

# THE CORE VALUES OF SOLA 5

*Adopted 30 September 2005*

## 1 GOD-CENTREDNESS

God commands us to glorify him in all we do. Furthermore, he requires us to love him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.<sup>1</sup>

- Therefore we affirm that our lives in their entirety must be lived before God, under his authority, and for his glory alone. In the light of this, we will endeavour to be focussed on honouring and pleasing God in our personal lives, our worship and all our cooperative activities.<sup>2</sup>
- We deny that there is a place for man-centredness or for the promotion of our own popularity, carnal success or self-image.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 LOGIC AND REASON

God has created human beings as rational creatures in his own image.<sup>4</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the necessity of logic and reason as tools for the correct understanding of truth, which is not contradictory.<sup>5</sup>
- We deny that faith is illogical or irrational;<sup>6</sup> we further deny that logic apart from revelation or reason apart from the Holy Spirit's illumination is sufficient for knowing truth.<sup>7</sup>

## 3 AUTHORITY

God is the only being with intrinsic authority; consequently, all human authority is delegated by him.<sup>8</sup>

- Therefore we affirm that God has established three spheres of human government, and that he alone defines what their various responsibilities are.
  1. *Family government* is for the upbringing and education of children, as well as for the nurturing of orderly human relationships in honour, discipline and love. The family is the basic unit of society.<sup>9</sup>
  2. *Church government* is for the spiritual well-being and ministry of God's people.<sup>10</sup>
  3. *Civil government* is for the well-ordering and protection of society; this includes the appropriate punishment of criminals.<sup>11</sup>
- We deny that any sphere of government is without accountability to God, and that any government may assume the responsibilities God has assigned to another sphere of authority. This means that, while there must be a separation of church and state, there is no separation of the state from God.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor 10:31; Mark 12:30.

<sup>2</sup> Eccl 12:13.

<sup>3</sup> Jer 45:5; Rom 2:29.

<sup>4</sup> Gen 1:27; Ps 32:9.

<sup>5</sup> Isa 5:20.

<sup>6</sup> Isa 1:18.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor 2:6–16.

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<sup>8</sup> Rom 13:1; Matt 28:18.

<sup>9</sup> Eph 5:22–6:4; Deut 6:4–9.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Cor 12:12–27; 1 Thess 5:12–15; Heb 13:7, 17.

<sup>11</sup> Rom 13:1–7.

<sup>12</sup> Ps 2; Rev 11:15.

#### 4 SANCTITY OF LIFE

God the Creator has the sole right to give and take human life, which belongs to him and is defined by him alone.<sup>13</sup>

##### **Abortion:**

- Therefore we affirm that life begins at the moment of conception and that abortion is the taking of a human life.<sup>14</sup>
- We deny that abortion is merely an issue of a woman's right of choice over her own body.<sup>15</sup>

##### **The death penalty:**

- We further affirm the responsibility of civil government to execute the death penalty for premeditated murder, in order to demonstrate the sanctity of life and to deter such crime.<sup>16</sup>
- We deny that the just execution of a murderer by the God-ordained authorities is itself murder, and that such criminals have a right to life.<sup>17</sup>

#### 5 MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

God created mankind male and female, and ordained marriage as a lifelong union between a natural man and a natural woman.<sup>18</sup>

##### **Marriage and divorce**

- Therefore we affirm that husband and wife are no longer two but one, and that God intends marriage to last as long as both partners are alive.<sup>19</sup> We affirm that there are certain circumstances in which Scripture permits divorce;<sup>20</sup> nevertheless,

divorce always grieves the Lord and hurts those involved.<sup>21</sup>

- We deny that marriage is merely a negotiated contract which may be terminated at will. We deny that divorce is permissible for any cause not permitted in Scripture.

##### **Marriage and sexual purity**

- We further affirm that marriage is by nature heterosexual,<sup>22</sup> and that any expression of sexual intimacy is holy only in the covenant of marriage.<sup>23</sup>
- We deny the legitimacy and permissibility of homosexuality, lesbianism, fornication, adultery, pornography, paedophilia, bestiality, prostitution, incest and other forms of sexual perversion.<sup>24</sup>

#### 6 DISCIPLINE

God is a God of order and justice, who disciplines those he loves for their good.<sup>25</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the duty of churches to discipline their unrepentant members, excommunication being the final means of grace for their reconciliation.<sup>26</sup> We further affirm the responsibility of parents to discipline their children in the spirit of loving correction. This discipline may include corporal punishment.<sup>27</sup>
- We deny that all such discipline in the church and the home is unloving or harmful to its recipients when done

<sup>13</sup> Neh 9:6; Isa 42:5.

<sup>14</sup> Ps 51:5.

<sup>15</sup> Ps 139:13–16.

<sup>16</sup> Gen 9:6; Rom 13:4; Eccl 8:11.

<sup>17</sup> Num 35:30–34.

<sup>18</sup> Gen 2:18–25.

<sup>19</sup> Matt 19:4–6.

<sup>20</sup> Matt 19:9; 1 Cor 7:10–16.

<sup>21</sup> Mal 2:16.

<sup>22</sup> Gen 2:24.

<sup>23</sup> Exod 20:14; Heb 13:4.

<sup>24</sup> Rom 1:24–27.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Cor 14:33; Heb 12:5–11.

<sup>26</sup> Matt 18:15–17.

<sup>27</sup> Prov 22:15.

according to the rules of Scripture and in the spirit of Christ.<sup>28</sup>

**7 GENDER ROLES**

God our Creator has established a difference in the creation and roles of men and women, which we are not at liberty to change.<sup>29</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the male headship of responsibility in the home and in the church, to be exercised in the spirit of Christlike, sacrificial servanthood.<sup>30</sup>
- We deny that women are inferior to men in value,<sup>31</sup> and we deny that women may serve in leadership roles as pastors or elders.<sup>32</sup>

**8 VOCATION**

God calls each of his people to serve him in various ways in this world.<sup>33</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the sanctity of labour and the validity of all vocations which are not contrary to the righteous requirements of Scripture.<sup>34</sup>
- We deny that work and business are outside the realm of Christian living, and we deny that they may be performed as something other than service to Christ.<sup>35</sup>

**9 RACIAL HARMONY**

God has created all mankind in his own image; all people are of one blood, having descended from Adam.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, God in Christ has broken down every wall that

sin has made to separate us, creating one new humanity in Christ.<sup>37</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the dignity and human brotherhood of all mankind, in addition to the unity of all believers in Christ regardless of race, colour or ethnicity.<sup>38</sup> We will therefore take steps personally and corporately to encourage racial and cultural harmony, expressing this visibly in our communities and churches.
- We deny that there is any basis in reason or in the Bible for racial discrimination by any person against other people.<sup>39</sup>

**10 CREATION**

God is the sovereign Creator of the heavens and the earth.<sup>40</sup>

- Therefore we affirm that the account of creation in Genesis is a record of historical events, that God created everything out of nothing, after its own kind, and that man was specially created in the image of God.
- We deny the philosophy of evolutionism in all its various expressions.

**11 ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

God has given mankind dominion over that part of his creation which is not made in his image and needs to be subdued, especially since the Fall and God’s subsequent curse.<sup>41</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the stewardship of human beings to use animals and the environment for the glory of God and the benefit of humanity, within the guidelines of biblical principles of ecology. We also affirm God’s

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<sup>28</sup> Lev 19:17; Prov 13:24.  
<sup>29</sup> Gen 1:27; 1 Cor 11:7–9.  
<sup>30</sup> 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:22–33; 1 Tim 3:1–5.  
<sup>31</sup> Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:11–12.  
<sup>32</sup> 1 Tim 2:11–14.  
<sup>33</sup> 1 Cor 7:20–24; Col 3:22–25.  
<sup>34</sup> 1 Thess 4:11–12; 2 Thess 3:6–10.  
<sup>35</sup> Eph 6:5–9.  
<sup>36</sup> Gen 5:1–3; Acts 17:26–28.

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<sup>37</sup> Eph 2:13–18.  
<sup>38</sup> Col 3:11.  
<sup>39</sup> Rev 7:9.  
<sup>40</sup> Gen 1:1–2:3; Heb 11:3.  
<sup>41</sup> Gen 1:26–28; 3:17–19.

ownership of all land and mankind's responsibility to use it for his glory, considering the needs of fellow human beings and of future generations.<sup>42</sup>

- We deny that animals have rights or value equal to that of human beings; we also deny that the environment is without corruption, is self-determining, or shares in the nature of God in any way.<sup>43</sup>

## 12 PLURALISM

The only true and living God is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who has revealed himself in Holy Scripture.<sup>44</sup>

- Therefore we affirm that he alone is to be worshipped and obeyed in all of life, and that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour for sinners.<sup>45</sup>
- We deny that any other religion or creed is valid and should be considered a respectable equal to biblical Christianity.<sup>46</sup>

## 13 FREEDOM OF RELIGION

God has ordained civil government for the ordering of society in order to ensure the peaceful co-existence of all citizens irrespective of race or creed.<sup>47</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the responsibility of government to ensure that citizens are free to practise and propagate religion according to their consciences.
- We deny that civil government has the right to prescribe or forbid any religion—be that religion Christianity, pluralism, secularism, or any other.

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<sup>42</sup> Gen 9:1–17; Ps 24:1.

<sup>43</sup> Rom 8:20.

<sup>44</sup> Isa 43:10–11; Matt 28:19; 1 John 5:20.

<sup>45</sup> Exod 20:3; 1 Tim 2:5.

<sup>46</sup> 1 Kgs 18:21; Acts 5:29.

<sup>47</sup> Rom 13:1–7; 1 Tim 2:1–4.

## 14 EVANGELISM

God has ordained evangelism—the proclamation and teaching of the biblical message about Christ and him crucified—as the primary human activity through which he will call his elect people to salvation.<sup>48</sup>

- Therefore we affirm that in this regard our core activity is to unite efforts in God-centred evangelism and missions, through which Bible-believing churches will be established throughout southern Africa and beyond.<sup>49</sup>
- We deny that evangelism is an activity aimed at entertaining the lost and meeting their felt social needs.<sup>50</sup>

## 15 SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

God has revealed all that is necessary for life and godliness in his Word.<sup>51</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the complete sufficiency of the Scripture for faith and obedience in all areas of life;<sup>52</sup> we also affirm the completion of God's revelation in the sixty-six books of the Bible.<sup>53</sup>
- We deny that any further revelation is being given today through so-called prophets and apostles,<sup>54</sup> or through any revelatory gifts.<sup>55</sup> We further deny that human traditions or conventions should be followed without continual evaluation in the light of Scripture, since such things have no intrinsic authority.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> 1 Cor 1:17–25.

<sup>49</sup> Matt 28:18–20.

<sup>50</sup> 1 Cor 2:1–5.

<sup>51</sup> 2 Tim 3:16–17.

<sup>52</sup> 2 Pet 1:3; Matt 4:4.

<sup>53</sup> Jude 3.

<sup>54</sup> Eph 2:20.

<sup>55</sup> 1 Cor 13:8–13; Heb 2:3–4.

<sup>56</sup> Matt 15:1–9; Col 2:20–23.

**16 EXPOSITORY PREACHING**

God has ordained preaching as the primary means by which his people are brought to faith and sanctified.<sup>57</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the centrality of expository preaching since this best reflects the mind of God and most edifies his people. We place a high premium on a Christ-centred exposition of the Scriptures, promoting it in our churches and theological schools.<sup>58</sup>
- We deny that things such as films, drama and musical programmes, while having a place in life in general, should take the place of the preaching of the Word in corporate worship.<sup>59</sup>

**17 GENUINE CHRISTIANITY**

A true Christian is a person whose nature has been transformed by the Holy Spirit from a God-resisting orientation to a God-seeking orientation.<sup>60</sup>

- Therefore we affirm that all true Christians display certain marks of regeneration, namely: ongoing and continual dependence on Christ alone;<sup>61</sup> habitual obedience to His commands and habitual rejection of evil;<sup>62</sup> sacrificial love for God and fellow believers;<sup>63</sup> the ability to overcome the ungodly pressures of a society antagonistic to its Maker (i.e. the “world”);<sup>64</sup> perseverance in faith and obedience to the end of life.<sup>65</sup>

- We deny that a person who makes a mere outward profession of Christianity without displaying the above marks is a genuine Christian.

**18 PERSONAL DEVOTION TO GOD**

God is a living God who dwells among his people in covenant relationship.<sup>66</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the individual believer’s personal walk with God in all of life, enjoying communion with him in a vital relationship—which includes commitment to a local church.<sup>67</sup>
- We deny that mere intellectual adherence to an orthodox creed or confession, apart from a regenerated heart issuing in good works, is truly Christian.<sup>68</sup>

**19 GOOD WORKS AND SOCIAL CONCERN**

God has created his people in Christ for good works, which are to be done in obedience to God’s commandments as the fruit and evidence of a true and lively faith, for the glory of God.<sup>69</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the importance of engaging in good works such as helping orphans, looking after widows, caring for the poor and speaking for the dumb (unborn children).<sup>70</sup>
- We deny that good works are the ground or basis (rather than the evidence) of our salvation.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Rom 10:17; Ezek 37:4–6; John 17:17; Jas 1:18–25.

<sup>58</sup> Ps 1; Luke 24:27, 44.

<sup>59</sup> 2 Tim 4:1–4.

<sup>60</sup> 1 John 5:18–20.

<sup>61</sup> 1 John 5:10–12.

<sup>62</sup> 1 John 2:3; 3:7–10.

<sup>63</sup> 1 John 3:10, 17; 4:7–21.

<sup>64</sup> 1 John 5:4.

<sup>65</sup> 1 John 2:19; Matt 24:13; Heb 3:14.

<sup>66</sup> Eph 2:22; Heb 8:8–12.

<sup>67</sup> Mic 6:8; 1 John 1:3; Phil 2:1.

<sup>68</sup> 2 Tim 3:5; Matt 23:25–28.

<sup>69</sup> Eph 2:8–10.

<sup>70</sup> Jas 1:27; 1 Tim 5:3–16; Isa 58:6–7; Prov 31:8–9.

<sup>71</sup> Rom 11:5; Gal 3:10–14.

## 20 AUTONOMY AND INTER-DEPENDENCY

God has instituted the local church as a self-governing body through which his people will be evangelized, edified and engaged in good works for his glory. He has also revealed in his Word that a local church may cooperate with other local churches.<sup>72</sup>

- Therefore we affirm the principle of local church autonomy, as well as that of the interdependency of local churches. We also affirm that local churches may cooperate with each other in order to unite their efforts and resources around common projects.
- We deny the need to form an institution with officers bearing instruments of power that would undermine or even replace the autonomy of any local church. We also deny that any local church should ignore its relationships with other local churches; in particular, no church should receive members from another local church without regard for disciplinary measures taken by that church.

## 21 THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

God's Word teaches the essential unity of God's people based upon union with Christ, truth and righteousness.<sup>73</sup>

- Therefore we affirm a biblically and doctrinally based cooperation among true churches of Jesus Christ for the purpose of reaching the whole world with the gospel of Christ.<sup>74</sup>
- We deny that there is any biblical basis for an ecumenism that calls for an organizational unification of the Protestant churches of the world (and ultimately of all professing Christians)

<sup>72</sup> Matt 18:15–20; 2 Cor 8:16–21.

<sup>73</sup> Eph 4:3–6; 1 Cor 12:12–27.

<sup>74</sup> John 17:20–23.

which disregards the essential and fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, such as the virgin birth, the atoning work of Christ, regeneration, conversion, justification by faith alone and sanctification.<sup>75</sup>

## 22 LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

God in Christ has purchased the liberty of believers, freeing them from the guilt of sin, God's wrath, unbiblical traditions and regulations of men, Satan, and the fear of death.<sup>76</sup>

- Therefore we affirm that believers are bound in their consciences only to God and his Word, not to the impositions of men and of Satan.<sup>77</sup> We further affirm that Christian liberty is nothing but freedom to serve God within the boundaries that God himself has set.<sup>78</sup>
- We deny that Christian liberty gives licence to sin of any kind.<sup>79</sup> We further deny that any church or its leaders have a right to expect obedience from members when they teach things that are contrary or additional to God's word.<sup>80</sup>

## 23 HYPER-ORTHODOXY

Our Lord has warned his church against straining out gnats while swallowing camels.<sup>81</sup>

- Therefore we affirm that in essentials there must be unity, in non-essentials liberty and in all things charity.<sup>82</sup>
- We deny that our understanding of infallible truth is itself infallible, and

<sup>75</sup> Amos 3:3.

<sup>76</sup> Gal 5:1; Col 2:8–23; Heb 2:14–15.

<sup>77</sup> Rom 14:1–15:4.

<sup>78</sup> Rom 6:8–22.

<sup>79</sup> Rom 6:1–7.

<sup>80</sup> Matt 15:1–9; Col 2:20–23.

<sup>81</sup> Matt 23:24.

<sup>82</sup> Titus 1:9–11; 1 Cor 8:1–13; Col 3:12–15.

that all matters are equally important; therefore we deny that all matters require contention and division among those who differ.<sup>83</sup>

For the purpose of fellowship in Sola 5, we consider non-essentials to be those matters which are outside of our Confession of Faith and Core Values.

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<sup>83</sup> Matt 23:23.