

A Brief Sketch of Christopher Ellis Osterbrock

Family

My family consists of Emily, my wife of 12 years, our three daughters—Ruth (6), Edra (3), and Hadassah (8 months)—and a dog named Eudora. Emily and I met in vocational school, she was in cosmetology, and I was in welding and machining. However, we didn't begin dating until a few years after our schooling, and were married within a year and a half. She is my greatest encourager, an incredible homemaker and educator, and my favorite partner in ministry. Our girls love reading (or being read to), drawing, making up stories, and talking about princesses.

Personal Testimony

Though I was raised in Kenwood Baptist Church, I left the church in junior high. I had become very antagonistic to Christianity and sought to make my life my own. Through high school I experimented with all sorts of ways to live outside of God's favor and my parent's authority, through drugs, alcohol, and the occult. This came to a head when I watched my friends struggling with these same lifestyle issues. One particular night, I vividly recall watching my friends under the influence and recognizing the truth and depravity of the sin in which I was living. God chose to make it very clear to me He was pulling me out of the well—and it would hurt for my good and His glory. I retreated to my parent's home and, at 3am, I called on my mother to pray for me. As we prayed and I read from Isaiah, a change took place. At age 18, I called on Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. The next week I forsook all my past relationships, enrolled in vocational school, was baptized and received membership under my parent's church. I rejoice at the radical change He made in me, and believe without doubt He continues the work in me and will do so to anyone a Christian may pray for and call on in the Gospel work—this remains my pursuit for His glory.

Education

Bachelor of Arts (Biblical Studies)	
Cincinnati Christian University	2011
Master of Arts (Biblical Studies)	
Cincinnati Bible Seminary	2013
Doctor of Educational Ministry (Biblical Spirituality)	
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary	2018

Ministry

Volunteer Youth Leader	Kenwood Baptist Church	2008–2010
Youth Pastor	Mount Washington Baptist Church	2010–2012
Associate Pastor	Mount Washington Baptist Church	2013–2019
Associate Pastor	First Baptist Church of Hamilton	2019–2020
Acting Pastor	First Baptist Church of Hamilton	2021–2022

Hobbies and Interests

I enjoy writing and editing and have published books and articles. My main hobby is serving as the Project Manager of Reprints for a Baptist publishing house H&E (www.hesedandemet.com). I write blogs occasionally for H&E and for Union School of Theology, under Union Publishing. I am currently acting as Sr. Editor for a modernized abridgment of John Gill's works. I spend a lot of my down time studying Baptist history, biblical spirituality, and systematic theology.

I enjoy reading/watching Star Trek and Agatha Christie. I keep a hobby of studying Sherlock Holmes (Baker Street Irregulars) and J.S. Bach. Emily and I are huge fans of Jerry Garcia and Grateful Dead. My favorite artists in order are Bach, Jerry Garcia, Beethoven, and Johann Strauss II. I also make feeble attempts at playing guitar and writing hymns in the style of CityAlight or Sovereign Grace Music. I am also very fond of coffee, black licorice, and hiking.

I love the church of Jesus Christ, and my (and my family's) calling is to serve the bride of Christ, faithfully, joyfully, excellently, and tenderly.

A Bite-sized Theology

While I am quite comfortable in the tradition of the London Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689, my desire is to lay out in my own words what I believe.

1. Scripture

Scripture and It's Purpose

Scripture is the special revelation by which God makes clear who He is and His purpose for His creation. Scripture, the Holy Bible, is comprised of 66 books—each progressively given to God's people, breathed out by God in self-revelation. This writing was manifested by the pen of man and articulated through fallible, fallen people, yet the eternal, perfect God preserved His words with holy and perfect precision through these broken vessels without imparting anything unholy or questionable in them. His Word was then as it is now, infallible, inerrant, authoritative, holy, perfect and closed (1 Cor. 13:10). Such a gift is the standard by which all men are called to live, and through which alone man can seek and know the living God. Only through the truths of Scripture can humanity understand the design of salvation (2 Tim. 3:15–16), the propositions of faith (John 17:17), and the way of obedience. Scripture is the standard and bedrock for our faith statements of Christ, the object of faith. It alone is the means God has chosen for repentance and growth, praise and teaching, and describing the attributes of God.

2. The Trinity

The Triune God

God exists on his own, without any beginning or end (aseity). He does whatever pleases Him and orchestrates all to pass as will bring Him glory (Ps. 115:3; 135:6; Ezek. 36:22; Rom. 11:36). He is not only the creator of all matter and energy, but of time as well—therefore, He exists outside of our limited framework of the universe and yet chooses to act within it and speak to us in ways that, while not contradicting His person, make knowledge of His deity accessible. God, as the perfect unity of love, exists in three subsistences, being one yet having three persons humanity can distinguish: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—these three being co-equal and consubstantial. The triune God is without parts (simple), without passion, and indivisible.

Doctrine of God, the Father

The Father is He who elects his redeemed people, creates and orders the universe, dispenses justice (mercy or wrath), and conducts His providence over the willful hearts of men, the prayers of the saints, the affairs of the world, and of nature (Job 42:2; Isa. 46:9–10). He is steadfast and faithful.

Doctrine of God, the Son

From eternity past the eternally begotten/generated Jesus was of the Godhead. Prior to the incarnation, Jesus, the exalted one made Himself known through Genesis to Malachi, and was in

union concerning the decree and counsel of God's plan of salvation (John 7:18). He subordinated Himself temporarily (Phil. 2:6–7) yet maintained entirely His deity while fulfilling the plan on earth. Being fully God and fully man, Jesus was born of a virgin, yet being born of the Spirit inherited no sin from the stain of Adam (1 John 3:5). Jesus is the Federal Head of His saints, for whom He died and rose as indicative of their place in Him in physical resurrection (Col. 2:9–12).

Doctrine of God, the Holy Spirit

The third person of the trinity proceeds from the Father and the Son, yet has no beginning or end. He is indivisible from the Godhead. The Holy Spirit seals, intercedes, comforts, convicts, secures, and is He which regenerates our very hearts (Ezek. 36:27; John 3; Rom. 8:26). Through Him alone we can know spiritual wisdom, understand the Bible, obey Scripture, love and cultivate the spiritually deep friendships within Christ's church (1 Cor. 2:6–13).

3. Salvation

Covenant of Grace

From the foundation of the world, God intended to save a people to Himself. Following the failed *work* of righteousness in the garden, God continued to reveal in types and shadows His fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace by which He would redeem His people through faith alone in Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1–3). The Covenant of Works was progressively given as the Law, but fulfilled in Christ, though the Moral Law stands—under which we are universally condemned. The Covenant of Grace covers us in our sin by our receiving the righteousness of Christ, our Head (Jer. 31:33–34).

Regeneration

The Holy Spirit gives new birth to those called of God (John 3:5–8). In our depraved state there is nothing we can do of our own power to please God (Eph. 2:8–9). Yet by His sovereign grace, the Holy Spirit indwells us and makes our hearts new; through this indwelling we can call Jesus our Lord and Savior (Acts 2:21; 2 Cor. 3:6). Through this new birth our will is redeemed such that we can mortify our sinful inclinations and work out the holiness compelled by our heavenly Father.

Faith and Repentance

Following regeneration, the Holy Spirit enables us to grow in spiritual wisdom. To believe on the truths of Scripture (saving faith) and to examine and put to death, or turn away from, the sin that corrupts our mind, affections, and will (repentance). Faith and repentance are part of the working of God's call throughout Scripture (as Jesus says, "Repent and believe!" in Mark 1:15).

Immortal State

When the saints in Christ die their souls will enter paradise with Christ, at once the soul is made holy. But as humanity is created to be both body and soul (Gen. 2:7), upon judgement the saints will then return to their bodies, which will be made holy, glorified through physical resurrection (1 Cor. 15:55). The saints, by justification in Jesus Christ, receive the mercy of God. They rejoice and live upon the New Earth with the Lord, now made even better than Eden. Those who die without Christ go to hades, or sheol, and await the resurrection of their bodies. They will receive the justice of God and take their station under the wrath of God, both physically and spiritually, in a physical place called Hell where they will receive eternally purifying justice for eternity.

4. Biblical Spirituality

Baptism

Unique to Baptists, I believe that the profession of faith is the grounds for immersion into the waters of baptism. A believer who has confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, repented of their sin by the received grace of God, should be—according to the example and command of Christ—dipped by another believer in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is a portrayal of our union with Christ in death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3–11). Baptism does not save but is the outward expression of our regeneration (Titus 3:5; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 3:21).

The Lord's Supper

This meal, ordained by Christ, is the fulfillment of the Passover meal, which was a type of what was to come. Christians are instructed to obey the ordinance on the Lord's Day in a gathered meeting (1 Cor. 11:23–26). The church, not only the pastor, examine themselves and receive from the church body the bread and the cup in remembrance of Christ's death until he returns. The body of Christ does not inhabit the elements, but the ordinance does invigorate God's people in a particular way for spiritual nourishment. The meal is a holy discipline for those who confess Jesus is Lord and believe in their hearts that God raised him from the dead (Rom. 10:9). The church is instructed not to allow believers to take the meal in an unworthy manner (1 Cor. 11:27–33).

Spiritual Disciplines

God saved us to grow in biblical spirituality. The manner in which we obey, apply, and experience our union with Christ consists no less than in prayer, fasting, joy, biblical meditation, tithing, offering, singing, fellowship, marriage, biblical education and catechizing both youth and adults, journaling, reading, suffering, forgiving and being forgiven, and evangelism, etc.

Evangelism

The Church on earth exists to be the outward calling of the gospel. Though indeed faith is a work of God by the indwelling of the Spirit to regeneration (John 6:29; Rom. 9:16), yet the saints are to make no distinction in calling every living person to repent and believe (Matt. 24:14; Mark 1:15).

5. The Church

Membership

Members of the church are those who by profession of faith and submission to the ordinance of baptism are thus received as one with the body of Christ in the bond of the local church. Members voluntarily submit to the statement of faith and leadership of the elders and deacons, to participate in the life of the church and receive both positive and negative forms of church discipline.

Association

It is prudent that the church voluntarily interacts with like-minded churches, evidencing the bond of Christ's universal church within region, state, and foreign evangelical churches and missions.

Governance

The congregation voluntarily rests under the headship of the elders and deacons for encouragement and correction (Matt. 18:14–20; 1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9). It is a display of God's glory through the ordinances, preached Word, singing, fellowship, and education of the saints and their children—to these the elders are charged and will give account (1 Tim. 4:16; Heb. 13:17).