Bylaws of the
Black Creek Baptist Association

To carry out the mission of the Black Creek Baptist Association (BCBA), the following bylaws are hereinafter set forth as approved and adopted by the Black Creek Baptist Association:

Throughout this document the letters BCBA will be used in short for Black Creek Baptist Association, Inc.

Provision I - Membership

The membership of the BCBA shall be comprised of admitted Southern Baptist Churches, which cooperate with the BCBA. Cooperation is defined as follows:

1. Share an annual church report with the BCBA via the Annual Church Profile.
2. Financially support the work of the BCBA by giving to the general budget a minimum of $250 per year.

   Financially support the work of the BCBA by giving to the general budget a minimum of $600 per year.

   (WILL BE REMOVED) Provide representatives from the member church to attend associational annual meetings or special called meetings for member churches.
3. Participate in the various efforts and events of the BCBA.
4.

5. Conduct themselves according with the Holy Scriptures and the BCBA's Statement of Faith which is *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 of the Southern Baptist Convention (see Addendum 1 attached)* or any other declaration of faith which is consistent with the tenets of our historic Baptist faith, as the theological framework.

Section A - Obtaining Membership

Any Southern Baptist Church of like faith or belief may seek to attain fellowship with the BCBA by making application to the BCBA at any time. The church seeking membership

will undergo a reasonable vetting process, conducted by the BCBA staff and the leadership team. The vetting may include both an interview component and written submissions by the applicant church. Upon completion of the vetting process, the staff and leadership team will determine whether to offer the applicant church conditional member status. Any churches offered conditional member status may be voted upon by the BCBA at any Annual Meeting or such other meeting properly called for this purpose. All churches receiving a two-thirds (2/3) majority or greater vote, will become members in good standing.

Any Southern Baptist Church of like faith or belief may seek to attain fellowship with the BCBA by making application to the BCBA at any time. Participation in the association shall be voluntary. Churches seeking membership will undergo a reasonable vetting process, conducted by the Bylaws/Constitution/Credentials Committee. The vetting will include both an interview component and written submissions by the applicant church. Upon completion of the vetting process, the Bylaws/Constitution/Credentials Committee will determine whether to recommend the prospective church a conditional membership status to the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team will determine by majority vote, whether to offer the applicant church conditional member status. Any churches offered conditional member status may be voted upon by the Executive Committee at any Executive Committee meeting. All churches receiving an affirmative two-thirds (2/3) or greater vote, by the Executive Committee, will become members in good standing.

Section B - Privileges and Responsibilities of Membership

Once a church is granted conditional member status, it is entitled to all benefits and offerings of the BCBA except that its messengers may not vote on BCBA matters nor hold positions of leadership. Both voting rights and eligibility for members to be elected to a position of leadership are bestowed upon member churches only after the BCBA votes to accept the church into membership during the Annual Meeting.

Once a church is granted conditional member status, it is entitled to all benefits and offerings of the BCBA except that its Senior Pastor and members may not vote on BCBA matters nor hold positions of leadership. Both voting rights and eligibility for members to be elected to a position of leadership are bestowed upon member churches only after the Executive Committee votes to accept the church into membership.

As set forth in the BCBA constitution, all churches associated with the BCBA shall adhere to, maintain, and propagate the doctrines, faith and practices of Southern Baptist churches which cooperate with the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. Many of such beliefs and tenants are set forth in the doctrinal statement known as the Baptist Faith and Message most recently drafted and adopted by Southern Baptists in the year 2000. Member churches may choose to use any other declaration of faith which is consistent with the tenets of our historic Baptist faith, as the theological framework.

Member churches are expected to partner in the missional works of the BCBA. Such participation should come in the form of both participation in events/meetings, and non-designated financial contributions to the BCBA.

The expectation of each member church is that they will contribute a meaningful amount to the BCBA. While such amount will vary among member churches, meaningful contributions are a percentage of the church's' non-designated receipts of at least $250 per year. The BCBA will issue a report each year- published to all member churches detailing the amounts given by each member church to support the missional works of the BCBA. Each member church is also to cooperate by sending messengers to the associational annual meeting.

The expectation of each member church is that they will contribute a meaningful amount to the BCBA. While such amount will vary among member churches, meaningful contributions are a percentage of the church's' non-designated receipts of at least $600 per year. The BCBA will issue a report each year- published to all member churches detailing the amounts given by each member church to support the missional works of the BCBA. Each member church is also to cooperate by sending their Senior Pastor or a member as outlined in **Section D - Executive Committee** to the executive committee meetings.

Section C - Termination of Membership

Should the BCBA become aware that any member church has failed to satisfy session B of the Bylaws:

The Association maintains no oversight, authority, or control over any associated church. When it appears that the behavior or doctrine of any member church is inconsistent with the criteria listed **Provision I – Membership, Section B - Privileges and Responsibilities of Membership**:

The BCBA (through its leadership team) will contact the church and inquire into the matter. Should the leadership team confirm any one or more of the criteria set forth above, the team will seek to restoratively counsel such member church concerning the departure from BCBA membership requirements.

The BCBA Bylaws/Constitution/Credentials Committee will contact the church and inquire into the matter. Should the Bylaws/Constitution/Credentials Committee confirm any one or more of the criteria set forth above, the team will seek to restoratively counsel such member church concerning the departure from BCBA membership requirements.

Should the church be unwilling or unable to bring its practices and/or beliefs back in line with the requirements for membership in the BCBA, the leadership team will bring the situation to the Executive Committee at the next scheduled meeting. Such church's membership in the BCBA would then be subject to termination upon a majority vote of the messengers at a properly called meeting.

Should the church be unwilling or unable to bring its practices and/or beliefs back in line with criteria as stated in **Provision I – Membership, Section B - Privileges and Responsibilities of Membership**: for membership in the BCBA, the Bylaws/Constitution/Credentials Committee shall request the Leadership Team confer with the church and if no hope of reclamation is imminent, the Leadership Team shall bring its findings to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may terminate the church's membership with the association with a vote of no less than 2/3 of those at the Executive Committee meeting for approval to remove such church. The Executive Committee will report the outcome of the vote at the annual meeting.

Provision II - Notice to Member Churches

Where feasible (i.e., where it does not compromise the integrity of its work), the Association will seek to utilize the most efficient and cost-effective methods in all operations. To that end, notices to member churches of upcoming events and any Special Meeting will be delivered electronically. Such electronic delivery may be by email to the email address provided by the member church.

Where feasible (i.e., where it does not compromise the integrity of its work), the Association will seek to utilize the most efficient and cost-effective methods in all operations. To that end, notices to member churches or committees of upcoming events and any special meeting may be delivered electronically or by physical mail. Electronic delivery may be by email or text messages to the contact information provided by the member church or their pastor.

Provision III - Meetings

Section A - Procedural Rules

The regular meeting of the Association shall be conducted in accordance with the current edition of the Robert's Rules of Order. To the extent any conflict arises between these Bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order, the provisions of these Bylaws shall prevail.

Section B - Parliamentarian

While it is not required to do so, the BCBA may choose to retain a parliamentarian to assist the meeting-moderator in any meeting of the membership. If a Parliamentarian is retained, the person chosen for the role must be sufficiently familiar with and/or certified

in Robert's Rules of Order. The role of any such parliamentarian shall be advisory only. All decisions of the meeting-moderator regarding procedure shall be final.

Section C – Associational Meeting

The Black Creek Baptist Association shall hold an annual meeting each year. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for working with the Association staff to set the agenda for the annual meeting. The Leadership Team shall have much flexibility and discretion when setting the agenda and order. The following items of business shall be conducted at each annual meeting:

1. **Reports from committees to Association Membership.**
   Provide reports of the Associations activities.
2. **Election of Officers and other Leaders.**
   Publicly announce Officers and other Leaders for the upcoming year.
3. **Approval of Budget.**
   Publicly announce the budget for the upcoming year.
4. **(REMOVE) Messenger Input.**
   1. Unlike special meetings, the annual meeting shall have a time set aside for messenger comment or questions.
   2. Any messenger may take up to three (3) minutes to bring a question or make a comment on any issue or topic pertinent to the Association and its operation.
   3. The Moderator may choose to respond to such comment or question (or seek a response from any interested person or team), or he may choose to simply take such comment or question under advisement.
5. **An "inspirational" message** will be delivered to encourage and charge participants to continue doing kingdom advancement work and ministry. (This will become 4)
6. **(REMOVE)** All member churches shall choose their messengers for voting capacity at the annual meeting of the association. Each church constituting the association shall be entitled to four (4) messengers, and an additional messenger for every fifty (50) members thereafter up to ten (10) total messengers.
7. **(REMOVE)** Each messenger shall register his or her attendance upon arrival at any Association meeting wherein business will be conducted, and a vote taken. Such registration will require the messenger to provide his or her name and address to the Clerk. The first time a messenger is sent by a particular

member church, the messenger must also provide the Clerk with a letter from such church confirming the person's status as a duly elected/nominated messenger**.** The Association retains the sole discretion to

refuse to recognize any messenger who is unable or unwilling to register as set forth herein.

2. Other meetings of pastors, staff, volunteers, and associational staff will meet regularly as needed.
3. In case of emergency or other need, as determined by the Lead Mission Strategist and/or Leadership Team, the Moderator shall call a special meeting. Notice of such special session shall be provided to associated churches as set forth in the Bylaws.

2. Other meetings of pastors, staff, volunteers, and associational staff will meet regularly as needed. (This will become 5)
3. In case of emergency or other need, as determined by the Associational Mission Strategist and/or the Moderator or Vice-Moderator, the Moderator shall call a special meeting. Notice of such special session shall be provided to those as set forth in the Bylaws. (This will become 6)

4. The Executive Committee will report to the annual celebration any business that required votes and the outcome of the votes over the previous year.

Provision IV - Quorum and Voting

Section A - Annual Meeting

Except as is set forth below, properly called meetings (no less than fourteen [14] days prior) shall not be postponed or discontinued for lack of a certain number of attendees. A quorum for the Annual Meeting shall be reached when a minimum of 35 representatives from at least 8 churches are present.

Except as is set forth below, properly called Annual meetings (no less than fourteen [14] days prior) shall not be postponed or discontinued for lack of a certain number of attendees. A quorum for the Annual Meeting shall be reached by those present and attending the annual meeting.

Section B - Voting

The default manner of voting shall be by voice vote or a show of hands. Secret and/or written ballot voting shall not be used unless three-quarters of those in attendance and eligible to vote request to employ such ballots. Regardless of the method or manner of voting, the Moderator and Vice-Moderator shall conduct the vote and tabulate the results.

Provision V - Responsibilities of BCBA Leadership

Ultimate control over the work of the BCBA is vested in the associated churches. Day-to-day control over the work of the BCBA is vested in the BCBA staff and the leadership team. A Nominating Committee will facilitate the selection of potential candidates to serve as the Officers and Leaders of the Association. The following sets forth the division of duties and responsibilities for each of these bodies:

Ultimate control over the work of the BCBA is vested in the associated churches. Day-to-day control over the work of the BCBA is vested in the BCBA staff and the leadership team. A Nominating Committee will facilitate the selection of potential candidates to serve as the Officers and committee members of the Association. The following sets forth the division of duties and responsibilities for each of these bodies:

Section A - The BCBA Staff

The BCBA staff shall consist of traditional employees, contract workers and independent consultants. Regardless of their specific designation, all persons compensated by the BCBA shall abide by these bylaws, as well as any and all provisions in the employee handbook or personnel policy manual that is, or may be, in effect at any time during their period of compensation.

The make-up of the staff (i.e., staff positions that are necessary and prudent) shall be subject to the discretion and oversight of the Lead Missional Strategist.

The make-up of the staff (i.e., staff positions that are necessary and prudent) shall be established by the discretion of the leadership team and report to the Associational Missional Strategist.

Among other individual duties, the BCBA staff will collectively:

1. Study the needs of the churches in the association, and then design and implement programs to meet those needs.
2. Collaborate with the Finance Committee to develop a recommended budget for the association.
3. Coordinate with the Florida Baptist Convention and North American Mission Board (NAMB) to ensure effective use of Associational resources and a minimal amount of overlap/redundancy.
4. Be responsible for calendaring the annual meeting and any called special meetings (as well as making proper and adequate notice of no less than fourteen [14] days prior to such meetings being sent to member churches).

Specific duties and responsibilities for each worker compensated by the BCBA are to be set forth in an employment handbook and/or policy and procedure manual (including individualized job descriptions). Such descriptions are to be reviewed annually and updated as necessary by the leadership team.

The staff structure of the BCBA is subject to change at any time pursuant to the direction and oversight of the Lead Missional Strategist and the Leadership Team.
The staff structure of the BCBA is subject to change at any time pursuant to the direction and oversight of the Leadership Team.

Section B – Associational Missional Strategist (AMS)

The BCBA staff is to be directly supervised by the Associational Missional Strategist as with other BCBA staff, the specific duties and responsibilities of the staff are set forth in the personnel policies manual and manual of procedures. Nevertheless, the role of the Associational Missional Strategist shall be to act as, essentially, Chief Operating Officer of the BCBA.
While the Associational Missional Strategist has the authority to make personnel decisions up to and including termination of BCBA staff, he will consult with the Leadership Team prior to any personnel actions.

The leadership team will function as a Personnel Committee and has the authority to make personnel decisions up to and including termination of BCBA staff. When needed, they will consult with the Associational Missional Strategist's prior to any personnel actions.

The Lead Missional Strategist is ultimately responsible to the BCBA member churches. Direct oversight of the Lead Missional Strategist is performed by the Leadership Team. Should any material decision (e.g., formal accolade, salary increase/decrease) regarding the Lead Missional Strategist employment need to be made, the Leadership Team will make appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee, which in turn will present recommendations to the BCBA at the annual meeting.

The Associational Missional Strategist is ultimately responsible to the BCBA member churches. Direct oversight of the Associational Missional Strategist is performed by the Leadership Team. Should any material decision (e.g., formal accolade, salary increase/decrease) regarding the Associational Missional Strategist employment need to be made, the Leadership Team will make appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee which will by majority vote determine such action.

If the Leadership Team has any material decision (e.g., discipline, hiring or dismissing) regarding the Lead Missional Strategist employment they will make appropriate recommendations immediately to the Executive Committee, which in turn will present recommendations and actions to the BCBA.

If the Leadership Team has any material decision (e.g., discipline, hiring or dismissing) regarding the Associational Missional Strategist employment they will make appropriate

recommendations immediately to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall call a meeting for the purpose of this vote, with a 14-day notice, and the action will be determined by a 2/3 affirmative vote.

Section C - The Leadership Team

The Leadership Team shall consist of the Officers of the BCBA and chairpersons from each BCBA committee. Additionally, the Leadership Team may include up to three (3) at-large members, as requested by the Associational Missional Strategist. Members of the Leadership Team shall serve one (1) year terms and shall hold their respective offices until they resign, or their successors are elected. The duties of the Leadership Team are varied and broad. However, among other responsibilities, the Leadership Team shall,

1. Act for and on behalf of the BCBA membership between its meetings.
2. Assist the Associational Missional Strategist in the oversight of the BCBA staff and its operations.
3. Review and discuss BCBA budget for any needed adjustments and recommendations.
4. Make nominations for any ad-hoc committees that may be created from time to time.
5. Annually review of the constitution, bylaws, and employee job descriptions.
6. In an emergency, the Leadership Team may make decisions normally requiring action by BCBA membership as a whole (such emergency action being subject to ratification or recission by the BCBA membership at the next meeting). In an emergency, the Leadership Team may make decisions normally requiring action by the BCBA executive committee (such emergency action being subject to ratification or recission by the BCBA executive committee at the next meeting).
7. Participate in the process of credentialing churches who have applied for membership with the BCBA.
8. Appoint replacements for any position on the Leadership Team that may become vacant during the year.
9. Work with the staff to implement and carry out the directives aimed at accomplishing the mission of the BCBA.

Decisions of the Leadership Team will be subject to a vote of the team. All issues will be subject to a majority vote, provided that all issues must be approved by at least four (4) Leadership Team members.

Section D - Executive Committee

The executive committee shall consist of the senior pastor from each member church in good standing with the association. Each church's senior pastor represents them on the executive committee. Each church can vote to send a representative other than the senior pastor to serve on the Executive Committee. This requires a congregational vote

by the church. The Association must receive official notification, on church letterhead, of the outcome of such a vote before the approved representative can serve on the Executive Committee. Each church's senior pastor or elected designate, represents their member church's vote for matters brought before the executive committee.

Among the responsibilities, the executive committee shall:

1. Act for and on behalf of the individual participating member churches.
2. Assist the Associational Missional Strategist at all scheduled meetings, discussions, and decisions about future processes and procedures.
3. Shall meet on a regular basis for fellowship, information, and general discussion of associational topics.
4. Maintain confidentiality regarding appropriate Executive Committee business.
5. The yearly budget will be approved by 2/3 affirmative vote of the Executive
6. Committee.
   All nominations for leadership shall be approved by 2/3 affirmative vote of the
7. Executive Committee.
   Any term limits set forth herein may be suspended (for a finite duration) if such suspension is approved by 2/3 affirmative vote of the Executive Committee.

Section E - Duties of Officers

The BCBA shall have four elected officers:

1. Moderator: The Moderator shall preside over all meetings of the Association and Executive Committee and perform all duties common to such office. The Moderator will serve a term of two (2) consecutive years. In the annual filings with the Florida Department of State, the Moderator shall be listed as "President" of the corporation (such title shall not convey any additional obligations or authority, however).

   Moderator: The Moderator shall preside over the annual meetings, special association wide meetings, executive committee meetings and leadership team meetings of the Association. The moderator shall perform all duties common to such office. In the annual filings with the Florida Department of State, the Moderator shall be listed as "President" of the corporation (such title shall not convey any additional obligations or authority, however).

2. Vice-Moderator: shall preside over BCBA meetings in the absence of the Moderator and/or at the Moderator's request. The Vice-Moderator shall serve a term of two (2) consecutive years. In the annual filings with the Florida

Department of State, the Vice-Moderator shall be listed as “Vice-President” of the corporation (such title shall not convey any additional obligations or authority, however).

Vice-Moderator: shall preside over the annual meetings, special association wide meetings, executive committee meetings and leadership team meetings of the Association. In the absence of the Moderator and/or at the Moderator’s request. In the annual filings with the Florida Department of State, the Vice-Moderator shall be listed as “Vice-President” of the corporation (such title shall not convey any additional obligations or authority, however).

3. Clerk - The position of Clerk shall be filled by the office manager of the BCBA. The Clerk shall make and preserve records of all BCBA meetings. Additionally, the Clerk shall be responsible for the distribution, collection, and compilation of the annual church letters and the BCBA’s minute books. In the case of absence of both the moderator and vice-moderator, the clerk may serve as presiding officer for any BCBA meeting (or be responsible to retain a temporary moderator for that meeting). The Clerk is the only non-voting officer of the BCBA. As such, the Clerk will participate, but not vote as an officer, in either BCBA meetings or meetings of the Leadership Team.

4. Secretary/Treasurer - shall be the chairperson of the Finance Committee of the BCBA and work with the Finance Team and BCBA staff. In the annual filings with the Florida Department of State, the Treasurer shall be listed as “Secretary/Treasurer” of the corporation (such title shall not convey any additional obligations or authority, however). The Secretary/Treasurer shall be bonded and responsible for:

    1. Monitoring the disbursing of all monies in accordance with the budget and/or upon authorization of the Leadership Team.
    2. Assisting in planning an annual budget to provide for the program of work in the BCBA.
    3. Reporting as to the financial receipts, expenditures, and assets of the BCBA.
    4. Advise and assist in the audit of the financial records.

5. Officers of the BCBA shall represent the BCBA in all legal matters.

Section F – Committees

1. Members of the Associational Committees shall serve one (1) year terms and shall hold their respective offices until they resign, or their successors are elected. The nominating committee will present all nominations to the Executive Committee for approval.
2. Any office or other position of leadership which becomes vacant during the year (e.g., by resignation, removal, death, or any other reason) may be replaced during that year by vote of the Leadership Team. Such replacement officer or leader shall serve the remainder of the term.

i The Nominating Committee shall consist of six (6) members. Three (3) members shall rotate off at the conclusion of each two-year term. Replacements for those who rotate off (or any other vacancy on the committee), shall be presented by the remaining members of the committee for election at the Annual Meeting.

The Nominating Committee shall consist of six (6) members. Three (3) members shall rotate off at the conclusion of each two-year term.

Replacements for those who rotate off (or any other vacancy on the committee), shall be presented by the remaining members of the committee for election to the Executive Committee.

The duty of this committee shall be to make nominations for all vacancies in the Officer corps, Leadership Team, Mission/Ministry Committee, Finance Committee, or the Nominating Committee as necessary for ensuing year(s).

All nominations shall be voted upon by the Executive Committee or any Special Meeting called for that purpose.

All nominations shall be voted upon by the Executive Committee.

ii The Bylaws/Constitution/Credential Committee - Shall annually study the BCBA constitution, and by-laws and make recommendations to the leadership team for changes that need to be made. The Committee is tasked to determine the eligibility of churches seeking membership with the BCBA. The Committee is also tasked to investigate questions that arise concerning whether a church is in "Friendly cooperation with BCBA as described in the Constitution, Article III, Section B.

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tasked to determine the eligibility of churches seeking membership with the BCBA. The Committee is also tasked to investigate questions that arise concerning whether a church is in “Friendly cooperation with BCBA as described in the Bylaws **Provision I Membership, Section A.**

iii The Finance Committee: Shall be responsible for working with the Associational Missional Strategist and BCBA staff for the preparation and promotion of the BCBA budget, the enlistment of the churches in support of the budget, the determination of procedures for handling and disbursing BCBA funds, and advising the Treasurer as needed.

Either an annual review of the BCBA’s financial accounts, or an annual audit is to be made at their direction. A report of this review or audit shall be made at the Executive Committee Meeting in the Spring of each year or as soon thereafter as is feasible.

The Leadership Team shall have authority to make an emergency transfer of funds within the budget and shall report any transfer made to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

iv The Missions/Ministry Committee shall have the general oversight of promoting and coordinating missions and ministry activities within the association. It shall provide missions education, inspiration, and motivation. It shall assist the association in recognizing the biblical responsibility of every congregation and its members to participate in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Provision VI – Inspection of BCBA Records

The BCBA will provide member churches access to its records in accordance with Florida law. Therefore, any request for access to BCBA records must be in writing and directed to the Clerk at the mailing address listed on the BCBA’s annual report to the Secretary of State.

Provision VII – Indemnification of BCBA Staff and Leadership

Should any member(s) of the BCBA staff, its Officers or Ministry Teams be faced with actual or threatened litigation as a result of the performance of their proper and normal duties, the BCBA will obtain sufficient and appropriate legal defense and/or indemnify such person(s) for costs and expenses relating to such actual or threatened litigation.

This obligation to indemnify and/or provide a defense shall cease if at any time it is discovered that the person(s) in question acted contrary to Holy Scripture, in violation of law or otherwise acted in any way that was dishonest or lacking complete candor.

Provision VIII – Use of BCBA Facilities

The BCBA staff shall oversee implementation of a facilities use policy. Such policy will ensure that the facilities of the BCBA are used in a manner which is consistent with our beliefs as Southern Baptists (e.g., in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Baptist Faith & Message or any other declaration of faith which is consistent with the tenets of our historic Baptist faith). The staff shall also be charged with ensuring that any use of all or part of the BCBA grounds or facilities will be done in a manner consistent with our beliefs as Southern Baptists. Moreover, all use of BCBA property shall be sufficiently documented and memorialized so as to protect the BCBA from unnecessary exposure to liability.

Provision IX - Alteration or Amendment of these Bylaws

These Bylaws may be altered or amended by consent of a majority vote of the Executive Committee present at any meeting called for that purpose. Prior notice of the proposed changes to these Bylaws (such notice to include the specific verbiage to be voted upon) shall be given to all associated churches no less than sixty (60) days prior to any vote on such alteration or amendment.

Provision X - Emergency Powers

The Associational Mission Strategist and or Moderator/Vice-Moderator reserves the right to move or cancel any meeting including, but not limited to, Administrative Team, Executive Committee and Annual Meetings in the event of an emergency as defined below.

The Associational Mission Strategist and along with the associational officers collectively reserve the right to move or cancel any meeting including, but not limited to, Leadership Team, Executive Committee and Annual Meetings in the event of an emergency as defined below.

An “emergency” exists for the purposes of this section if a quorum of the members cannot readily be obtained because of some catastrophic event. In the event of an emergency, the Staff and Officers may modify lines of succession to accommodate the incapacity of any officer, employee, or agent. During an emergency, notice of a meeting of the members only needs to be given to those members for whom such notice is practicable. Necessary or Prudent action taken in good faith during an emergency binds the Association and may not be the basis for imposing liability on any officer, employee, or agent of the Association on the grounds that the action was not authorized. The Leadership Team may include provisions necessary for managing the Association’s operations during an emergency including procedures for calling a meeting of the members either physically or via real-time telecommunication.

An “emergency” exists for the purposes of this section if a meeting quorum cannot readily be obtained because of some catastrophic event. In the event of an emergency, the Staff and Officers may modify lines of succession to accommodate the incapacity of any officer, employee, or agent. During an emergency, notice of a meeting only needs to be given to those members for whom such notice is practicable. Necessary or Prudent action taken in good faith during an emergency binds the Association and may not be the basis for imposing liability on any officer, employee, or agent of the Association on the grounds that the action was not authorized. The Leadership Team may include provisions necessary for managing the Association’s operations during an emergency including procedures for calling a meeting either physically or digitally.

Provision XI – Electronic Meetings and Vote

To encourage participation, the BCBA may utilize electronic meetings with members including but not limited to, committee or team meetings and annual meetings if necessary.
Electronic meetings are defined as a video meeting or telephone conference call. Committees may utilize email to conduct business including but not limited to voting on recommendations and minutes of meetings.

Addendum 1.

The Baptist Faith and Message

Baptist Faith & Message 2000

Table Of Contents

- I. The Scriptures
- II. God
- III. Man
- IV. Salvation
- V. God's Purpose of Grace
- VI. The Church
- VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- VIII. The Lord's Day
- IX. The Kingdom
- X. Last Things
- XI. Evangelism and Missions
- XII. Education
- XIII. Stewardship
- XIV. Cooperation
- XV. The Christian and the Social Order
- XVI. Peace and War
- XVII. Religious Liberty
- XVIII. The Family

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 5:1718; 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; 17:18; 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; Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 1:1823; 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; 16:1516,28; 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; 3:2326; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:1921; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:1322; 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 2:2832; 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; 7:1425; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:2122; 3:911.

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.; 5:810; 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 1:223; 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; 19:4144; 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 1:79; 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; 15:130; 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; 3:115; 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; 11:2329; 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; I 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; 15:78,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:111; 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; 17:2425; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 89; 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 1:1314; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 89; 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 1:2934; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12– 14; 1Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:59; 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; 13:17; 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 6:12; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:1217; 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 1:1832; 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.