

CONSTITUTION

MOUNT VERNON

BAPTIST CHURCH,

Raleigh, NC

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**CONSTITUTION OF
MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.
RALEIGH, NC**

PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the Scriptures, accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of MVBC and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I. NAME

This congregation of Christians shall be known as the Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Incorporated, of Wake County, Raleigh, North Carolina (hereafter may be referenced as or known as MVBC).

ARTICLE II. DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

MVBC is a congregation of baptized believers in Christ, united by covenant for the worship of Almighty God, and associated in faith and fellowship of the Gospel to practice its precepts, to recognize and receive Jesus Christ as the supreme Law-giver and Ruler, and to take the Holy Bible and the Holy Bible alone as the standard by which all matters of belief and conduct are to be judged or measured. MVBC is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law). Such purposes include, but are not limited to the following: 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, to be involved in the mission of evangelism by carrying the Gospel to the world, and to maintain a ministry to the needs of our members and others according to the model of the New Testament church. In order to effectively carry forth the purposes set forth above, MVBC 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 hereinafter set forth.

ARTICLE III. CHARACTER

Section 1. Government and Authority

- A. The government of MVBC is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, and consistent with our Declaration of Purpose, MVBC will cooperate with and support the Raleigh Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and the Southern Baptist Convention.
- B. MVBC will function as a congregationally governed body under the final authority of Jesus Christ and the Holy Bible. This governance is normally exercised through the selection of officers to lead and to equip the church. However, the vote of the active membership of MVBC at a properly called business meeting, as provided in this constitution, shall be required to effect the following actions:
 - 1. Elect officers of the church.
 - 2. Permanently change the time, place or frequency of any regularly scheduled worship service.
 - 3. Approve the annual budget of the church and authorize any changes to the budget in accordance with the MVBC Financial Policy and Procedure Manual (copy available).
 - 4. Approve all transactions regarding real property or the incurrence of debt.
 - 5. Approve all major structural alterations and improvements to church facilities.

6. Adopt, amend, or repeal this constitution.
7. Approve the job description for newly created Pastoral and Ministry staff positions.
8. Approve the call of Pastoral and Ministry staff.
9. Approve the appointment of messengers to represent the church at all conventions.
10. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the church by officers or committees, or raised by motion at a business meeting.

Section 2. The Holy Bible, Articles of Faith and Covenant

- A. MVBC acknowledges the Holy Bible, comprised of the Old and New Testaments, as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Our understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of other Southern Baptist churches that adhere to the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.
- B. MVBC adopts the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message as the MVBC Articles of Faith, believing such Articles of Faith comprise the Scriptural beliefs and practices of MVBC and its members. The Articles of Faith do not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Holy Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the Articles of Faith accurately represent the teaching of the Holy Bible. All literature used in the ministries of MVBC shall be in complete agreement with the Articles of Faith. The Articles of Faith are included in an appendix to this constitution.
- C. MVBC states the following as the MVBC Covenant:

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; and having publicly professed our faith through baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and having been joined together by the Spirit to bear witness to Christ as a local church; we each do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully endeavor to enter into/renew this covenant as one body in Christ.

We understand that the mission of MVBC—to grow the Kingdom family to magnify the Trinity in all of life, through Jesus Christ—is most fully expressed in a consistent lifestyle of faithfulness, in response to the Lord’s covenant promises to His people, with full reliance on the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we commit to the Lord Jesus and to our church family that we will become maturing disciples who:

Know the Triune God, His gospel of grace, sound doctrine, and mission, as revealed in His Scriptures;

Grow, through the Spirit’s transformation, to be whole-life worshippers of God—pursuing holiness, both personally and corporately; to pray desperately; to love all peoples with deepening, Christ-like affection; and to be teachable with Christ-like humility;

Go bearing witness to Christ and His kingdom, through evangelism and missions, mercy and justice, word and deed, as we seek to do good in our homes, workplaces, among the nations, and throughout creation; and

Sow into the advancement of the gospel in and beyond this church by developing servant-leaders; multiplying disciples; teaching and applying the Scriptures; stewarding time, talents, and treasures generously; and welcoming all with hospitality.

Finally, if we sense the Lord’s direction to pursue our calling in Christ through another place of ministry, we commit to notify our Pastors as soon as possible and unite with another church of like faith, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God’s Word.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership Requirements

- A. The membership of MVBC shall be composed of persons who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been baptized by immersion, subscribe to the MVBC Articles of Faith and Covenant, agree to

submit to the authority of the church and its leaders as set forth herein, and have been received into its membership according to this constitution.

- B. College or seminary students, missionaries and their families, and others who meet all requirements for membership, but because of commitments to or support from their home church desire to retain their present church membership, may join MVBC as Associate Members. This membership is a commitment on their part to serve the Lord in cooperation with MVBC and a commitment on MVBC's part to provide to them the Christian fellowship needed while away from home. Associate Members shall be able to serve in the church in capacities for which they are qualified, but they will have no vote in church business. Associate Members may be received into full voting membership upon their request of transfer of membership from their home church.
- C. If a person professes belief in the doctrine of baptism by immersion as a symbol of faith and an ordinance of Jesus Christ for all Christians, but has extenuating circumstances which prohibit immersion, MVBC may receive this person into membership.

Section 2. Reception of Members

- A. All those seeking membership under any conditions must have their request for membership examined by the Pastoral staff according to the membership criteria outlined in this constitution and voted on by the congregation during a worship service or business meeting.
- B. A person who is or has been a member of another church of like faith and message and meets all requirements for membership and wishes to join MVBC may be received into membership. A letter of transfer, or dismissal, will be requested from the person's former church. If such letter cannot be obtained, then a statement of faith consistent with the MVBC Articles of Faith and Covenant may be accepted.

Section 3. Instruction of New Members and Members in Good Standing

- A. All persons uniting with MVBC in any of the ways set forth above shall attend a membership class to understand the MVBC Articles of Faith and Covenant. New members shall commit themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations as to worship attendance, service, and giving when they make public profession of faith and join the church.
- B. Certain privileges of membership, including leadership opportunities, are available only to those members in good standing with the church. Members in good standing are those who adhere to the MVBC Articles of Faith and Covenant and have demonstrated faithfulness to MVBC in their stewardship obligations as to worship attendance, service, and giving, and who are not presently under church discipline.

Section 4. Dismissal of Members

- A. Anyone joining another church shall be removed from the rolls of MVBC in accordance with the procedures prescribed herein for dismissal. Upon request, MVBC may grant a letter of transfer, provided the requesting church is of like faith and message.
- B. By written request, any member may have his or her name removed from the rolls of MVBC. Counsel by the Pastoral staff is recommended before removal.
- C. Expulsion of members because of unrepentant sin will be by vote of the congregation, after the recommendation of the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council, and after the steps of spiritual discipline stated in Matthew 18:15-17 have been applied.
- D. Upon recommendation by the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council, individuals who have been expelled for cause may be restored to the fellowship of the church provided they give satisfactory evidence of repentance by personal confession of their error. The restoration of members will be by vote of the congregation.

Section 5. Inactive Members

- A. An Inactive Members roll shall be maintained, which shall include those members who have not joined another church yet have demonstrated a lack of faithfulness to MVBC.
- B. If a member shall fail to manifest any interest in the church for a period of six months, or as determined by the Membership Committee, that member will automatically be termed as "inactive," and shall be neither qualified to vote nor participate in church issues brought before the congregation. An inactive member may be restored to active membership by demonstrating interest in the church to the satisfaction of the Pastoral staff.

ARTICLE V. CHURCH PROPERTY

Section 1. General

- A. Church property shall belong to the collective membership, be held in trust by the Church Trustees, and be managed by appropriate employees and/or committees as directed by the Lead Pastor. It is intended for use by the church in the worship of God and the fulfillment of its missions and ministries. Its general care and orderly use are the responsibility of all members as stewards of the House of God.
- B. Membership in MVBC does not afford the individual members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, MVBC property remains private property. The Lead Pastor (or his designee) may, with cause, suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on MVBC property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation the person enters or remains on MVBC property, the person may, in the discretion of the Lead Pastor (or his designee), be treated as a trespasser.
- C. All church records, written and electronic, are property of MVBC. To every extent possible, records shall be maintained on property owned by or under contract with MVBC. Officers shall surrender all records in their possession to the Lead Pastor (or his designee) at the conclusion of their term of office, and the official minutes of all business meetings and of all standing committees shall be submitted to the Lead Pastor (or his designee) at least quarterly, all to be preserved as a permanent record of the work of the church.
- D. A member may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of MVBC and the minutes of the proceedings of church business meetings, provided he or she shall have submitted a written request to the Lead Pastor at least five business days before the requested inspection date. MVBC may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material, for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member. A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to MVBC, the list of names and addresses of MVBC members, minutes of standing committees, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.

Section 2. Use of Facilities

- A. The sanctuary shall be used for worship and should always be treated with reverence.
- B. There shall be no use of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages or illegal substances on any church premises or property.
- C. The use and operation of church facilities, including grounds, furnishings and equipment, shall be governed by the policies set forth in the Facility Usage Handbook (copy available). Notwithstanding, in all instances, the use and operation of the facilities shall be consistent with the MVBC Declaration of Purpose, Articles of Faith, and Covenant.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services

MVBC shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training, and fellowship. Worship services shall be held on Sundays, and additional services at other times may be added or removed at the discretion of the Pastoral staff. These meetings shall be open for the membership of the church and for all people. All worship services shall be conducted under the direction of the Lead Pastor or his designee.

Section 2. Business Meetings

- A. At least one scheduled business meeting shall be held in November or December of each year to vote on the budget and conduct the business of the church. Additional meetings shall be recommended by the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council and may be called to conduct business as necessary. Whenever a business meeting is called for, proper notice and publicity shall be given in a prior regular Sunday worship service and shall include the date, time, and location of the meeting and the purpose for which it is called.
- B. A quorum shall be those active members in attendance at a regular or properly called business meeting. For purposes of formulating the quorum and for voting, an active member shall be at least 16 years of age. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting.
- C. A two-thirds majority of active members present in the meeting and voting shall be required to approve all motions in business meetings, unless otherwise provided herein. Votes shall be taken by a show of hands, unless otherwise provided for in this constitution.
- D. The moderator for church business meetings shall be the chairman of the Deacon Council or its vice chairman or, in their absence, a person designated by the Lead Pastor. All business meetings of the church shall be conducted in accordance with generally accepted practices of parliamentary procedure; notwithstanding, the moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all active members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision and interpretation shall be final and controlling. Acceptance of the meeting minutes in the next business meeting finalizes the business for that meeting.
- E. The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.
- F. Business meetings will not be electronically recorded for public distribution.

Section 3. The Lord's Supper

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed by the church at least once each quarter. The date and service shall be determined by the Lead Pastor or his delegate.

Section 4. Revivals

Revivals shall be for the purpose of evangelism and renewal of Christian enthusiasm. Frequency of revivals shall be determined by the Lead Pastor, who shall be responsible for determining the dates and services and securing evangelists.

ARTICLE VII. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. General

- A. The officers of MVBC shall be the Pastoral staff, Ministry staff, members of the Deacon Council, Church Clerk, Church Treasurer, Church Trustees, and Director of Operations. Unless otherwise provided in this constitution or approved by the church in a properly called business meeting, standing or special committees or ministry teams shall have no authority to act on behalf of MVBC.

- B. Pastoral staff shall meet the Scriptural qualifications, including that each Pastor is male having never been divorced, as established in 1 Timothy 3. Ministry staff positions do not require ordination by the church.
- C. The Lead Pastor and Deacon Council shall implement processes that ensure the membership of the church are kept informed in an ongoing fashion throughout the fiscal year of the church about the ministries and activities of MVBC.

Section 2. Lead Pastor

- A. The Lead Pastor shall be in charge of the welfare and oversight of the church and shall be a male that has the Scriptural qualifications according to 1 Timothy 3. He shall be an ex-officio member of all organizations, departments and committees. He may call a special meeting of the Deacons, Deacon Council, or of any committee or ministry team as needed. To fulfill his charge and calling, he shall:
 - 1. Conduct worship services on stated and special occasions.
 - 2. Administer the ordinances.
 - 3. Equip the members of MVBC for the work of the ministry both in the church and the community.
 - 4. Have special responsibility to lead the church in winning the lost to Christ, and through prayer and study to render effective preaching and Pastoral ministries.
 - 5. Have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall provide for pulpit supply when he is absent and shall arrange for ministers to assist in revival meetings, and workers to assist in other special services required by the church.
 - 6. Perform other duties as described in the approved job description.
- B. The Lead Pastor shall be in regular communication with the Deacon Council regarding the affairs of the church, and he shall request counsel from the Deacon Council regarding particular matters as they arise. In the event a particular matter or decision faces negative counsel from a majority of the full Deacon Council, the Lead Pastor shall reconsider the matter in the interest of preservation of the welfare of the church and the unity of the body of Christ.
- C. In the event that the Deacon Council unanimously agrees that, for any reason, the Lead Pastor has lost his effectiveness or he is jeopardizing the goodwill of the members and the welfare and progress of the church by remaining as Lead Pastor, and after consultation with the Lead Pastor, decide that the situation cannot be resolved, it shall be their duty to request his resignation. If the resignation is not forthcoming as requested, the matter shall be brought before the church in a meeting set for disposition of this sole matter. If the opinion is not unanimous among the Deacon Council but is that of the majority, a recommendation may be presented to the church for his dismissal. Any vote concerning the dismissal of the Lead Pastor shall be by secret ballot, the Lead Pastor and his family being absent during the discussion and voting. If the church votes to dispense with his services, the Lead Pastor shall be paid at least thirty days salary and accrued benefits, and the pulpit shall be vacated immediately. All church property shall be vacated by the Lead Pastor upon demand after notice has been given.
- D. Upon the vacancy of the office of Lead Pastor:
 - 1. An Interim Pastor shall be recommended by the Deacon Council and called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the Interim Pastor or the church.
 - 2. The Pastoral staff and Deacon Council shall select by secret ballot vote two Pastoral staff members and two members of the Deacon Council to form an Administrative Committee that oversees the church's affairs until the office of Lead Pastor has been permanently filled.
 - 3. The Deacon Council shall immediately appoint a Pulpit Committee who shall seek a minister of good report whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office. Notice of the intention to vote on the call of a new Lead Pastor shall be given by the Pulpit Committee publicly one week in advance of the vote. Nominations for Lead Pastor shall be made by the Pulpit Committee only, with approval of the Deacon Council. The Pulpit Committee shall bring one name at a time for

consideration by the church. The church's vote to call a new Lead Pastor shall require at least a three-fourths majority vote of those present and voting. Election shall be by secret ballot. Should the minister recommended by the Pulpit Committee fail to receive a three-fourths majority, the Pulpit Committee will seek another candidate.

- E. Upon the hire of a Lead Pastor, he shall share in the responsibilities of overseeing the church's affairs with the appointed Administrative Committee for a period of one year. At the end of one year, the appointed Administrative Committee shall dissolve, and the Lead Pastor shall assume the responsibility of overseer of the church as described herein.

Section 3. Pastoral, Ministry and Administrative Staff, and Other Employees

- A. MVBC shall employ personnel as needed. Titles and job descriptions shall be written when the need for a position is determined. Following approval by the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council, the Personnel Committee shall present titles and job descriptions to the church for approval.
- B. MVBC employees shall consist of those employed by the church and under the direct supervision of the Lead Pastor or his delegate. They shall work in accordance with the Lead Pastor's vision toward the spiritual well-being of the church as a whole and his expectation of maintaining the highest standards in the ministries to which they are called. They shall report regularly as requested by the Lead Pastor concerning the planning and execution of their programs and duties and cooperate with all other church staff and officers.
- C. Pastoral staff that are or shall be ordained shall be males that have the Scriptural qualifications according to 1 Timothy 3. They shall be under the direct supervision of the Lead Pastor or his delegate. Ministry staff includes all non-Pastoral and non-administrative staff that are not ordained, and may be male or female. Notwithstanding, only ordained males may serve under the title of "minister."
- D. All Pastoral staff members other than the Lead Pastor shall be selected by a search committee appointed by the Deacon Council, and with approval of the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council, presented to the church for final approval. Non-Pastoral staff members may be selected by the Pastoral staff, and with approval of the Deacon Council, presented to the church for final approval.
- E. Other employees, including administrative staff and contract labor, shall be employed by the church and be under the supervision and responsibility of the Pastoral and Ministry staff, committee, council, or organization as appointed by the Lead Pastor. Upon employment, they shall remain in their position until their term has been completed, their resignation, or dismissal by the Lead Pastor.
- F. The Pastoral staff shall have the ability to immediately suspend for cause any church employee under their direct supervision. Should any employee consistently fail to respond to the Pastor's reasonable instructions, such employee shall resign or be subject to termination. Records of employee performance shall be documented and maintained throughout employment.
- G. Dismissal of Pastoral or Ministry staff shall be upon recommendation to the Deacon Council by the Lead Pastor and Personnel Committee. Upon approval by the Deacon Council, the Personnel Committee shall make a recommendation to the church to dismiss the Pastoral or Ministry staff employee.

Section 4. Deacon Body

- A. The Deacon Body shall consist of all ordained Deacons who are members in good standing of MVBC and have been elected pursuant to Article VII, Section 4.C.
- B. Deacons shall be elected from among those male members who have never been divorced and who have proven themselves to have Scriptural qualifications according to 1 Timothy 3. Qualified candidates must have been active members of MVBC for at least one year.
- C. Annually, the Deacon Council shall receive written nominations from active members of the church to ordain new Deacons into the Deacon Body as needed. All Deacon candidates shall be thoroughly examined and approved by the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council before being presented to the church by the Deacon Council for election. Those not previously ordained by MVBC or a church of like faith

and message shall after election be ordained in a special service which shall include the laying on of hands as recorded in Acts 6.

- D. Members of the Deacon Body shall at all times regard themselves as servants of the church and should conduct themselves in accordance with the meaning of the work and practice of a Deacon as found in the New Testament in passages such as Acts 6. The role of the Deacon at MVBC is to serve the practical needs of the church and support the Pastoral and Ministry staff in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.
- E. The Deacon Body shall meet at least semi-annually for the consideration of their duties.

Section 5. Deacon Council

- A. The Deacon Council shall consist of seven to twelve Deacons selected from the Deacon Body.
- B. The Deacon Council, with the Lead Pastor, as the Holy Spirit may direct, are to have general oversight of the church, offering advice and direction in all its affairs. The Deacon Council may consider and make recommendations to the church in all matters pertaining to its work and discipline while seeking the highest spiritual good of the church.
- C. Annually, the Deacon Council shall receive written nominations from active members of the church for candidates to fill Deacon Council vacancies. All candidates for Deacon Council shall have served on the Deacon Body a minimum of one year and be thoroughly examined and approved by the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council before being presented to the church by the Deacon Council for election.
- D. Members of the Deacon Council shall serve up to a three-year term on a rotation basis. After serving a full three-year term, a Deacon shall be ineligible for re-election to the Deacon Council until there is a lapse of one year. Deacons currently not serving a term on the Deacon Council must be reexamined and approved by the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council and elected by the church in order to serve a new term on the Deacon Council.
- E. If a member of the Deacon Council is unable to fulfill his three-year term, a Deacon will be appointed by the Deacon Council to fulfill the remainder of the term. If that partial term is less than one year, the Deacon will serve a full three-year term in addition to the partial term. If the partial term is greater than one year, the Deacon shall serve only the partial term.
- F. The Deacon Council shall elect annually a chairman who, if possible, shall have served on the Deacon Council at least one year immediately preceding his election. He shall not serve consecutive terms. They shall also elect a vice chairman, a secretary, and such officers and committees as are needed.
- G. The Deacon Council shall meet regularly for the consideration of their duties at a frequency to be determined by the Deacon Officers and Lead Pastor, at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called at any time by the chairman or Lead Pastor, and in emergency situations the Deacon Council may be polled in absence. In any case, a majority of the Deacon Council must concur in order to conclude any business.
- H. The absence of a Deacon from two consecutive regular meetings of the Deacon Council shall be cause for his removal from the Deacon Council unless the absences are approved by the Deacon Council Chairman.

Section 6. Church Clerk

- A. The responsibilities of the Church Clerk shall be:
 - 1. To attend or be represented at all church business meetings and maintain business meeting minutes.
 - 2. To report all pertinent correspondence to MVBC.
- B. The Church Clerk shall serve a three-year term and can succeed himself/herself only upon approval of the Lead Pastor and Nominating Committee and election by the church.

Section 7. Church Treasurer

- A. The responsibilities of the Church Treasurer are:
 - 1. To oversee the financial operations of MVBC so as to ensure that all affairs are conducted according to the MVBC Financial Policy and Procedure Manual (copy available).
 - 2. To serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Financial Stewardship Committee.
 - 3. To oversee the Tellers ministry so as to ensure that the collection, processing, and accounting of contributions are conducted in accordance with the MVBC Financial Policy and Procedure Manual. The Tellers are under the authority of the Financial Stewardship Committee and the direct supervision of the Church Treasurer.
 - 4. With counsel from the Lead Pastor, the Church Treasurer shall authorize check signers for MVBC and shall oversee that function.
- B. In the absence or incapacitation of the Church Treasurer, the Financial Stewardship Committee, with approval of the Lead Pastor, shall appoint an Interim Church Treasurer, who will temporarily perform all of the above duties until the Church Treasurer resumes his or her duties.
- C. The Church Treasurer shall serve a three-year term based on the calendar year. After serving a full three-year term (disregarding any partial term that may have preceded), the Church Treasurer shall be ineligible for re-election until there is a lapse of one term. A candidate for Church Treasurer must be approved by the Lead Pastor and Financial Stewardship Committee and elected by the church.

Section 8. Church Trustees

- A. There shall be three Church Trustees (also known as Church Directors) nominated by the Deacon Council, approved by the Lead Pastor, and elected by the church. Responsibilities of the Church Trustees are:
 - 1. To hold in trust all property of MVBC for the benefit of its members who adhere and submit to the regular order of the church.
 - 2. To execute all contracts, deeds, mortgages, or other instruments when authorized to do so by the church and shall be responsible for the keeping of such documents in a safe deposit box or other such means of security as designated by the church.
 - 3. To oversee all corporate affairs of MVBC and ensure that all reports and regulations required by the State of North Carolina in relation to incorporation are properly executed. To meet those requirements, the Church Trustees must meet at least annually and keep minutes of meetings and actions taken.
 - 4. To review and, if approved, recommend the reception of specific gifts and devises to the church as proposed by Pastoral or Ministry staff members.
- B. Church Trustees shall serve three-year terms on a rotation basis, with one Church Trustee elected by the church each year. Church Trustees may succeed themselves.

ARTICLE VIII. DEPARTMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. General

- A. MVBC shall have any department or organization or branch thereof deemed necessary and appropriate by the membership to advance the work of the church.
- B. The establishment of other organizations not otherwise enumerated or described in this constitution shall be consistent with the provisions of this constitution.

Section 2. Discipleship

MVBC shall always provide a Sunday School or its equivalent and other discipleship endeavors to equip the saints to live out the Great Commission.

Section 3. Evangelism and Missions

MVBC shall be involved in advancing the Gospel of Jesus Christ both locally and internationally in accordance with the Great Commission through financial support and ministry endeavors.

Section 4. Ministry Partnerships

MVBC seeks ministry partners whose goals are generally consistent with the MVBC Articles of Faith. Those ministries shall comply with the use-of-facilities requirements of Article V, Section 2 of this constitution and any and all agreements and contractual stipulations defined by the church. Those ministries shall meet with the Director of Operations or Pastoral staff as required on a prescribed basis.

ARTICLE IX. COMMITTEES AND MINISTRY TEAMS

Section 1. General

- A. Committees and ministry teams provide structure to support the overall objectives and ministries of the church. Standing committees are formal committees charged with specific responsibilities and are subject to specific membership requirements and rotating terms of service. Ministry teams are informal committees responsible for fulfilling various ministries at MVBC. Ministry teams consist of one or more members and membership is not constrained by term limitations.
- B. The church may create standing committees as it deems necessary to carry out the continuing purposes of the church efficiently and effectively. In addition to the committees provided for herein, new standing committees shall be established by vote of the church upon the request of the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council. All standing committees shall conduct their first meeting within 30 days of the new church year, or within 30 days of the new committee's origination.
- C. Unless otherwise specified in this constitution or within the committee description, each committee shall consist of a minimum of three members approved by the Lead Pastor and elected by the church, who serve three-year terms on a rotation basis and may succeed themselves.
- D. Ministry teams may be created and appointed by appropriate officers and organizations to perform functions which are a part of an established church program or specifically approved by the church. When any ministry team has fulfilled the purpose for which it was established, it shall cease to exist.
- E. A standing committee may establish special committees for a temporary purpose. The special committee shall report to the standing committee monthly or on a schedule defined by the standing committee. All special committees are expected to meet needs not to exceed one year. When a special committee has fulfilled the purpose for which it was established, it shall cease to exist.
- F. All members of standing committees, special committees and ministry teams shall be active members of MVBC in good standing.

Section 2. Membership Committee

- A. The Membership Committee is a standing committee that shall consist of at least three members of the Deacon Body appointed by the Deacon Council that shall consider all questions or requests concerning the membership of MVBC. They shall have the following responsibilities:
 - 1. To accurately update and maintain the membership rolls.
 - 2. To recommend to the Pastoral staff those members who should be moved to the Inactive Members roll based on their failure to manifest any interest in the church for a period of six months.

3. To communicate with the Deacon Council and Pastoral staff any trends (positive or negative) that are observed.
- B. In the absence of a functioning Membership Committee, the Deacon Council shall serve as the Membership Committee.

Section 3. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is a standing committee that shall have five members who may serve no more than two consecutive terms. They shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Nominate candidates for non-Pastoral offices and standing committees whose membership is not otherwise provided for by this constitution, pursuant to the procedures set forth in Article X, Section 2.
2. Maintain a description and roster of each standing committee.
3. Facilitate the nominations for Deacon Body and Deacon Council.
4. Present all nominations to the Pastoral staff for review before approval by the church.

Section 4. Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee is a standing committee that shall consist of five members, one of whom shall be a member of the Deacon Council, and one of whom shall be a member of the Financial Stewardship Committee, if possible. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. They shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To prepare and maintain job descriptions for all MVBC employees including both responsibilities and qualifications for each position. Any significant changes to job descriptions or titles shall be approved by the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council and then presented to the church for approval.
2. To work with the Lead Pastor in reviewing and recommending salaries and benefits for all employees of the church. The resulting salary and benefit total will be recommended to the Financial Stewardship Committee as an overall budget line item. The details of individual salaries and benefits are the responsibility of the Personnel Committee and the Lead Pastor.
3. To maintain the MVBC Personnel Policy Handbook (copy available) including the administrative structure, benefits, and church-adopted policies related to all personnel. They are to present any policy changes to the Lead Pastor for approval.
4. To assist the Lead Pastor in addressing matters between employees, as well as between employees and the church in order to promote harmony and unified ministry.
5. To advise and consult with the Lead Pastor in the employment of prospective staff members. This may include interviewing and recommending candidates for a vacant position, whether on a permanent or interim basis.
6. Following consultation with the Lead Pastor, to make recommendations to the Deacon Council and then to the church concerning significant changes in job descriptions, position changes, and dismissals of Pastoral and Ministry staff pursuant to Article VII, Section 3.G.

Section 5. Building and Grounds Committee

The Building and Grounds Committee is a standing committee that shall consist of four or more members, one of whom shall serve as a liaison between the Building and Grounds Committee and the other entities and ministry partners that use the facilities. The Director of Operations should attend the Building and Grounds Committee meetings as a non-voting ex-officio member. Representatives of ministry partners may be invited to attend as non-voting observers. The Building and Grounds Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To assist the Director of Operations in maintaining the physical care of all MVBC property not designated as the responsibility of other church organizations and overseeing the status of the church's ongoing maintenance and repair plans.
2. To ensure that all customary janitorial functions are performed for the beautification and orderly operation of all church facilities.
3. To see that the church buildings are open and maintained for all regular services, and to make certain the buildings are secured.
4. To consider and make recommendations to the church concerning alterations and improvements to church facilities.
5. To provide input to staff on the priorities of the church's capital plan.

Section 6. Cemetery Committee

The Cemetery Committee is a standing committee that shall consist of five members, three of whom must own a plot in the MVBC Cemetery or have relatives buried there. Members are elected for four-year terms, on a rotation basis with at least one member elected each year. Members may succeed themselves. They shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To supervise the use and care of the MVBC cemetery under the direction of the Pastoral staff and as prescribed by the MVBC Cemetery Policies and Procedures adopted by MVBC (copy available).
2. To maintain and administer all Cemetery Funds accounts solely for the use and perpetual care of the cemetery. Cemetery Funds are restricted funds and shall be used for maintenance, upkeep, and other expenses necessary for the operation of the cemetery. All monetary funds received through the sale of burial site reservations, bequests, and other monetary gifts and donations specified for the cemetery will be placed in the Cemetery Funds accounts. Cemetery Funds are restricted and will be used exclusively by the Cemetery Committee to manage the cemetery in perpetuity. The Pastoral staff shall have oversight and the MVBC Financial Stewardship Committee will have advisory oversight over the activities of the Cemetery Committee; however, all Cemetery Funds will remain in the Cemetery Funds accounts and will be used only as specified above.
3. To provide the Financial Stewardship Committee, on a quarterly basis, with copies of all bank and investment statements and minutes from all Cemetery Committee meetings.

Section 7. Financial Stewardship Committee

- A. The Financial Stewardship Committee is a standing committee that shall consist of six members, one of whom shall be a member of the Deacon Council or Deacon Body. The members will serve their terms on a calendar year basis. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. Ex-officio members without voting privileges include the Lead Pastor (or his designee), Director of Operations, Church Treasurer, and others as deemed required by the church staff or the committee.
- B. The Financial Stewardship Committee is responsible for developing and administering the annual church-wide budget as well as an overall stewardship plan to ensure adequate resources are available for the ministries of the church. They shall have the following responsibilities:
 1. To present an annual budget to the church for approval in a business meeting prior to the beginning of the fiscal year and at least one week before vote is taken.
 2. To periodically oversee and review the budget as adopted by the church, and to recommend to the church changes to the approved budget in accordance with the MVBC Financial Policy and Procedure Manual (copy available).
 3. To obtain funding requests from committees and organizational leaders, consulting with the Lead Pastor when necessary in regard to alignment of spending with the church's purposes and priorities.

4. To develop and implement financial policies and procedures for the purposes of:
 - a. Ensuring adequate internal controls are in place over financial processes, financial reporting, and compliance with laws, regulations, and internal policies.
 - b. Ensuring timely and accurate financial reporting, with church leadership and the church as the primary audience; and
5. To develop campaigns and/or programs that promote and foster among the congregation an understanding of and commitment to the Biblical concepts of individual and corporate stewardship.
6. To sponsor capital stewardship campaigns and programs for purchases of large ministry items such as facilities, land, transportation, etc.

ARTICLE X. ELECTIONS

Section 1. General

Unless otherwise provided for by this constitution, all church officers and members of standing committees shall be elected by the church annually. Those elected shall be members in good standing.

Section 2. Procedure

- A. Following approval by the Lead Pastor and Nominating Committee, nominations for all church officers and members of standing committees shall be presented to the church for election by the Nominating Committee unless otherwise provided by this constitution. Nominations from the floor for church officers and standing-committee vacancies are not permitted.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall receive nominations from any member in good standing to fill vacancies for church officers and members of standing committees. Proper notice and publicity of the nomination period shall be given in a prior regular Sunday worship service or inclusion in the church bulletin at least two weeks prior to a vote by the church.
- C. Whenever a vacancy occurs, the Nominating Committee shall act promptly to appoint a replacement. The appointee shall serve until the next regularly scheduled business meeting.

ARTICLE XI. INDEMNIFICATIONS AND INSURANCE

- A. MVBC may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of MVBC) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a Pastor, Minister, Deacon, officer, employee, or agent of MVBC, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of MVBC and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of MVBC and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.
- B. To the extent that a Pastor, Minister, Deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.
- C. Any indemnification made pursuant to this Article, may be made by MVBC only as authorized in the specific case after a determination that indemnification of the Pastor, Minister, Deacon, officer,

employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because the person has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Article XI, Section A. That determination shall be made as follows:

1. By a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the Lead Pastor and members of the Deacon Council who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding.
 2. When the described quorum is not obtainable, then by independent legal counsel in a written opinion, as directed by a majority vote of Deacon Council members who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding; or
 3. By a majority vote of the members of the church present and voting at a properly called business meeting.
- D. Expenses of each person seeking indemnification pursuant to this Article, may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by Deacon Council in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the Pastor, Minister, Deacon, officer, employee, or agent to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.
- E. The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or pursuant to any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by MVBC, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification pursuant to this Article in their official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a Pastor, Minister, Deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.
- F. MVBC may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a Pastor, Minister, Deacon, officer, employee, or agent of MVBC against any liability asserted against them and incurred by them in that capacity, or arising out of their status in that capacity, whether or not MVBC would have the power to indemnify them against liability pursuant to the provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE XII. TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS

Section 1. Private Inurement

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, Church Trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II hereof.

Section 2. Political Involvement

MVBC shall not endorse any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 3. Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the church, the Church Trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Church Trustees shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax-exempt organizations that agree with the MVBC Articles of Faith.

Section 4. Racial Nondiscrimination

MVBC shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and, therefore, shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

Section 5. Limitation of Activities

Notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution, MVBC shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Article II.

ARTICLE XIII. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1. Licensing to Preach

MVBC may grant a license to preach to any male member who gives evidence of his ability and spiritual preparedness, providing he is recommended by the Lead Pastor and Deacon Council. The licensee must have preached within hearing of the church before any church action is taken. Licensing to preach shall follow approval by the Deacon Council. Following approval by the Lead Pastor and the Deacon Council, candidates shall be presented to the church in a Licensing Service.

Section 2. Ordination of Ministers

MVBC may ordain to the Gospel ministry any male member who gives evidence of having been called of God. The Lead Pastor shall appoint an Ordination Council to examine the candidate to determine the validity of his calling. The Ordination Council shall consist of two or more ordained ministers, one of which must be a member of MVBC, the chairman or vice chairman of the Deacon Council, and two or more Deacon Council members. The ordination candidate must have preached within hearing of the church before any church action is taken. The Deacon Council shall approve the candidate for ordination only as they are satisfied with the Ordination Council's affirmation of his testimony and qualifications. Upon approval by the Deacon Council and affirmation by the Ordination Council, candidates shall be presented to the church in an Ordination Service.

Section 3. Endorsement of Seminary Applicants

MVBC may endorse to a Bible college or seminary any member in good standing. The Lead Pastor (or his designee) shall examine the candidate and present a report to the Deacon Council for approval.

Section 4. Contributions to Church Designated Funds

From time to time MVBC, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. All contributions made to an MVBC designated fund shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the church. Any change to the use of an MVBC designated fund requires approval by the Financial Stewardship Committee in accordance with the MVBC Financial Policy and Procedure Manual (copy available). No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to MVBC other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article II.

Section 5. Name and Affiliation Change

Any attempt to change the name of MVBC or disassociate it from the Raleigh Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, or the Southern Baptist Convention shall be in the form of a written motion by the Deacon Council with approval of the Lead Pastor. The motion shall be held open for 90 days before being brought to a vote at a properly called business meeting, and must be approved by a three-fourths majority of those members present and voting.

Section 6. Amendments

This constitution may be added to or amended by vote of the church at any regular business meeting providing at least 28 days' notice has been given as to the article and section in question or nature of addition. A summary of the proposal shall be posted on the church premises during this interval.

Section 7. Ratification

Unless otherwise stated, the provisions of this constitution are effective immediately upon approval by MVBC.

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APPENDIX. 2000 BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE

I. The Scriptures

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

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

II. God

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

A. God the Father

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

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

B. God the Son

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

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

C. God the Holy Spirit

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

the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

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

III. Man

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

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

IV. Salvation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

V. God's Purpose of Grace

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

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

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

VI. The Church

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

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

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

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

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

VIII. The Lord's Day

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

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

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

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

Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. Last Things

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

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

XI. Evangelism and Missions

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

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

XII. Education

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

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

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

XIII. Stewardship

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

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

XIV. Cooperation

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

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

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

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

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

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

XVII. Religious Liberty

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

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

XVIII. The Family

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

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

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

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

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