

The Branches

Constitution and By-Laws

Date: Amended 3/15/2020

Date: Amended 5/21/2023

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CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will both preserve the liberties of each individual church member and establish an atmosphere in which we can strive to be more like Jesus Christ in every way.

ARTICLE I: NAME AND AFFILIATIONS

Section 1 Name

This organization shall be known as “The Branches, Inc.”, hereafter known as “the Church” or “The Branches”, located in Olathe, Kansas. It is legally incorporated, as a non-profit organization, according to the laws of the State of Kansas under the same name.

Section 2 Affiliations

As a local body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, the Church voluntarily cooperates and affiliates with the Kansas City Kansas Baptist Association, the Kansas Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE II: MISSION STATEMENT

Section 1 Statement of Purpose

We exist to worship God and to exalt His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are here to evangelize, disciple, minister and fellowship as led by the Holy Spirit in accordance with the Bible, God’s holy word.

Section 2 Mission Statement

We, The Branches, being united in love and empowered by the Holy Spirit, express God’s love by:

Worshiping God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit through public praise, thanksgiving, hearing, commitment, prayer and service.

Evangelizing the lost in Olathe, the United States and around the world.

Ministering to the Community in seeking to meet the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of people in Christ’s name.

Ministering to the body of Christ through prayer, fellowship and discipleship unto Christ-likeness.

ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 1 The Baptist Faith and Message

The Branches adheres to the most current publication of “The Baptist Faith and Message” as a statement of faith. (See Appendix A or <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>.)

Section 2 Additional Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexual conduct, bisexual conduct, pedophilia, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

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

ARTICLE IV: ORDINANCES

The Church observes two ordinances: baptism by immersion (Matt 28:19) and the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:23-26).

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this Church is composed of individuals who have made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, have experienced believer’s baptism, and have joined the Church as defined in the By-Laws, Article B-I.

ARTICLE VI: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Section 1 Principle of Congregational Rule

The Church shall be a congregationally ruled body governed only by its members, after seeking the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

No business of the Church shall be conducted by written consent as defined in Kan. Stat. Ann. § 17-6518 (2019). No voting by proxy shall be allowed.

Section 2 Principle of Delegation

The Church shall delegate authority and accountability to the deacons, Church Council, pastors, officers, committees, and ministry directors in accordance with its By-Laws.

Section 3 Corporate Officers

For corporation purposes, the pastor will serve as the president of the corporation. The treasurer of the Church will serve as the treasurer of the corporation. The church clerk will serve as the secretary of the corporation. Any of the above named officers are authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the Church.

ARTICLE VII: MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

Section 1 Limitation

Pastors in this church are not authorized to perform same-sex wedding ceremonies or civil unions, and will only perform covenant marriage ceremonies for one man and one woman as biologically designed and revealed at birth.

Section 2 Facility Use

Church facilities and resources shall not be used for same-sex weddings or civil ceremonies.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

Section 1 Procedure

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any business meeting of the Church provided that such proposed amendments are presented in writing to the Church and announced during Sunday morning services at least one month prior to the date set for final action.

Amendments to By-Laws may be made by publishing a written notice and announcing to the Church a minimum of one week prior to any given business meeting of the Church.

Section 2 Approval

Amendments to the Constitution shall be approved by two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting. Amendments to the By-Laws shall be approved by a simple majority vote of the members present and voting.

Section 3 Adoption

The adoption of this Constitution and By-Laws repeals, supersedes, and makes void all former or similar documents adopted by The Branches, Olathe, Kansas. The effective date of this document is 11/17/2019. Any amendments subsequent to this date shall be attached to this document with effective dates.

ARTICLE IX: DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution of the corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied, none of its assets or holdings shall be divided among members or other individuals but shall be irrevocably transferred in the percentage of 50% to Kansas Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, Inc. or its successor, and 50% to Kansas City, Kansas Baptist Association or its successor, for use in mission work as is in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith adopted by the church and in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service Code of 1954 Section 501(c)(3).

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE B-1: MEMBERS

Section 1 Reception of Members

1. Prospective members are encouraged to consult with a pastor.
2. New members shall be recognized and presented to the church body during a regular Sunday morning worship service, after one of the following:
 - a. Public profession of faith followed by baptism by immersion
 - b. Transfer of membership from another Southern Baptist church
 - c. Statement of previous salvation and baptism by immersion
3. Congregation will accept new members by simple majority vote.

Section 2 Removal of Members

Removal of members shall be by a simple majority vote of the members present and voting at a business meeting. Members may be removed under the following circumstances:

1. Upon death.
2. In case of joining another church.
3. In case of being guilty of unrepentant conduct blatantly and consistently unbecoming a Christian (1 Corinthians 5:11-13). Exclusion in this case would only be considered after every effort has been made to reconcile such a person in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.
4. In case of having no attendance or communication for a period of at least 12 months.

Section 3 Rights and Responsibilities of Members

1. Members of the church age 16 and older are entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in business meetings, provided the member is present.
2. Members 18 and older are eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church.
3. Members should have an attitude of positive encouragement toward one another and all the various ministries of the church.
4. Members should regularly attend worship services and participate in church activities.

ARTICLE B-II: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Section 1 Church Council

1. Purpose
 - a. Conduct any business directed by the church
 - b. Provide leadership to the church regarding decisions to be made by the church as a whole

- c. Coordinate events and activities
- 2. Composition
 - a. The Church Council shall consist of all pastors, chair of deacons, ministry directors, standing committee chairs and ad hoc committee chairs.

Section 2 Standing Committees

- 1. Purpose
 - a. Standing committees shall be formed when there is a significant, specific ongoing need.
 - b. Standing committees are formed by, and accountable to, the Church Council. The pastor is a member of all standing committees.
- 2. Composition and formation
 - a. The Church Council shall establish all standing committees.
 - b. All standing committee chairs shall be elected annually at the November business meeting with terms to begin in January.
 - c. In case of vacancy, the Church Council will nominate a chair, and a special called business meeting will be held to elect the nominee.
 - d. The chair of each standing committee shall serve on the Church Council.

Finance and Budget Committee

- 1. Purpose
 - Oversee the financial activities of the Church.
- 2. Composition and Formation
 - The committee shall consist of the treasurer and pastor and other members as needed, and appointed by the Church Council.
- 3. Limitation
 - No employee of the Church shall be allowed to vote on salary matters within the finance committee.
- 4. Responsibilities
 - a. It shall determine that we have a system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds. The system shall include a general fund budget, double entry accounting, periodic financial statements, division of responsibilities and other appropriate accounting checks and balances.
 - i. The Treasurer will request all ministry directors to provide their requested budget to the finance committee for review no later than November 1st.
 - ii. The finance committee will meet as needed in early November to prepare a proposed budget by reviewing past expenses and the ministry director requests.
 - iii. The proposed budget will be printed and provided to church members for review one week before the November business meeting.
 - iv. The budget will be reviewed and discussed at the November business meeting. Adjustments to the proposed budget may be made at the business meeting. If there are no issues requiring

additional review by the finance committee, the budget is voted on at that meeting.

- v. If there are issues requiring additional review by the finance committee, or if the budget is not approved, the finance committee will reconvene and produce an amended proposed budget. A special business meeting will need to be called in order to review and approve the amended budget.
- b. It shall oversee the work of the treasurer.

Section 3 Ad Hoc Committees

1. Purpose
 - Ad hoc committees shall be formed when there is a significant, specific temporary need.
2. Composition and Formation
 - a. Ad hoc committees are selected by and accountable to the Church Council.
 - b. The ad hoc committee shall appoint a chair to sit on the Church Council.

Section 4 Ministries

1. Purpose
 - The Church shall be organized around ministries, with each ministry having a stated purpose.
2. Selection
 - All ministry directors shall be nominated by the Church Council and elected annually at the November business meeting with terms beginning in January.
3. Vacancy
 - In case of vacancy, the Church Council will nominate a chair, and a special called business meeting will be held to elect the nominee.
4. New Ministry
 - A new ministry may be created at any time during the year by the Church Council and a director will be nominated and elected by the Church at a special called business meeting.
5. Leadership and Responsibilities
 - a. Each ministry will have a director who represents that ministry on the Church Council.
 - b. Each director shall be responsible for recruiting the necessary help to accomplish the purpose of the ministry.
 - c. All ministry directors are required to present written or verbal reports at annual business meetings.
6. Accountability
 - Ministry directors are accountable to the Church Council.
7. Removal from office
 - The Church Council is authorized to remove a ministry director at any time and for any reason by majority vote.

8. List of ministry directors

The following ministry directors are currently elected according to church needs.

a. **Building and Grounds**

The Building and Grounds Director shall be responsible for overseeing the maintenance of the church properties with regards to safety and attractiveness.

b. **Children's Ministry**

The Children's Ministry Director shall be responsible for organizing and leading in children's ministries, such as the following: VBS, Awana, Children's Church, and Nursery. The Director will recruit leaders for each area of ministry. Leaders will recruit volunteers as needed.

c. **Deaf Ministry**

The Deaf Ministry Director shall oversee ministries and activities for the deaf community. He or she is responsible for ensuring that interpreters are present.

d. **Fellowship**

The Fellowship Director shall be responsible for organizing and leading in churchwide fellowship activities, and for overseeing the cleaning, maintenance and stocking of the kitchen when used by other groups within the church.

e. **Men's Ministry**

The Men's Ministry Director shall be responsible for organizing and leading activities for men to encourage personal spiritual growth, fellowship and outreach beyond that of the Sunday School ministry.

f. **Missions**

The Missions Director shall be responsible for organizing and coordinating mission activities for our church. The director shall act as liaison between the Church and all outside mission organizations such as the International Mission Board, the North American Mission Board, as well as other organizations and individuals approved by the Church for purposes of information about and contributions to such organizations.

g. **Music**

In the event of no Associate Pastor of Music, a Music Director would oversee the worship activities of the Church.

h. **Sunday School**

The Sunday School Director shall be responsible for the operation of the Sunday School and accomplishing the ministry priorities of Bible Study,

fellowship and outreach. Sunday School teachers shall be recruited and nominated by the Sunday School Director and approved by the Church Council. The Sunday School Director, in consultation with the pastor, shall approve all materials used by teachers. Teachers are accountable to the Sunday School Director.

i. **Usher**

The Usher Director shall be responsible for overseeing the greeting of people, particularly new people. They also would assist new people as needed and provide welcome materials to them.

j. **Women's Ministry**

The Women's Ministry Director shall be responsible for organizing and leading activities for women to encourage personal spiritual growth, fellowship and outreach beyond that of the Sunday School ministry.

k. **Youth**

In the event of no Associate Pastor of Youth, the Youth Director would be responsible for teaching the Word of God and creating spiritual activities for the youth.

ARTICLE B-III: MEETINGS

Section 1 Worship

The Church shall assemble each Sunday and at any other time the Church chooses for public worship and praise of Jesus Christ, for study of His Word, prayer and the fellowship of believers.

Section 2 Regular Business Meetings

1. Schedule

- a. Annual business meetings will be held on the third Sunday of November at a time designated by the Church Council or senior pastor.
- b. The time is to be posted and announced at least one week prior to the meeting date.

2. Elections

- a. Standing committee chairs and ministry directors are elected and the budget is approved at the November meeting.
- b. Church officers are re-elected annually at the November meeting.
- c. Vacancies may be filled at a special called business meeting.

Section 3 Special Business Meetings

1. Calling of Meeting
In addition to the annual business meetings, special business meetings may be called by the pastor, by majority vote of the Church Council, or by 30% of members who have signed a petition.
2. Posting of Meeting
The special called meetings must be posted and announced at a regular Sunday service a minimum of one week prior to the date of the meeting. The date, time and purpose of the meeting must also be given.
3. Business of Meeting
Business at a special business meeting is restricted to the purpose stated at the time the meeting is called.

Section 4 Meeting Procedures

1. Quorum: A quorum for transaction of business of the Church shall consist of 10% of the membership of the Church.
2. Moderator: The pastor shall be the moderator at business meetings. In the absence of the pastor, the chair of deacons shall act as the moderator. If neither the pastor nor chair of deacons is available to moderate, members attending shall elect a moderator by majority vote.
3. Rules of Order: The rules of order for the conducting of these meetings shall be the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, but only in regard to matters of parliamentary procedure. If any provision of the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* conflicts with any provision of this Constitution or By-Laws, the appropriate provision of this Constitution and By-Laws shall control. All actions taken shall be considered approved by a simple majority of all members present and voting, except in instances otherwise stated in this Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE B-IV: CHURCH PERSONNEL

Section 1 Senior Pastor

1. Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, 1 Peter 5:2)
 - a. Understanding that these verses represent the best in a pastor and not a checklist for criticism, the Church desires a senior pastor who strives to apply these passages in his daily life. They will be in full agreement with the Church's Statement of Faith.
 - b. Pastor shall be ordained or eligible for ordination.
2. Responsibilities
 - a. Provide oversight of the Church's worship, ministry and administration
 - b. Seek God's direction and desires for the congregation through prayer, preaching and teaching
 - c. Provide a solid Biblical-based preaching and teaching ministry to meet the needs of the congregation as directed by the Holy Spirit
 - d. Oversee observing and administering the ordinances set down by the *Holy Bible (Baptism and Lord's Supper)*

- e. Lead and inspire the church leaders, such as deacons, Church Council, staff, teachers and congregation, in the development and effective operation of a wide range of program activities
 - f. Provide pastoral counseling as needed
 - g. Oversee weddings and funerals for the congregation, providing appropriate preparation and support. (Non-congregational requests at the discretion of the pastor)
 - h. Moderate the Church's business meetings
 - i. Participate in the development and administration of the departmental budgets under his responsibility and lead financial drives and giving programs
 - j. Schedule necessary time for study, preparation and planning in order to develop and maintain a deep level of spiritual growth
3. Call and Termination of Call
- a. As often as may become necessary by death, resignation or removal, the Church shall call a pastor. The call shall be for an unlimited tenure, to be terminated at the will of the pastor, or by the Church.
 - b. Process
 - i. Call of a pastor – An ad hoc pastor search committee shall be formed according to Section 3, Article B-II. The committee is charged with the responsibility of presenting a qualified candidate for approval by the church. Upon selection of a candidate, a special business meeting shall be convened. The call of a pastor shall be considered approved by a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting. Voting shall be by written ballot.
 - ii. Resignation of a pastor – The pastor shall give a minimum of four weeks written notice to the church of his intention to resign, with departure date as mutually agreeable.
 - iii. Termination of a Call – In the event that the Church is dissatisfied with his performance, there shall be a joint meeting of the deacons and Church Council to review the situation. Should they so decide, they shall inform him that it is their judgment that he should resign. If after that meeting there is no resolution, there shall be a special business meeting to consider termination of the pastor. Termination shall be approved by a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting. Voting shall be by written ballot. It shall be effective immediately and the church shall provide a minimum of two weeks compensation beyond that point.
 - iv. Immediate suspension with or without pay may take place by the Church Council in cases of criminal action or Biblical moral failure.

Section 2 Other Pastoral Staff

1. Qualifications: Same as senior pastor.
2. Responsibilities to be determined by the senior pastor and Church Council.
3. Call and Termination of Call:

- a. Associate pastor(s) will be called as deemed necessary by the senior pastor and Church Council and approved by simple majority of members present and voting at a special business meeting.
- b. Resignation: The associate pastor shall give a minimum of two weeks written notice to the church of his intention to resign.
- c. Dismissal: By the senior pastor in consultation with and majority approval of the Church Council.

Section 3 Deacons

1. Qualifications: The qualifications for deacons are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. The candidate must be a member of the Church.
2. Selection: It is the responsibility of the deacons and Church Council to ensure candidates are qualified. As needed, the Church Council may nominate candidates to be deacons. Nominees will be presented to the church for voting at any business meeting. An unordained deacon would then be ordained by the church before serving.
3. Responsibilities: Deacons exist to serve, to meet the needs of the Church. They will provide care for the congregation as directed by the pastoral staff and Church Council. They will also be responsible for the maintenance and distribution of benevolence funds.
4. Dismissal: By the senior pastor in consultation with and majority approval of the Church Council.
5. Quantity: The number of deacons will be determined by pastor and Church Council as needed.
6. The position of chair of deacons will be chosen by the deacons and approved by the pastor.

Section 4 Church Officers

Church officers other than the pastor shall be nominated by the Church Council and elected annually with terms beginning in January.

1. Church President
The Church President is the Senior Pastor, and represents the Church in corporate matters.
2. Church Clerk
The church clerk acts as the secretary of the Church Council, and is re-elected annually at the November meeting. The church clerk shall be accountable to the pastor. The church clerk will have the following duties:
 - a. The church clerk, or designee, shall keep uniform minutes of all Church Council and business meetings.
 - b. The church clerk shall be responsible for the accurate recording and processing of all business transactions approved in Church Council and business meetings.
 - c. The church clerk shall maintain all Church records, which are Church property, and safely store for a minimum of three years.

3. Church Treasurer

The church treasurer shall be accountable to the finance committee. The church treasurer will oversee the following duties:

- a. The receiving, accounting, disbursing and reporting of all monies and gifts to the Church
- b. Ensuring that adequate records of member contributions are maintained
- c. The examining of supporting data for all check requests and issuing checks
- d. The maintenance of all bank accounts, including payment of bills
- e. Managing the Church budgeting process
- f. Making reports for business meetings and financial reports to the Finance Committee and Church Council
- g. Enlist and train people to count and document weekly offering receipts; counting shall be done by two people.

ARTICLE B-V: SUPPORT STAFF

Support staff may be hired as needed. Such positions shall be recommended by the Church Council and approved by the Church prior to recruitment.

Section 1 Hiring

1. The Church Council may appoint members to assist the pastor in recruiting a person to fill a needed position.
2. The qualifications and duties of such staff person shall be determined at the time the need for the position is realized.
3. The final decision on hiring is made by the senior pastor.

Section 2 Benefits for Support Staff

Full and part time church employees shall accrue the following benefits:

1. Sick pay
 - a. Full time employees – one paid day a month
 - b. Part time employees – ½ paid day a month
2. Vacation pay
 - a. Full time employees – one paid week which may be taken after completing six months of employment. After completing one full year of employment, two paid weeks are granted. After five years employment, three weeks paid vacation are granted.
 - b. Part time employees – ½ paid week which may be taken after completing six months of employment. After completing one full year of employment, one paid week is granted. After five years employment, 1 ½ weeks paid vacation are granted.
3. Holiday pay

Employees will be off work and paid their usual pay for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. When a holiday falls on an employee's day off, they may take off a different day.

4. Unpaid time off

Unpaid time off may be taken if approved by the pastor if employee has no sick time or vacation pay available.

Section 3 Termination

The pastor may at any time dismiss support staff for non-performance of duties.

Section 4 Administrative Assistant

1. Accountable to senior pastor
2. Purpose: To serve the church by providing administrative support to the pastoral staff and providing clerical assistance to other support staff upon request.
3. Primary Responsibilities:
 - a. Receive incoming calls, answer questions and provide information whenever possible. Take complete accurate messages and route calls to appropriate staff members
 - b. Sort and distribute incoming mail
 - c. Maintain hospital list, keeping appropriate staff members informed
 - d. Provide clerical assistance to other staff members, committees and volunteers upon request if time allows and as approved by the senior pastor
 - e. Establish and maintain master program and facilities calendar
 - f. Seal, stamp, sort and post outgoing mail
 - g. Attend regular staff meetings
 - h. Schedule appointments, handle correspondence and take notes from meetings and other clerical support tasks as assigned
 - i. Prepare weekly bulletin for worship services
 - j. Ensure that office files are up-to-date and well organized and that office equipment is clean and properly maintained
 - k. Order office supplies as necessary
 - l. Maintain an accurate up-to-date database of church membership records
 - m. Produce a church directory as needed
 - n. Produce special membership, attendance and contributions reports as required
 - o. Provide letters of transfer upon request
 - p. Update current events on webpage
 - q. Other duties assigned by the senior pastor
 - r. Ensure social media is updated regularly with current events

ARTICLE B-VI: DUE DILIGENCE FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN WORKERS

Section 1 Policy Adherence

Directors of Sunday School, Youth and Children shall adhere to current insurance requirements for due diligence when selecting volunteers to work with children and youth.

Section 2 Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy

The Branches implements the following Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy designed to protect children and youth of the church. At a minimum, the following are required:

1. A volunteer working with youth/children must be a member or regular attender for at least 6 months. An exception may be made at the discretion of the pastor, with the approval of the Church Council.
2. Volunteers shall follow the 2 person rule, one of each gender whenever possible (there shall be at least 2 adults in a room with a minor whenever possible)
3. Volunteers working with youth or children under age of 18 must be willing to complete an application form and submit to a background check every 3 years.

Section 3 Incident Reporting

If an incident occurs, or abuse is suspected, it must be reported immediately to the pastor, and then to Child Protective Services or local police. Report must also be made to current insurance company. Volunteer will be removed from duties pending resolution.

ARTICLE B-VII: LICENSING AND ORDAINING

Section 1 License to Preach the Gospel

Any member of the Church who gives evidence of being called into the ministry of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ may request a license from the Church. A license may be granted at any business meeting of the Church by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting.

Section 2 Ordination to the Gospel Ministry

1. Any member of the Church desiring ordination to the gospel ministry must first be called to that ministry by a church or sponsoring organization recognized by this Church. Request for such ordination is to be made by the church or sponsoring organization to which he has been called.
2. The candidate shall be examined privately by a council composed of ordained ministers and deacons of this Church. Upon approval by the ordination council an ordination service shall be held at a special called business meeting. The candidate shall be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting.

Section 3 Deacon Ordination

Church members elected to become deacons who have not previously been ordained shall be ordained by this Church in the manner described above in section 2B for the ordination of ministers.

Section 4 Revocation of License or Ordination

In the event of criminal action or Biblical moral failure, and on recommendation of the deacons and the Church Council, license or ordination may be revoked at a business meeting by a two-thirds vote.

ARTICLE B-VIII: REIMBURSEMENT of EXPENSES for CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Section 1 Expenses

1. The Church shall reimburse expenses for any church business approved by a ministry director within budget guidelines.
2. Mileage shall be reimbursed at the current IRS Business Standard Mileage Rate for business purposes or for actual expenses.

Section 2 Procedures for Payment

1. Expenses for budgeted church activities are submitted to the church office via a check request form which may be obtained in the church office.
2. The forms are approved by the appropriate ministry director and directed to the church treasurer for payment and posting.
3. Non-budgeted expenses are directed to the church treasurer and submitted to the finance committee for action.

ARTICLE B-IX: USE OF CHURCH EQUIPMENT

Church members may borrow church equipment on approval of the administrative assistant to avoid calendar conflicts. All equipment must be returned in clean condition by date designated by the administrative assistant.

REVISION HISTORY

Revision Date	Description of Revision
11/17/2019	Major revision from previous version
3/15/2020	Modified Article BVI Section 2 to more accurately reflect who can work with children and youth
5/21/2023	Modified Article B-II Section 4 item 5c and 8h, Article B-III Section 2 item 1a, item 2, and Section 3 item 1 to remove the May business meeting and turn Sunday School teacher nomination and election over to the Director and the Church Council

APPENDIX A

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000

I. The Scriptures

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

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

II. God

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

A. God the Father

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

[Genesis 1:1](#); [2:7](#); [Exodus 3:14](#); [6:2-3](#); [15:11ff.](#); [20:1ff.](#); [Leviticus 22:2](#); [Deuteronomy 6:4](#); [32:6](#); [1 Chronicles 29:10](#); [Psalms 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 scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

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

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

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the

resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

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

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

VIII. The Lord's Day

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

[Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 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; 15:7-8,16; 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](#); [Psalms 101:5](#); [Micah 6:8](#); [Zechariah 8:16](#); [Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48](#); [22:36-40](#); [25:35](#); [Mark 1:29-34](#); [2:3ff.](#); [10:21](#); [Luke 4:18-21](#); [10:27-37](#); [20:25](#); [John 15:12](#); [17:15](#); [Romans 12-14](#); [1 Corinthians 5:9-10](#); [6:1-7](#); [7:20-24](#); [10:23-11:1](#); [Galatians 3:26-28](#); [Ephesians 6:5-9](#); [Colossians 3:12-17](#); [1 Thessalonians 3:12](#); [Philemon](#); [James 1:27](#); [2:8](#).

XVI. Peace and War

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

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

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

XVII. Religious Liberty

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

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

XVIII. The Family

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

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

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

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

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