another and that we are one with Christ in his suffering and death. Communion also points to the perfect messianic banquet we will share in the kingdom of God. It is therefore a memorial meal, where we as a church preach what Christ has done. The Communion is also a covenant and communion meal, reminding us of the new covenant that Christ instituted and of which all believers are a part. Every time we as a congregation celebrate Communion, we remember what Jesus has done and we look forward to the day when we can eat the meal with Christ. As a church community meal, communion is for those who confess Jesus as Lord and only begotten Son of God.

Bible texts: Matt 26,26 - 29, Mark 14,22 - 25, Luke 22,14 - 20, 1 Cor 10,16 - 17,

1 Cor 11,23 - 29.

Chapter 4 Baptists today

In Baptist teaching, it is important that faith leads to concrete actions. According to the teachings of the Bible, mission and diaconal ministry are the two main areas from which these actions spring. Our mission assignment is based on the Great commission, where believers are commanded to go and make disciples of all nations. Diaconal ministry springs from the commandment of Christ to extend love and charity towards others. Diakonia is Christian love in practice, aimed at all people regardless of faith and background, and demonstrates God's care for people with different needs. Mission and diaconal work are both rooted in the ministry of local churches within the union.

In our day, mission has two sides. On the one hand, there is international mission, which is based on diakonia, evangelism and financial support in some selected countries and areas, often countries that several of our congregations have a connection to due to migration. On the other hand, there is the specific mission challenge associated with an increasingly multicultural and secularized Norway. Baptist missional engagement leads to a focus on congregations reaching people in their local environment and to planting new churches.

The Baptist Union of Norway is a multicultural church community. We regard this as a visible manifestation of the worldwide church and as a reflection of God's people of all nations.

In the Baptist view of people and congregations, community is important. A community will consist of people from many different backgrounds in different phases of life. This is expressed, among other things, in a diversity of worship practices and other forms of church community activities.

It is important to win new generations for Jesus and it is a strength that several generations come together and worship. Child and youth work is a high priority in churches and takes place at both local, regional, and national levels.

In a Baptist human view, faith is personal, as is the freedom not to believe. Therefore, the Baptist Union of Norway strives to be a church community that will promote an open-minded society. We want to contribute to the freedom of religion being strengthened while allowing a personal faith to be viewed as a positive contribution to cultural and social life.

Attachments

A. Church Order

Adopted at the National Assembly in Trondheim on 12 July 1963:

1. Faith

1. Baptists believe that the Bible is God's revealed word, and they hold it to be the normative guide for faith, doctrine, and life.
2. Baptists do not want to form a binding creed alongside the Bible, but they profess in faith the content of the ecumenical symbols (the Nicene and Apostolic Creed).
3. The Baptists belong to the ranks of evangelical denominations that profess Reformational principles in the question of salvation formulated in the terms, "grace alone" and "faith alone."
4. Baptists practice baptism on the basis of personal confession of faith. It therefore takes place at the onset of the life of faith in a person, as in apostolic times.
5. Baptists regularly share the Lord's Supper. In principle, they see it as a church meal, but since it usually takes place at public services, all believers and baptized are invited to the Lord's table.

2. Church Constitution

1. The Baptists have a congregational church constitution with local church autonomy. Church administration lies with a parish council and a trustee. The trustee is usually a full-time pastor. He performs the usual functions of a priest.
2. The Baptist Union of Norway is the collaborative body for all the congregations in the country. Congregations in the union participate in a voluntary and intimate collaboration when it comes to tasks of common interest and those that can exceed the capacity of a single congregation. This applies to evangelism, the running of schools, child and youth work, social tasks, and foreign mission. Separate boards take care of the respective common tasks. These are responsible within the Baptist community's annual meeting, where elected representatives of the local congregations come together to decide on budgets, accounts, and work tasks.
3. The Baptist Union of Norway is a member of the European Baptist Federation and the Baptist World Alliance. These associations are co-operative bodies at an international level; however, they have no jurisdiction over the national denominations.

3. Relationships with other denominations

1. Baptists' attitude towards other denominations is characterized by tolerance.
2. Baptists cooperate with other evangelical denominations in several areas of common interest, such as in matters of mission, Sunday school, scouting and youth work, work for sobriety, and inter-church affairs.

4. Church and state

1. Baptists have always claimed full religious liberty. Their ideal is a free church in a free state, where all denominations are separated from the state.
2. Baptists view the state and its many functions positively and urge its members to be loyal and responsible to society in the performance of its many tasks.

B. Statement on our view of the Bible

National Meeting of Pastors, 7. - 14. Sept. 1966, Langesund Bath:

We believe the following formulations correspond to what we as Norwegian Baptists have always stood for - and still stand for:

- We believe that the Bible is God's inspired word, given to us as a historical document. It is the sum of God's revelation, preaching a divine creation, giving us the law and the prophetic word, and leading us to Jesus Christ and the apostolic age.
- We believe that the center of God's revelation is Jesus Christ. In him the Scripture finds its highest authority and its center.
- However, we believe that a purely formal confession to the Bible is insufficient. A true understanding of the Bible also includes a correct understanding of the great truths of salvation. As a central example we mention: Jesus Christ, God incarnate, who died and rose again for our salvation.
- We believe that the Holy Spirit is the life principle of the Word. The Word and the Spirit must therefore not be separated. The testimony of the Spirit is Jesus Christ, as the Scripture says, "He (the Spirit) will take what is mine and make it known to you."(Jn. 16:15)
- We believe that the gospel is God's gift of salvation that all individuals must personally accept or reject. The gospel is always current and relevant, and reaches its purpose when man comes into communion with God.

It is with gratitude and joy that we again have the opportunity to emphasize the Scripture as God's normative Word, the guideline for faith, doctrine, and life.

We encourage all our people to work tirelessly with the message of Salvation entrusted to us, and to continued faithfulness to Him who is our Savior and Lord.

C. Value basis DNB

Adopted at the national meeting in Langesund, 9-10. July, 1996

1. We are part of the whole, worldwide Christian church, and we profess the belief in one God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. We emphasize that it is necessary to have a personal faith in Jesus Christ and to live as his followers.
3. Our ultimate authority for faith and work is Jesus Christ, as revealed in the scriptures and present among his people through the Holy Spirit.
4. We recognize the Old and New Testament scriptures as the fundamental authority for understanding God's revelation in Christ.
5. We understand the church to be a community of believers, who share the communion table of the Lord.
6. We practice baptism, only for believers, within the body of Christ.
7. We emphasize that every local church has the freedom and responsibility to discover the meaning of Christ for their lives and activities.
8. We emphasize the "priesthood of all believers," that all members of the congregation are called to service, some being called to exercise spiritual leadership, which must always be understood as a form of service.
9. We believe that the mutual commitment expressed in baptism and membership in a local church leads to a further fellowship between churches, where possible.
10. We believe that every disciple of Christ is called to testify of Jesus Christ as Lord, and that the church as part of the kingdom of God will participate in all of God's mission in the world.
11. We affirm that it is necessary to preserve the freedom of conscience, and consequently we accept the differences that exist among us.
12. We stand for the separation of church and state, based on faith in Christ as the only Lord, and for safeguarding religious freedom.
13. As believing Christians, we live in the hope that Christ will be finally revealed in glory and that all creation will be transformed.