

**Bethlehem Baptist Church  
1581 Bethlehem Church Road  
Youngsville, NC 27596**

**BBC Church Constitution  
(September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005)**

**PREAMBLE**

For the purpose of preserving, propagating and making articulate the principles of our Faith, and to the end that this body of believing Christians may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of Missionary Baptist Churches, for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the church, and in order to set forth the relationship of this body to other Baptist bodies, we do adopt and establish this Constitution.

**Article I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be **Bethlehem Baptist Church** of 1581 Bethlehem Church Road, Youngsville, NC - Tar River Baptist Association.

**Article II. PURPOSE**

The Bethlehem Baptist Church is organized for the purpose of advancing and promoting the worship of God through the reading and study of the Holy Bible as the revealed word of God, the teaching and preaching of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, conducting regular services of worship for the spiritual training, development and benefit of each member and for the winning of souls to Jesus Christ. This church shall be missionary in spirit, extending the Gospel through our organized religious channels to the entire world. It shall promote and maintain the teachings and doctrines of that Christian denomination universally known and designated as the Missionary Baptist Denomination. It shall exist to provide regular opportunities for public worship, to sustain the ordinances, doctrines and ethics set forth in the New Testament for the church of our Lord Jesus Christ and to channel its offerings to the support of the objects of the Kingdom of God. In order to effectively carry forward the objects and purposes set forth above, the Church will have full power and authority to purchase, lease and acquire by gift, devise or bequest and to hold, mortgage, convey and dispose of all kinds of property, both real and personal, provided that the title to all property shall be vested in the church trustees as here-in-after set forth.

**ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP**

Section I. The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have given evidence of regeneration by the spirit of God, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have subscribed to the church covenant, articles of faith, and constitution of this church, and who have been received into membership by a vote of the church.

Section 2. A member of another Baptist church may be received by a vote of the church upon promise of letter of transfer from the church where membership resides. The applying member will be in probationary status with no voting privileges.

Section 3. Applications for membership under circumstances other than those described in Sections 1 and 2 above will be considered by the church in conference and the decision of the church will be final in each case.

Section 4. Upon request, a letter of transfer to unite with another Baptist church may be issued to the church which the member is planning to join providing such member is in good standing. All such requests must be passed upon by the church in conference.

Section 5. The church, after due notice(minimum two weeks) and opportunity for hearing, and every possible kindly effort to make such action unnecessary, may upon two-thirds vote of the current active membership, terminate the membership of a person in this body for reasons it considers sufficient to warrant such action.

Section 6. In the event a member requests a letter in order to unite with a church of another denomination, the church will instruct the clerk to withdraw her/his name from the church membership roll and also inform the requesting party that such action has been taken in church conference.

#### **ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS**

Section 1. This church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training and fellowship.

Section 2. This church shall hold regular business meetings for the disposition of all business matters not otherwise provided for, to hear reports from the various church organizations and to consider other matters essential to the spiritual welfare and prosperity of the congregation.

Section 3. Other meetings of the church as a whole or of authorized groups within the church may be set according to the needs of the congregation.

#### **ARTICLE V. OFFICERS**

The officers of this church shall be a pastor, and other vocational leadership as needed, deacons, trustees, clerk, treasurer, and such other officers as shall be required to do the work of the church in any of its departments or organizations. All of these shall be elected by the church and shall be members in good standing at the time of election. (Exception: a pastor may not be a member until after his call.)

#### **ARTICLE VI. ELECTION AND DUTIES OF CHURCH OFFICERS**

##### **Senior Pastor**

Section 1. Call: Whenever a vacancy occurs, a pastor shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the pastor or the church. In either case, at least sixty-days notice shall be given of termination of the relationship, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon, with both pastor and church seeking to follow the will of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The call of the pastor shall take place at a meeting especially set for that purpose of which at least one-week notice has been given the membership. The election shall be upon the recommendation of a special committee recommended by the deacons and approved by the church to seek out and nominate as pastor a minister of the gospel whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office. The committee shall bring only one name at a time for the consideration of the church and no nominations shall be made except by the committee. Election shall be by show of hands or by ballot at the discretion of the congregation with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present and voting necessary for an extension of a call. Should the minister recommended by the committee fail to receive a three-fourths vote, the committee will be instructed to seek out another minister and the meeting at which the vote was taken shall be adjourned without debate.

Section 2. Duties: The pastor shall have in his charge the welfare and oversight of the church; he shall be an ex-officio member of all organizations, departments and committees; he may call a special meeting of the deacons or of any committee according to procedures which are set forth in the By-laws; he shall conduct religious services on stated and on special occasions, administer the ordinances, minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the church and community; he shall perform other duties that usually pertain to that office; he shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall, in cooperation with Pulpit Committee and/or the deacons, provide for pulpit supply when he is absent, for ministers to assist in revival meetings and workers to assist in other special services required by the church. It shall be his special responsibility to win the lost to Christ, to minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the congregation, and through prayer and study to render effective preaching and pastoral ministries.

## Associate Pastor

Section 1. Call: Whenever a vacancy occurs, an associate pastor shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the associate pastor or the church. In either case, at least sixty-days notice shall be given of termination of the relationship, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon, with both associate pastor and church seeking to follow the will of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The call of the associate pastor shall take place at a meeting especially set for that purpose of which at least one-week notice has been given the membership. The election shall be upon the recommendation of a special committee recommended by the deacons and approved by the church to seek out and nominate as pastor a minister of the gospel whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office. The committee shall bring only one name at a time for the consideration of the church and no nominations shall be made except by the committee. Election shall be by show of hands or by ballot at the discretion of the congregation with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present and voting necessary for an extension of a call. Should the minister recommended by the committee fail to receive a three-fourths vote, the committee will be instructed to seek out another minister and the meeting at which the vote was taken shall be adjourned without debate.

Section 2. Duties: The associate pastor (under the direction of the senior pastor) shall have in his charge the welfare and oversight of the church; he shall be an ex-officio member of all organizations, departments and committees; he may call a special meeting of the deacons or of any committee according to procedures which are set forth in the By-laws; he shall conduct religious services on stated and on special occasions, administer the ordinances, minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the church and community; he shall perform other duties that usually pertain to that office; he shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall, in cooperation with Pulpit Committee and/or the deacons, provide for pulpit supply when he is absent, for ministers to assist in revival meetings and workers to assist in other special services required by the church. It shall be his special responsibility to win the lost to Christ, to minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the congregation, and through prayer and study to render effective preaching and pastoral ministries.

## Youth Minister

Section 1. Call: Whenever a vacancy occurs, a youth minister shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the youth minister or the church. In either case, at least sixty-days notice shall be given of termination of the relationship, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon, with both youth minister and church seeking to follow the will of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The call of the youth minister shall take place at a meeting especially set for that purpose of which at least a one-week notice has been given the membership. The election shall be upon the recommendation of a special committee recommended by the deacons and approved by the church to seek out and nominate a minister of the gospel whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office. The committee shall bring only one name at a time for the consideration of the church and no nominations shall be made except by the committee. Election shall be by show of hands or by ballot at the discretion of the congregation with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present and voting necessary for an extension of a call. Should the youth minister recommended by the committee fail to receive a three-fourths vote, the committee will be instructed to seek out another youth minister and the meeting at which the vote was taken shall be adjourned without debate.

Section 2. Duties: The youth minister shall work under and be responsible to the Pastor (Senior and/or Associate). He/she shall represent the pastor(s) in his absence(s), aid in the worship services, and assist in preaching and teaching responsibilities. The youth minister shall be in charge of the welfare and oversight of the youth/children program and activities. He/she shall be an ex-officio member of the organization, departments and committees as directed by the Pastor(s); he/she shall conduct religious services on stated and special occasions, minister to the spiritual needs of the youth/children, assist in revival meetings and other special services required by the church. He/she shall assist the Pastor(s) in all areas of ministry as requested with particular emphasis on the youth/children.

## **Deacons and Deaconesses**

Section 1. Deacons and deaconesses shall be elected from the membership of the church and shall be composed of at least seven members, with the option for more, depending on the needs and wishes of the church membership. They shall not be of the same immediate family (immediate family shall be defined as husband, wife, parent, child and sibling). They shall serve a three-year term. At least two new members shall be elected each year and the longest serving current members will rotate off. A deacon or deaconess shall be eligible for nomination to an additional three-year term after being off for a one-year period.

### **Section 2. Nomination and Election.**

- Every member of the church prior to deacon and deaconess nominations and elections should carefully and prayerfully review I Timothy 3, Titus 1 and Acts 6.
- Before being eligible to serve as a deacon or deaconess, a candidate must have been a member of Bethlehem Baptist church for a period of one (1) year prior to nomination.
- The church body will be provided with the qualifications and duties of the deacons/deaconesses by the last Sunday in May by way of sermon and handout.
- In conjunction with the morning worship service on the first Sunday in June, each church member thirteen years of age and older will be given a written ballot to nominate people to serve as deacons/deaconesses.
- A list of nominees will be compiled from these ballots by the current active deacons/deaconesses. They will list the nominees in order by the number of votes received and then screen them.
- The current deacon fellowship will contact nominees (how this is accomplished is determined by the current active deacons and the pastor), beginning at the top of the list, and continuing down the list until the number of nominees who are qualified and willing to serve equals the number of vacancies. The current deacon fellowship shall discuss the biblical requirements of the position of deacon with each contacted nominee.
- In addition, the nominees are required to read and affirm their support and belief in
  - the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, and
  - the Church Constitution and Bylaws (including the Articles of Faith)
- The men or women determined to be qualified by the deacons shall be declared elected and will be ordained, if needed, and will take office for a continuous term of three (3) years. The rotation will be observed.

Section 3. **Qualifications.** No person shall be considered qualified to serve as deacon or deaconess unless he or she has given evidence of having experienced salvation and endeavors to be a consistent witness for Christ. He or she should refrain from intoxicating drinks and habit-forming drugs and should seek to have a Christian home. He or she should be a tithing member of the church. Furthermore, he or she should attend and support the Sunday School, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening worship services, and other church activities unless there are reasons beyond his or her control. They should be willing, if elected by the church, to serve as a deacon or deaconess to covenant, to cooperate and work with the pastor, the other deacons and deaconesses, and the church as a whole.

Section 4. **Duties.** In accordance with the meaning of the name and the practice of the New Testament, deacons and deaconesses are to be servants of the church:

They are to be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace. They should greet and welcome the members and visitors at services of the church.

They should serve as a council of advice and conference with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare and work of the church. With the pastor, they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the development of Christians and the extension and growth of the Kingdom of God. They shall be charged with administering of the Lord's Supper.

In case of absence or inability of the pastor, subject to advice from any conference with him, they will make provisions for filling the pulpit.

In any period when the church is without a pastor, unless the church shall otherwise provide, the deacons and deaconesses will arrange the temporary ministry (securing supply speakers and an interim pastor).

They shall be organized and elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary each year. They shall have regular meetings and/or special meetings at the call of the pastor or chairperson.

Section 5. **Ordination and training.** Ordination services for new deacons and deaconesses will be held on the last Sunday before the new church year begins.

Section 6. **Vacancy.** In case of death, removal or incapacity to serve, an inactive deacon may be selected by the deacon body to fill the unexpired term. After serving the unexpired term of another, a deacon shall be eligible for nomination and re-election.

### **Trustees**

Three members of the church will serve as trustees whose terms of office shall be for three years with one-third elected each year. Candidates will be presented by the Deacons annually for approval. Having served as a trustee during a previous term will not disqualify a member for re-election. At all times there shall be three trustees who are to hold title to all church property for the benefit of those members of the church. The trustees shall execute all contracts, deeds, mortgages or other instruments when authorized to do so by the church in conference. The trustees shall serve for a three-year term and until their successors are duly elected by the church in conference. Upon the death, resignation, or inability to serve of any of the trustees, a successor shall be recommended by the Deacon board and voted upon by the church in conference.

## **Clerk**

A clerk and assistant shall be elected annually upon recommendation of the nominating committee. It shall be the responsibility of the clerk to attend or be represented by an assistant clerk at all church business meetings, to keep an accurate record of all business transactions, to prepare the annual associational letter and to see that it is properly transmitted to the associational clerk. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal as authorized by the church, preserve all papers and valuable records and letters that belong to the church, and preserve a true history of the church, keeping same in a safe place. It shall be the duty of the clerk to see that an accurate roll of the church membership, the date and methods of admission and dismissal, change in name, correct mailing addresses and other pertinent information about each member is kept.

## **Treasurer**

The church shall elect a treasurer and assistant annually. One who has served previously in this position will be eligible for re-election. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, keep in a bank, and disburse by check upon proper authority all money or things of value that are given to the church in accordance with instructions from the church. The treasurer shall keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements, rendering an account to the church at the monthly business meeting and to be preserved by the church clerk. The treasurer's books shall be audited at least once a year as arranged by the church. All books, records and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be the property of the church. The treasurer shall, upon invitation, meet with the deacons, and shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee and the Budget Committee.

## **ARTICLE VII. CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

Section 1. The government of this church shall be congregational in nature and shall be vested in the membership.

Section 2. Church Conference: A church conference shall be held on the second Wednesday night of each month. In addition to stated conferences, a conference of the church may be called at any time by the pastor and/or chairman of deacons, or upon the request of any five members of the church who are regular in attendance and support. Any conference in addition to the stated conference must have prior announcement at two regular church services.

Section 3. Moderator: The pastor of the church shall preside as church moderator; in his absence the chairman of the deacons shall preside as vice-moderator; in the absence of the moderator and the vice-moderator, the pastor shall designate some other member in good standing to preside.

Section 4. Quorum: The number of active church members required to constitute a quorum shall not be less than 25.

Section 5. Minutes: The church clerk shall keep minutes of each business meeting and shall record the approximate number of members present, whether a quorum was present and what actions were taken by the church.

Section 6. Voting: An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the active members present and voting shall be required for all issues unless otherwise specified in the Constitution. Voting shall be by show of hands unless a majority of the voting members present request a ballot vote.

Section 7. Active/ Inactive Membership: An active membership is required in order to participate in the voting process of the church's business. An active member is defined as a member who has attended a minimum of one Sunday service during the preceding 90 days and is thirteen or older. An inactive member can be reinstated to active status by attending four consecutive Sunday services.

## **ARTICLE VIII. AFFILIATION**

Section 1. This church is a free, autonomous, independent body, congregational in nature with authority to determine for itself in the manner set forth in this constitution, free of any outside control, authority or power, whether governmental or otherwise, the use of its property and all church policies.

Section 2. Association: The church recognizes the value and mutual helpfulness in the voluntary association of churches which are in such agreement in faith and practice as to make possible a spirit of fellowship and goodwill. It is recognized that association and cooperation between such churches will influence the missionary, educational and benevolent interests of each other. The church does, therefore, declare its intention, as far as conscience will allow, to work in mutual cooperation with other Baptist groups.

Section 3. Affiliation: Upon the adoption of this constitution this church shall be deemed to have affiliated itself with the Tar River Baptist Association.

Section 4. Cooperation: Upon adoption of this constitution this church shall be deemed to be in friendly cooperation with the aims and purposes of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and of the Southern Baptist Convention as set forth in the constitution of these autonomous bodies and through duly-elected messengers will make an effort to participate in their deliberative assemblies, and shall as we are able, support the missionary, benevolent and educational programs of each.

Section 5. Discontinuance of Affiliation and/or Cooperation. The calling of a church conference for the purpose of voting on withdrawal from affiliation from the Tar River Association and/or discontinuance of cooperation with the Baptist State Convention and/or the Southern Baptist Convention will require thirty-days notice be given to active members stating the purpose and time of said conference. Action to withdraw must be carried by vote of three-fourths majority in order to be valid.

## **ARTICLE IX. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. This constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds of the members present at the business meeting at which vote is taken shall vote in favor of same. This vote shall be taken not less than thirty days after formal presentation of the Constitution to the Church, and notice of such meeting in which the vote is to be taken shall be given at least one week in advance.

Section 2. This constitution may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the active members present at any regular business meeting of the church, provided, however, that such amendment, alteration or repeal shall have been given to the clerk in writing, and the proposed change shall have been presented to the church at least thirty days prior to the time the vote is taken.

## **BY-LAWS**

### **ARTICLE I. MEETINGS**

The church shall hold regular services of worship on Sundays and Wednesday evenings unless otherwise agreed upon by the church. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once a quarter.

### **ARTICLE II. OTHER CHURCH OFFICERS**

Section 1. All church officers subject to annual election shall be elected by the end of August.

Section 2. In addition to those named in the body of the constitution, other officers of the church shall be a Financial Secretary, Superintendent of the Sunday School, Director of Church Music, Pianist-Organist, and such other officers as may be necessary and desirable. All officers of the church and its organizations, unless otherwise specified, shall be elected for a term of one year, and upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, it being understood, of course, that members of the church may offer substitute nominations for any position for which the Nominating Committee makes nominations.

### **ARTICLE III. DUTIES OF CHURCH OFFICERS**

Section 1. Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary shall receive the empty offering envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper person(s), and from these he/she shall give each contributor individual credit as provided in the record system approved by the church. He/She shall keep the envelopes for references as the church directs. He/She shall keep record of the receipts from envelopes, plate or loose, and miscellaneous or special offerings. The Financial Secretary shall also be responsible for preparing and distributing regular statements to all contributing members as the church directs. The Treasurer shall assume these duties in the event the Financial Secretary deems it necessary.

Section 2. Sunday School Superintendent. The Superintendent of the Sunday School shall have general oversight of the entire school and shall administer its affairs in cooperation with, and according to, the plans and methods of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, subject to the approval of the local church. He/She shall acquaint himself/herself with the best methods of religious education and endeavor to adopt them in this school. It shall be his/her duty to counsel weekly or monthly with his/her teachers and officers through officers' and teachers' meetings as needed, giving advice and receiving suggestions from his/her co-workers. He/She shall see that a full and accurate report is made of the work of the Sunday School in the regular business meetings of the church.

Section 3. Music Director. The Music Director shall be responsible for providing worshipful music at all services. He/She is to train and direct the choir and is to cooperate with the pastor and other church leaders in the selection of suitable music and the devising of appropriate musical programs for all occasions where such services are needed.

Section 4. Pianist-Organist. The Pianist-Organist shall play for all public services and shall assist the Music Director in a suitable program of music for the church.

### **ARTICLE IV. COMMITTEES**

Section 1. Standing Committees. The church shall elect such standing committees as may be deemed necessary to carry out the various phases of the program of the church efficiently and effectively. In any event, the church shall have at all times the following standing committees: Nominating, Budget and Finance, Building and Grounds, and Missions and any additional committees deemed necessary for the proper function of the church.

Section 2. Temporary Committees. The church may elect committees to perform temporary functions at any time.

### **ARTICLE V. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

Section 1. These By-Laws shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at the business meeting shall vote in favor of same. This vote shall be taken not less than thirty days after formal presentation of the By-Laws to the church.



Section 2. These By-Laws may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church, provided, however, that notice and proposal of such amendment, alteration or repeal be given in writing at the preceding regular business meeting of the church.

## **ARTICLE VI. RULES OF ORDER**

The church shall adopt Robert's Rules of Order for the conducting of its parliamentary procedures. This guide shall be followed unless otherwise specified in the Constitution or its By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE VII. VALIDATE**

Section 1. The adoption by the church of this Constitution and By-Laws shall repeal all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith, provided, however, that no actions taken by the church prior to this date shall be invalidated by the adoption of this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 2. A copy of this Constitution and By-Laws shall be kept by the clerk at all times among his/her records and another copy shall be kept in the church office, and all amendments to or revisions thereof shall be prepared by the clerk and attached to copies of the Constitution and By-Laws and made available to the church members generally upon request.

## **ADDENDUM NUMBER ONE**

### **CHURCH COVENANT**

We the members of Bethlehem Church do hereby voluntarily and freely covenant with one another to be one body under one head which is Christ and to jointly exist and act in church fellowship by the bonds and rules of the Gospel, and we do engage by the assistance of God's grace to walk together in brotherly love, to exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other, to admonish and entrust one another as occasions may require and that we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together nor neglect the great duty of prayer. We will participate in each other's joys and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's sorrows, that we will strive together for the support of a faithful evangelistically ministry among us and the preaching of a pure gospel in the world and that through life we will seek to live to the glory of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

## **ADDENDUM NUMBER TWO**

### **ARTICLES OF FAITH**

#### **The Scriptures**

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge 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.

Scripture references: Luke 16:29-31; Ephesians 2:19-22; Matthew 22:29-32; John 1:45; II Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 1:1; II Peter 1:19-21; Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119:1-17

## God

There is one and only one living and true God, and intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, the Preserver, and Ruler of the universe, infinite in holiness and all other perfections, to whom we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. He is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

Scripture References: Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:14; Duet. 6:4-5; Isa. 48:12-13; Jer. 10:10; Matt. 28:19; John 1:14-18; John 5:26-27; Gal. 4:4-6; I Tim. 1:17; I Cor. 8:4-6; Hebrews 11:6.

## The Fall of Man

Man was created by the special act of God, as recorded in Genesis. (Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7).

He was created in a state of holiness under the law of his Maker, but, through the temptation of Satan, he fell from his original holiness and righteousness; whereby his descendants and future generations inherit a nature capable of moral action, become actual transgressors.

Scripture References: Romans 3:21; Gen. 2:7; Gen. 3:4-7; Gen. 3:22-24; Psalm 51:1; Rom. 5:12-14; Rom. 7:23-25; Col. 1:21.

## The Way of Salvation

The Salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial office of the Son of God, who by the Holy Spirit was born of the Virgin Mary and took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience and made atonement for our sins by his death. Being risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in Heaven, and uniting in his person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is in every way qualified to be a compassionate and all-sufficient Savior.

Scripture Reference: Matt. 1:21-25; Luke 2:35; Isa. 7:14; Rom. 1:1-6; Rom. 3:23-25; Gal. 2:19-20; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7-14, Eph. 1:20-23; Eph. 2:1-3; Co. 1:21-23.

## Justification

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of righteousness of all sinners who believe in Christ. This blessing is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but through the redemption that is in one through Jesus Christ. It brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other needed blessing.

Scripture Reference: Rom. 3:21-26; Rom. 5:1-2; Rom. 8:30; I Cor. 1:30-31; II Cor. 5:21.

## Freeness of Salvation

The blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel. It is the duty of all to accept them by penitent and obedient faith. Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner except his own voluntary refusal to accept Jesus Christ as teacher, Savior, and Lord.

Scripture Reference: John 3:14-18; Rom. 5:1-11; Eph. 1:5; Rev. 22:17; Rom. 10:9.

## Regeneration

Regeneration of the new birth is a change of heart brought by the Holy Spirit, whereby we become partakers of the divine nature and a holy disposition is given, leading to the love and practice of righteousness. It is a work of God's free grace conditioned upon faith in Christ and made manifest by the fruit which we bring forth to the glory of God.

Scripture Reference: John 1:12-13; John 3:1-8; Rom. 8:1-3; II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:1-10; Eph. 4:30; Col. 3:1-11; Titus 3:3-7.

## Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, brought about in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation of Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

Scripture Reference: Mark 1:14-15; Mark 6:12; Luke 13: 1-5; John 16:8-11; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; Acts 20:20-21; Romans 3:25-31.

## God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners. It is perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. It encourages the use of means in the highest degree.

Scripture Reference: Acts 26:18; Rom. 8:29-30; Rom. 11:7-17; Eph. 1:9-10; Eph. 1:15-23; Eph. 2:4-7; II Tim. 1:8-10.

## Sanctification

Sanctification is the process by which the regenerate gradually attain to moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts. It continues throughout the earthy life, and is accomplished by the use of all the ordinary means of grace, and particularly by the Word of God.

Scripture Reference: John 17:15-17; Acts 20:32; Rom. 6:3-7; Rom. 8:17-28; II Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:16-26; Eph. 3:14-21; Heb. 12:14.

## Perseverance

All real believers endure to the end. Their continuance in well-doing is the mark which distinguishes them from mere professors. A special Providence cares for them, and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Scripture Reference: John 10:27-31; Rom. 5:8-10; Rom. 8:28-39; Rom 9:16; I Cor. 11:32; II Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14; Eph. 4:40; II Tim. 2:19; I John 2:19-20.

## XII A Gospel Church

A church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the end of the earth. Its Scriptural officers are bishops or pastors, or elders, and deacons and teachers.

Scripture References: Matt. 16:18; Matt. 18:15-18; Acts 2:41-47; Acts 14:21-23; I Cor. 1:2; I Cor. 9:6; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:9; Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 9:13-14.

## 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 Holy Spirit. The act is a symbol of our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior. It is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by the use of bread and wine, commemorate the dying love of Christ.

Scripture References: Matt. 3:13-17; Matt 28:1-20; Mark 1:9-11; Matt. 26:26-28  
Luke 22:19-20 & 30; John 3:22-23; Acts 8:38-39; Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 10:16-17; I Cor. 11:23-26.

## 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 be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, and resting from secular employments, works of necessity and mercy only excepted.

Scripture References: Matt. 28:1-6; John 20:1; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2; Rev. 1:9-11.

## XV. The Righteous and the Wicked

There is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and wicked. Those only who are justified through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit are truly righteous in his sight. Those who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked and under condemnation. This distinction between the righteous and the wicked holds in and after death, and will be made manifest at the judgment when final and everlasting awards are made to all men.

Scripture References: Matt. 25:31-46; Mark 9:48; Luke 23:43; John 3:36; Rom. 9:22-24; I Cor. 15:45-53; II Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 3:20-21; I Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:10-15.

## The Resurrection

The Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus rose from the dead. His grave was emptied of its contents. He appeared to the disciples after his resurrection in many convincing manifestations. He now exists in his glorified body at God's right hand. There will be a resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. The bodies of the righteous will conform to the glorious spiritual body of Jesus.

Scripture References: Matt. 28:6; John 5:28-29; John 14:1-3; John 20: 1-29; Acts 24:14-15; I Cor. 15:1-58; II Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 3:20-21; I Thess. 4:13-17; Rev. 20:12-15.

## The Return of the Lord

The New Testament teaches in many places the visible and personal return of Jesus to this earth. The time of his coming is not revealed. It is the duty of all believers to live in readiness for his coming and by diligence in good works to make manifest to all men the reality and power of their hope in Christ.

Scripture Reference: Matt. 24:29-44; Mark 13:24-37; Luke 21:25-28; Acts 1:9-11.

## XVIII. 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 the 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.

Scripture Reference: Matt. 22:17-21; Mark 12:13-17; Romans 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:1-4; I Peter 2:17.

## XIX. 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 pure 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 and oppose everything likely to provoke war.

Scripture Reference: Matt. 3:3-12; Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 14:17-19; Rom. 12:17-21; Heb. 12:14; James 4:1-3.

## XX. Education

Christianity is the religion of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ are hidden 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. An adequate system of schools is necessary to complete spiritual program for Christ's people. 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.

Deut. 4:1-14; Deut. 6:1-9; Psalm 19:7-11; Prov. 4:1-13; Neh. 8:1-9; Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 2:2-7; IITim. 2:14-15; Col. 1:28.

## Social Service

Every Christian is under obligation to work to make the will of Christ the ruling power in his own life and in human society; to oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice; to provide for the orphaned, the aged, the helpless, and the sick; to seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth and brotherly love; 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. All means and methods used in social service for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men must finally depend on the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Ex. 20:16; Deut. 27:17; Ezek. 18:5-9; Zech. 8:16-17; Luke 10:25-37; Luke 6:27-38; Rom. 12:14-21; Col. 3:12-17; James 2:8.

## Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and convention as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organization have no authority over each other 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. Individual members of New Testament churches should cooperate with each other, and the churches themselves should cooperate with each other in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent program 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 Christian denominations, when no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Ezra 1:3-4; Ezra 2:68-69; Ezra 5:14-15; Neh. 4:6; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 10:5-15; Matt. 20:1-6; Matt. 22:1-10; Acts 1:13-14; Acts 1:21-26; Acts 2:1; Acts 2:41-47; I Cor. 1:10; I Cor. 3:1-5; I Cor. 11:12; I Cor. 16:2; IICor.9; Eph. 4:1-16; III John 1:5-8

## Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty of every Christian man and woman, and the duty of every church of Christ to seek to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. 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. It is also expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods sanctioned by the gospel of Christ.

Matt. 10:5-25; Matt. 13:1-23; Matt. 22:8-10; Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-53;  
Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 21:38-39; Acts 8:1-40; Acts 10:42-48; Acts 13:1-3, 3000-33;  
II Cor. 5:19-21; I Thess. 1:1-8.

## Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that have and are we owe to him. We have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the Gospel, and a binding stewardship in our possessions. We are therefore under obligation to serve him with our time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to us to use regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally contribute of their means to advancing the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Lev. 27:30; Mal. 3:8-10; Matt. 23:23; Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 12:41-48; Acts 2:44-47;  
I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 8:1-15; Matt. 6:19-21. 24.

## Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is the reign of God in the heart and life of the individual in every human relationship, and in every form and institution or organized human society. The chief means for promoting the Kingdom of God on righteousness contained therein. The Kingdom of God will be complete when every thought and will of man shall be brought into captivity to the will of Christ. And it is the duty of all Christ's people to pray and labor continually that his kingdom may come and his will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Matt. 4:23; Matt. 6:10; Matt. 8:12; Matt. 13:25; Mark 11:10; Luke 12:32; Luke 22:29; Luke 23:42-43; John 3:3; John 18:36; I Cor. 15:24 Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28; Rom. 14:17.