



# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

## CONSTITUTION

REVISED AND UPDATED, November 5, 2003

REVISED AND UPDATED, June 14, 2015

## BY-LAWS

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# Constitution and By-Laws

of

## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BONHAM, TEXAS

### CONSTITUTION

#### PREAMBLE

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here in **November 1852** under the name **First Baptist Church of Bonham, Texas**, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we do hereby, in order that we may more readily aid each other in our Christian lives and service as members of this Church, adopt this Constitution and By-Laws as our message of faith and practice and as procedure for conducting Church business in an orderly manner and for conducting our Lord's work.

#### ARTICLE 1 | NAME, INCORPORATION, AND PLACE OF BUSINESS

The name of this church shall be **The First Baptist Church of Bonham, Texas**, which is the same church organized in November 1852.

This church is authorized under warrant of the Holy Bible and is instituted by the voluntary association of its members. It shall have no capital stock and is not organized for material or pecuniary profit.

The office and principal place of business of this church shall be at its church plant in the City of Bonham, Fannin County, Texas.

The official seal of the church shall be circular in form and have inscribed thereon: in the center, the open Bible, and around the circumference, the words, "The First Baptist Church of Bonham, Texas."

#### ARTICLE 2 | PURPOSE

**GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BONHAM, IS: IN LOVE, TO WORSHIP GOD, TO REACH PEOPLE FOR CHRIST AND EQUIP THEM FOR MINISTRY. (1COR. 13:1-13, MATT. 28: 19-20, LUKE 10:27)**

**THE HOLY SPIRIT AND GOD'S WORD (HOLY BIBLE) WILL LEAD US TO FULFILL GOD'S PURPOSE FOR OUR CHURCH THROUGH:**

- EVANGELISM – (Go and make disciples of all nations...Matthew 28:19a)  
We will identify, create, and provide opportunities to carry out the process of reaching people in our community and the world for Christ.

- **WORSHIP** – (Love the Lord your God...Luke 10:27a)  
Our church, by whatever form of worship, should be spirit led and focused on praising, exalting, magnifying and glorifying God.
- **MEMBERSHIP/FELLOWSHIP** – (Baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit...Matthew 28:19b)  
Believers are to belong to Christ's family and be members of His body. This requires individual commitment to love and support all members of the family. (Ephesians 1:19)
- **DISCIPLESHIP** – (...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...Matthew 28:20)  
It is the responsibility of this church family to equip people for ministry. It is the responsibility of each member to grow in Christ.
- **MINISTRY** – (...love your neighbor as yourself. Luke 10:27b)  
We will demonstrate Christ-likeness to our community and world. (Acts 6:1-7)

### **ARTICLE 3 | MEMBERSHIP**

#### Section 1 – Membership Composition

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who:

- have made a public profession of their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord
- desire to be numbered among His disciples
- subscribe to the faith and practices of this church
- have experienced baptism by immersion in this church or in a church of like faith and order
- have been received into its fellowship by vote of the congregation in open meeting.

The church shall have the sole right to determine the qualifications for membership and to discipline its members by reproof, rebuke, or exclusion from fellowship. Further statement on the disciplinary purpose and procedure can be found in Article 3, Section 6.

#### Section 2 – Qualifications for Membership

As an evangelical Baptist church, we believe in church membership based on personal belief and regeneration according to the teaching of Scripture. Therefore, to qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her conversion, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith (see Article 12 and Appendix 1) and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant (see Article 2, Section 8). The pastor of the church shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership under the oversight of the church body. The recommendation of the pastor to the church of an individual who desires membership should be based upon each person's profession of faith, appropriate baptism, and other evidence of personal lifestyle and character as is appropriate.

#### Section 3 – Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the pastor of the church for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

#### Section 4 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accordance with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant (Article 3, Section 8), each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation. Christians who are not members of this church may serve in the ministries of the church on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the Senior Pastor or church action. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of its officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote. A member requested to serve shall do his or her duty and serve, if requested and duly elected, unless good cause exists for not doing so.

#### Section 5 – Associate Membership

Students and others temporarily residing in the Fannin County area who are members of an evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above (see Article 3, Section 2), except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of recommendation will be sought from the applicant's home church.

Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members except that:

- when absent from the Fannin County area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services or serve in church ministries;
- while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings, they will not be eligible to stand for any office or to vote on any matter.

Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members (see Article 3, Section 6), except that the church shall notify the home church of the terminated associate member. Associate membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Fannin County area.

#### Section 6 – Purpose and Procedure of Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the pastors and deacons and to the discipline of the church body, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline by the entire body, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the pastors, deacons or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and exclusion (see Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5).

We believe that God offers redemption and forgiveness to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. As such, the ultimate goal of church discipline is to bring about the repentance and restoration of a member who is acting in a manner inconsistent with biblical morality and the teachings of this church. Therefore, this church understands the purposes and goals of church discipline should be:

- For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4–5; Hebrews 12:1–11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26–27; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1–5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1:22);
- For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them so that they may be encouraged to godly living and personal transformation from any unrighteous lifestyle (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24–25);
- For the purity of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 5:6–7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2);
- For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10);  
AND
- Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5–6; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

### Section 7 – Termination of Membership

Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following the death or voluntary resignation of any church member. Membership may be terminated as an act of church discipline at the recommendation of the pastors and deacons and with the vote of two-thirds of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members. However, a member, who is under the disciplinary action of the church, cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign membership once the disciplinary process has begun.

### Section 8 – Church Covenant

The covenant of this church, into which its members enter most solemnly and joyfully is as follows:

- Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

- We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.
- We also engage to maintain family and private devotion(s); to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our family, friends and acquaintances; to walk above reproach in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct to avoid gossip, and excessive anger; and to be enthusiastic in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.
- We further engage to watch over one another in Christian love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and in courtesy of speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, to secure it without delay.
- Moreover, we engage that when we move from this place, we will unite as soon as possible with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

#### **ARTICLE 4 | CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

This church is an independent, self-governing body in accordance with Baptist polity. We believe these principles to have been conceived by Jesus Christ our Lord and practiced by the apostles and the New Testament churches. We recognize no control, explicit or implied, by any other ecclesiastical body or person. We acknowledge only the lordship of Christ, the direction of the Holy Spirit and the governance of God's Holy Word.

The government of this church shall be in the hands of its members, a priesthood of believers, each with equal vote, all powers and privileges being derived from its congregational body. Any authority or privilege granted, or task or duty assigned, shall be at the will of the church and shall in no sense be construed as irrevocably vesting such power or privilege in any individual, team or organization. Powers so granted shall be only such as are necessary for the performance of the duty or task assigned. The officers of the church, as provided in Article 5, shall be elected by and accountable only to the church.

The business of the church shall be transacted at the regular monthly conference, except in matters of urgency or special need. Such special matters, not interfering with other provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the church, may be acted upon at a called conference.

Thirty-five members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, except as otherwise provided in this Constitution. In the absence of a quorum, the assembly shall have the power to adjourn and shall continue to adjourn until a quorum is present.

The Senior Pastor shall be moderator of the business meetings of the church unless the church by majority vote determines otherwise, and except that, in his absence, the members shall elect a moderator pro tem. The moderator or moderator pro tem shall appoint the members of all special teams authorized by the church, unless other provisions shall be made in the By-Laws or at the time

the team is created. Any moderator desiring to speak on any issue to be voted upon must relinquish his office while such issue is pending.

This Constitution and the By-Laws, or other rules, which shall be made in pursuance thereof, shall be the supreme law of this church but subject always to conformity with the Holy Bible. Every member of this church shall be bound thereby. The church shall not be bound by the rules of any other organization.

The church year shall be, for fiscal purposes, from January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>. The tenure of office of general church officers and standing teams, and for all other purposes shall be September the first through August the thirty-first. The pastors and deacons shall serve at the pleasure of the church.

Interpretation of the meaning and intent of this Constitution and of the By-Laws shall be the privilege but not the prerogative of the pastors and the deacon body. Any member dissatisfied with such interpretation, however, shall have the right to appeal to the church in regular conference and the decision there reached shall be final and binding.

The latest version of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of business at all conferences of the church, meetings of the deacons, and all organizations of the church.

## **ARTICLE 5 | OFFICERS**

The scriptural officers of this church are pastors and deacons. In addition, this church recognizes organizational and administrative officers which are clerk, treasurer, historian, trustees, librarian, director of the Sunday School, director of the Discipleship Training, president of the Women on Missions, and president of the Baptist Men, with such assistants as may be required, whose number, manner of election, terms of office, duties of office, and compensation (if any) shall be determined by the church. At the expiration of any term of office, that office shall be vacant until filled by the church. All officers shall be members of this church.

As its needs may require, the church shall create salaried positions on the church staff for the efficient operation of its program. Certain special functions of this church shall be performed through standing teams and special teams; each with definite duties and limitations of authority as the church shall authorize.

## **ARTICLE 6 | MEETINGS**

**The meetings of the church shall be as follows:**

- Services of worship which shall be held each Sunday, both morning and evening;
- Mid-week prayer service which shall be held each Wednesday evening;
- Revival services and special worship services as may be recommended by the pastor, or by the deacons if the office of pastor be vacant, and authorized by the church;
- Regular Conference, or business meeting, shall be held every month following the Sunday evening service. It shall take place after the occurrence of the Finance Team Meeting and the Deacon's Meeting.



- Special conference, or a called meeting, may be held at other times after due notice to the congregation, as need may require.

The program of the church and its regular or stated meetings, as named herein, shall take precedence over any and all meetings, programs, and the like of any organization within or without the church. However, by majority vote, the church may defer any meeting.

## **ARTICLE 7 | FISCAL POLICY**

The financial needs of this church, its organizations, and causes fostered by it shall be supported by voluntary tithes and offerings, which shall be paid into and disbursed from the church treasury. No debt, commitment, or other obligation shall be created except by specific authority of the church.

All property, both real and personal, all moneys, all equities, and the like shall be held and controlled by the church. Trustees of the church shall hold the record title thereof.

For the sake of efficiency, the church shall operate on a budget prepared and adopted by the church. Extraordinary disbursements and proposals for raising special funds must be authorized by the church.

The church treasurer shall be custodian of all church funds. All disbursements of moneys from the treasury shall be made only on authority of the church.

All persons handling funds of the church shall keep books of account of all funds received into and disbursed from the treasury. They shall deposit such funds as soon as possible after receipt in the name of the church in a bank subject to state or national supervision. All books, records, and supporting documents shall be submitted for audit at such times as the church shall direct.

## **ARTICLE 8 | ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH**

The organizations within the church shall be established to fulfill the purpose of the church as stated in Article 2. No individual or group of individuals under the protection of this church shall institute or form any organization upon any plan or ideal except upon the express authority of the church.

### **These Organizations are:**

- The Sunday School
- Discipleship Training
- Women on Missions
- Baptist Men
- The Department of Church Music
- The Library
- Any other as the church may deem wise to sponsor

## **ARTICLE 9 | ORDINANCES**

The ordinances of the church, as set forth in the Holy Bible, are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The ordinance of baptism shall be by immersion of the professed believer in water in obedience to the command of Christ and shall be administered on authority of and in the presence of the church. Only the pastor shall administer the ordinance, except that by special act of the church any ordained minister of the gospel of like faith and order may be authorized so to do.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at a worship service with such frequency as the church shall determine. All members of this church in good and regular standing and members of other Baptist churches of like faith and order may participate. The pastor shall preside at the table and shall be assisted by the deacons. In the pastor's absence or at his request, or when the church shall be without a pastor, the church, upon recommendation by the deacon body shall elect someone to preside.

#### **ARTICLE 10 | LICENSING AND ORDAINING**

Any member of the church who by his or her piety, zeal, and aptness to teach gives evidence of being called of God to the work, may, by request be licensed by the church to the Christian ministry. This shall be done by a vote of a majority of members present and voting at any regular conference.

When a Baptist church of like faith and order shall have called as its pastor a member of this church who possesses scriptural qualifications for ordination to the work of the gospel ministry, and shall have requested in writing that he be ordained, this church shall consider such request. If the church by a vote of a majority of the members present and voting at a regular conference approves such request, it shall authorize and direct the pastor to assemble an Ordaining Council of ordained ministers of the gospel of like faith and order and deacons of like faith and order who shall perform duties of the Ordaining Council. Upon favorable recommendation of this council, the ordination to the gospel ministry will proceed in the name of and in the presence of the church.

If the church at a regular conference shall elect a member or members to the office of deacon, it shall authorize and direct the pastor to assemble an Ordaining Council. This council may be composed of ordained ministers of the gospel of like faith and order and of deacons of this church and of visiting deacons of like faith and order. They shall perform the ceremony of ordaining him or them to the office of deacon in the name of and in the presence of the church.

#### **ARTICLE 11 | COOPERATION**

This church shall cooperate voluntarily with other Baptist churches of like faith and order through conventions, associations, and the like. These conventions, associations, and the like are to be devoted to the propagation of the gospel, religious education, healing the sick, benevolence, and other such efforts for advancing the kingdom of God.

This cooperation shall be manifest in this church by:

- contributing money through the regular treasuries of such organizations or directly to the causes fostered by them
- electing and sending messengers to participate in their deliberations
- the serving of its pastor and members as officers upon boards, committees and the like when invited so to do

- adopting at a regular conference, if the church deem proper, such recommendations or actions as may have been made or taken by the convention, association, or like organization.

This church may cooperate with other like-minded organizations or non-Baptist churches for purposes of community service, social issues, revivals, and other such activities. Such cooperation with non-Baptist groups or organizations shall not jeopardize the integrity of the gospel or the reputation of the church as a witness to that gospel and its moral expectations. All such cooperation shall be at the will of the church and the recommendation of the pastors and deacons.

## **ARTICLE 12 | STATEMENT OF FAITH**

This church was founded upon and professes historic Christian doctrine and beliefs most particularly of the Baptist tradition with its various distinctives.

As a cooperating church with the Southern Baptist Convention, we affirm the doctrinal confession put forth by the Southern Baptist Convention in the year 2000. This confession of belief is known as the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. The full statement can be requested from the Southern Baptist Convention or viewed in the Appendix of this document.

## **ARTICLE 13 | BY-LAWS**

The church shall adopt By-Laws to give practical effect to this Constitution. These By-Laws shall be in every particular subject to and in harmony with the letter and intent of this Constitution.

## **ARTICLE 14 | AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution was adopted by the church in regular conference held December 4, 2002. This Constitution shall supersede all prior resolutions, precedents, and actions of the church not in harmony with its provision.

This Constitution may be amended by a vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting at a regular conference. The amendment shall have been offered in writing at a previous regular conference and that not less than sixty (60) days shall have intervened before final consideration.

The By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular conference, or at any called conference, a quorum being present. The amendment shall have been offered in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the time of voting.

Two identical, complete, official copies of this Constitution and the By-Laws, together with amendments thereto, shall be kept. The clerk shall have one copy and the other shall be kept in the church office. A copy of the Constitution and By-Laws shall be furnished to each member of the church now belonging and hereafter to each new member.

REVISED AND UPDATED, November 5, 2003

REVISED AND UPDATED, June 14, 2015

## BY-LAWS

### **MEETINGS**

1. The church shall observe a regular monthly business conference following the occurrence of the monthly Finance Team meeting and the Deacon's Meeting. During regular conference, any business of the church may be transacted, a quorum being present. This meeting shall take place in conjunction with the Sunday evening service. Any meeting may adjourn until a future date by a majority present and voting.
2. All business meetings shall be conducted in regular church conference, presided over by a moderator as set forth in the Constitution of the church.
3. With a quorum being present, all votes carry by majority, unless otherwise provided herein or contained in the motion of a vote.
4. The membership of the church shall be notified at a prior Sunday morning worship service of the date of a vote to purchase or sell real property. In the event the vote is not taken, a new date shall be announced to the membership of the church one-week prior to the next scheduled vote.
5. The order of business at a regular business meeting shall include:
  - a. A devotional
  - b. Reading of minutes and financial statement
  - c. Consideration of request for changes in church membership
  - d. Report of teams
  - e. Unfinished business
  - f. New business

### **OFFICERS**

1. SENIOR PASTOR. The Senior Pastor shall shepherd the church under the authority of the Chief Shepherd Jesus Christ by the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit according to God's perfect Word. He shall meet the qualifications and perform the duties of an elder and shepherd as outlined in the Holy Bible (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4) and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. This office shall be limited to occupation by a qualified man according to the teaching of the New Testament (1 Tim. 2:9-15; 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
  - a. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the Constitution.
  - b. In the absence or incapacity of the Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastors and Deacons shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.
  - c. The pastor may be elected at any business meeting, stated or called, provided that due notice of such intended action has been given to the membership at least one week prior to a constitutional meeting of the church for the purpose of the Senior Pastor's election. Before calling any pastor, the church shall appoint a team to seek a pastor. This team shall report its action to the Deacons. The team and the Deacons shall recommend a prospective pastor before his name shall be submitted to the church. The Senior Pastor serves at the will and pleasure of the church.

2. **ASSOCIATE PASTORS.** The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the Senior Pastor is that of associate. Associate Pastors shall meet the same biblical qualifications as set forth for the Senior Pastor. Associate Pastors serve under and at the direction of the Senior Pastor. Each Associate Pastor shall assist the Senior Pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the Constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the Senior Pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight and at the direction of the church body. Associate Pastors serve at the will and pleasure of the church.
3. **DEACONS.** There shall be a body of deacons to serve the church according to the New Testament teachings (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). It shall consist of those deacons now serving and recognized by the church and such others as the church shall elect or ordain in the future. Once elected and ordained to serve this church, a deacon remains such an officer of this church until death, severance of membership from the church by himself, or by the church's withdrawing fellowship, whichever event occurs first.
  - a. From the active list of deacons, they, by majority vote, shall elect by secret ballot one of their number to be chairman. In like manner, they shall elect any other officers as are necessary to enable them to carry on their work. The Deacons may appoint various teams from their number to aid in carrying out their service to the church. The church membership shall seek the advice and counsel of its Deacons in matters pertaining to the welfare of the church. The harmony of the church is best served if any program has the support of the Deacons. In meetings of the Deacons, there must be a quorum present to conduct business. A minimum of twelve (12) deacons shall constitute a quorum.
  - b. If by reason of age, physical incapacity, or for any other reason, a deacon determines to his own satisfaction that he cannot actively discharge his duties, he shall, in writing, so state such fact to the chairman of the Deacons and the Senior Pastor. Upon receiving this request, the deacon's name shall be removed from the list of active Deacons. This person continues to be a Deacon. If circumstances change, he may in writing so state to the chairman of the body his desire that his name be reinstated to the active list and his name shall be reinstated by a majority vote of the active Deacon body.
  - c. It shall be the duty of the Deacons and the responsibility of the church to continually seek out qualified members for ordination to be Deacons. No person shall ever be a deacon who fails to possess the qualifications as set out in the New Testament, and no other test shall ever be applied or required. If qualified members are available, new deacons may be ordained every three years. Prior to ordination, trainees will have been through one year of deacon training conducted by the Senior Pastor. They will be expected to attend deacon meetings, but they will not have voting privileges. Deacon trainees will be recommended by secret ballot. All adult male members of the church, excluding deacons, will be listed on the ballot. After prayerful thought the congregation may select as many as three men to be considered as potential deacon candidates. The ballots will be tallied by the Deacon officers and evaluated by the Deacon body. Those deemed qualified will be contacted by a representative of the Deacon body and the Senior Pastor who will share with them the qualifications of a deacon according to 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Each Deacon candidate, Deacon, and the Senior Pastor should pray and make his own personal

decision whether or not the candidate participates in Deacon training for the following year.

- d. If an ordained Deacon from another Baptist church of like faith and order becomes a member of our church, he may be asked to be an active deacon after at least six months of testing, and if there is nothing against him according to 1 Timothy 3:10. He must be recommended by both the Deacon body and the Senior Pastor. Finally, he must be approved by the church.
4. CLERK. The clerk shall handle correspondence as directed by the staff. He or she shall keep the minutes of the business meetings and record the same in suitable books, and shall be custodian of the records and papers of the church. He or she shall record in a separate book the members' names, the date and manner of their joining, their residence at that time, and all dismissals, marriages, and deaths as far as ascertained.
5. TREASURER. The treasurer shall oversee all the funds and insurance policies of the church, and receive and pay out moneys as ordered by the church. Monthly statements shall be made to the church of the condition of his or her office. For auditing purposes, all accounting records shall be kept up to date.
6. THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES, OFFICERS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, AND OTHER CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS. The Director of Educational Ministries, other officers of the Sunday School, and all other officers of church organizations shall be elected as all other church officers. An education team shall make recommendations to the church of such officers prior to their election. This team shall in every case consult the various directors or proposed directors for recommendations as to various persons to serve under them. All other directors or proposed leaders of church organizations shall be contacted for recommendations of those to serve with them. [moved]

#### **COLLECTIONS AND EXPENDITURES**

1. Every Lord's Day there shall be a public collection taken for the regular expenditures of the church and for benevolences.
2. A collection shall be taken after each observance of the Lord's Supper for the needy of the church. These moneys shall be expended by the staff or deacons at their discretion.
3. All moneys raised in or by the church shall be reported to the treasurer.
4. The church is not responsible for any debt contracted or paid by members without the church's authority.
5. An annual budget of the church shall be developed by the Budget Team. This team shall be composed the following representatives of the various areas of church ministry: the Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastors, the Business Administrator, the Treasurer, the Deacon chairman, and the Finance Team leader, the Personnel Team leader, the House and Grounds Team leader, the Missions and Evangelism Team leader, a Children's Ministry Coordinator, and the Director of Educational Ministries. This team shall entertain budget requests from representatives from the standing teams and ministries of the church in order to develop the annual budget. The team shall have the power to elect its own chairman and other officers necessary in its work to prepare the preliminary budget of the church. This budget is then submitted to the Deacons for their recommendations before it is presented to the church. Upon recommendation from the Deacons, a proposed budget is presented to the church no later than the regular December business meeting. The church may amend, alter, or otherwise change any submitted budget, as it deems best. Then it will be in order for the

church to move for approval and a second to be received. The vote for approval of the budget will be taken on a stated Sunday morning prior to January 1<sup>st</sup>.

6. The finance team shall work closely with the church treasurer. This team shall be responsible for keeping complete and accurate records of church finances and to provide accountability and oversight to ensure the proper stewardship of the church's finances.
7. As custodians of the church's funds, the church treasurer and the business administrator shall oversee all payments of debts and charges, whether by cash, check, credit, or online, and may entrust the payment of these debts and charges to the other organizational staff of the church. As such, the business administrator or financial secretary of the church may pay any debts or charges of the church in the nature of regular or stated accounts up to the amount of \$500.00. The business administrator or treasurer of the church may pay any debt or charge in excess of \$500.00 and up to \$1,000.00. Any debts or charges over \$1,000.00 and up to \$5,000.00 may be paid by the business administrator and treasurer. The business administrator and/or treasurer may refer requests greater than \$1,000.00 to the church for approval if it is deemed necessary. All unspecified charges in excess of \$5,000.00 shall be paid only after approval by the church.

## **PUBLIC AND MORAL ISSUES**

### Marriage and Human Sexuality

1. We believe that the Bible speaks clearly on the issues of Marriage and Human Sexuality and base our convictions and practices upon its teaching (Gen. 2:18-24; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Matt. 19:3-6; Mark 10:6-9; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Tim. 1:8-11).
2. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.
3. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.
4. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.
5. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly. Furthermore, the church and its ministers shall only recognize, participate in, conduct or allow church facilities to be utilized for purposes consistent with the church's statement of faith and with this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality.
6. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

7. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

#### **AMENDMENTS**

These By-Laws shall be amended only as provided in the Constitution of the church. Please refer to Article 14 in the Constitution.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, April 7, 1954.  
REVISED AND UPDATED, November 5, 2003  
REVISED, May 10, 2009  
REVISED, May 16, 2010  
REVISED AND UPDATED, June 14, 2015  
REVISED, October 18, 2015



## APPENDIX

### **BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE 2000**

#### **I. The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

#### **II. God**

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

##### **A. God the Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

*Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.*

##### **B. God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation

between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

*Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.*

### **C. God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

*Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.*

### **III. Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

*Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.*

### **IV. Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

*Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.*

## **V. God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-*

*14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39–12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.*

## **VI. The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

*Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.*

## **VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

*Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.*

## **VIII. The Lord's Day**

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

*Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.*

## **IX. The Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to

pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

*Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.*

## **X. Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.*

## **XI. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.*

## **XII. Education**

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

*Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.*

### **XIII. Stewardship**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

*Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.*

### **XIV. Cooperation**

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

*Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.*

### **XV. The Christian and the Social Order**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians

should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

*Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.*

## **XVI. Peace and War**

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war. The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36, 38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.*

## **XVII. Religious Liberty**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

*Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7, 24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1, 13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.*

## **XVIII. The Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the

church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*