

Tabernacle Baptist Church
Constitution and By-laws
Last Revised and Amended on April 5, 2015

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of preserving, propagating and making secure the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body is governed in an orderly manner, consistent with the accepted tenets of a missionary-minded Southern Baptist Church, affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Association of Virginia, and the Concord Baptist Association, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the Church, and set forth the relationship of this body to other bodies of the same faith, we do declare and establish this Constitution and By-laws.

ARTICLE I. NAME

This body shall be known as the Tabernacle Baptist Church, located at 23875 Highway 47, South Hill, Mecklenburg County, Virginia.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this body shall be to preach and propagate among all people the Gospel of the revelation of God through Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, to provide regular opportunities for public worship, to sustain the ordinances, doctrines, and ethics set forth in the New Testament for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ; to nurture its members through a program of Christian Education; and to channel its offerings to support the objects of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

ARTICLE III. COVENANT

We the members of Tabernacle Baptist Church do receive and adopt the following covenant.

Having been led as we believe, by the Holy Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and on profession of that faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, thus forming a Christian Church we joyfully enter into this covenant before God and with one another.

We agree solemnly to walk together in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, to strive together for the Faith once delivered to the saints, to teach and admonish one another, to bear each other's burdens; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together regularly for public worship and instruction, and the preaching of the Gospel; contributing of our ability for the support of the Gospel at home and abroad, keeping the ordinances as they were delivered by Christ, and laboring together for the salvation of the ungodly. May God grant us grace to be faithful in the fulfillment of this covenant for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this Church shall be composed of such persons who (1) have accepted and confessed Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, (2) have been immersed in water in accordance with the New Testament example of baptism, and (3) have been received into the fellowship of the Church.

Section 1. Admission

A. Profession of Faith: Any person who gives testimony of receiving Jesus Christ as his/her personal savior, and indicates a desire to be baptized, shall be received into the membership of the Church subsequent to their baptism. It shall be the responsibility of the Church to arrange for baptism as soon as possible in order to observe the teachings of Acts 2:41 and Acts 2:47.

B. By Letter: Any member of another Baptist church of like faith and order may be received as a member of the Church upon receipt of a letter of recommendation from that church.

C. By Statement: (1) Any person who has once been a member of a Baptist church which has no letter of recommendation, upon statement of personal faith in Jesus Christ and baptism by immersion, may immediately be received into Church membership. (2) Any person who has been previously baptized by immersion after acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal savior, and so states that may be received into membership of the Church.

D. The Church shall make every effort to inform tentative members of Church beliefs. This shall be accomplished by displaying copies of the Constitution and By-laws, which may be taken by visitors for study.

E. If someone desires membership in Tabernacle Baptist Church and is unable to be baptized by immersion, upon a vote by the Church this person may be admitted for membership.

Section 2. Dismissal

A. Letters of recommendation may be granted to any church of like faith and order for members in good standing. When letters are granted, membership in this Church shall be terminated.

B. When a member of this Church joins a church of a different faith and order, a letter will be granted if requested, and membership in this Church will be terminated.

C. Should a member become an offense to the Church and its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, the Church may terminate his/her membership, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment. (I Corinthians 5; Matthew 18:15-17; and James 5:19-20)

Section 3. Duties

Members are expected, first of all, to lead a Christian life having as its basis the teachings of Jesus Christ; to attend regularly the services of the Church; to share in its

organized work; and to give regularly and systematically to its support and the causes of Christ's Kingdom.

Section 4. Rights

Members only may act and vote in the transactions and business of the Church.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

Except as otherwise determined by the Church, the meetings of the Church shall be as follows:

Section 1. This Church shall hold weekly meetings on Sunday for the purpose of worship, teaching, training, and fellowship.

Section 2. A regular weekly prayer meeting and Bible study shall be held on Wednesday evening, during a period decided by the Pastor and church body.

Section 3. A regular Church Business Meeting will be held on the first Sunday of each month. The meeting will be closed at 10:00 AM to allow time for Sunday School. If there arises a need for a special meeting, one week's notice will be given.

Section 4. Church Revival meetings will be held under the guidance of the Pastor, upon consultation with the Revival Committee and Church Council. In the absence of a pastor, the Revival Committee will assume this responsibility.

Section 5. The Lord's Supper shall be observed on the second Sunday of every even numbered month. It shall also be observed at other times throughout the year as deemed fit and proper.

Section 6. Other meetings of the Church as a whole or of authorized groups within the Church may be according to the needs of the congregation.

ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1: Pastor

A. Election: A pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election of the pastor shall take place at a business meeting of the Church, on Sunday morning, called for that purpose. Due notice shall be given of the date of this meeting. An affirmative vote of at least 75% (seventy-five per cent) of those members present at the Church Business Meeting shall be necessary to call a pastor.

B. Terms of Office: The Pastor shall serve as such as long as he and the Church feel the relationship should be maintained. In the event that either party comes to believe that the relationship should be terminated, the party initiating the termination shall give the other party not less than 14 (fourteen) days notice. Should the Pastor initiate the termination, he shall present a letter of resignation to the Church. Should the Church

initiate the termination, it shall be necessary to secure a majority vote of the members present at a Sunday morning business meeting of the Church called for that purpose. Notice of this meeting shall be given to the membership at least 14 (fourteen) days in advance of the meeting.

C. Duties: The Pastor is charged primarily with the spiritual leadership of the Church; he shall be an ex-officio member of all organizations, departments and committees. It will be the Pastor's duty to conduct religious services, administer the ordinances, perform weddings and funerals, minister to the members of the Church and community, and perform other duties that pertain to the office. He shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry and assist in the administration of the programs and activities of the Church designed to advance the Kingdom of God.

Section 2. Deacons

Deacons shall be elected annually, for a term of three years, during worship service on the first Sunday in October. Deacons will rotate off the board for 1 year before coming up for re-election. Newly elected Deacons will begin their ministry on January 1 of the following year. Nominations will be called for beginning the first Sunday in September. At this time, the Scriptural qualifications and functions of deacons in I Timothy 3:8-13, and Acts 6:1-5 shall be read to the congregation. Nominations can be made from the floor at the October business meeting or in written form prior to that. Written nominations should be given to the Pastor or the Chairman of the Deacons who will contact these nominees to see if they will accept nomination. The vote will be conducted by secret ballot. The ones receiving the majority of votes will fill the vacancies on the Deacon Board. In the event a vacancy occurs due to resignation or death the Deacon board will handle it at their discretion. The Chairman of the Deaconate, Vice Chair and Secretary will be elected by the deacons and serve for a term of one year. The Vice –Chair will move to the position of Chairman the following year and a new Vice-Chair will be elected. No chairman may succeed him/herself. The Deaconate will consist of one deacon for every 10 to 15 church families, one third of which will rotate off each year. The number of Deacons will never be less than nine.

Deacons are expected to be involved in ministry with the Pastor to the Church and community. A deacon is to be the kind of Christian leader described in Acts 6 and I Timothy 3, give faithful support to the Church in carrying out its mission, participate in training and developing Deacon ministry skills, assist the Pastor in ministering to the Church families, and attend Deacon's meetings. A Deacon is to be an example in faith, Christian virtues, stewardship, and in commitment to and involvement in the Church.

Section 3. Trustees

The Church shall elect Trustees that, according to law and the action of the Church shall hold in trust the title to all property of the Church and shall represent the Church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase, improvement, and disposal of Church property. They shall execute all legal papers relating to the Church and the community as the Church may direct. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property of the Church without specific vote of the Church

authorizing such action; neither shall they have control over the use of the Church property except by vote of the Church.

The Church shall have 3 (three) trustees who will serve for an indefinite period of time. They shall remain in office so long as the relationship and service is satisfactory to both the Trustees and the Church.

In the event that a Trustee should desire to resign, the Trustee shall present his/her letter of resignation to the Church at a regularly scheduled business meeting to be voted on by the Church. In the case of a medical or mental problem, a member of the Trustee's family may request the resignation on behalf of the Trustee.

If the Church believes that it would be in its best interest for a Trustee to resign, the Deacon Body shall give the Trustee at least fourteen (14) days notice prior to bringing its recommendation to the Church. It shall be necessary to secure a majority vote of the members present at a business meeting of the Church called for that purpose. Notice of this meeting shall be given to the membership at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting.

The Clerk will be responsible to have the Trustee's appointment approved by the Judge of the Circuit Court of Mecklenburg County as required by law.

Section 4. Clerk and Assistant Clerk

The Clerk shall be elected annually. It shall be his/her duty to attend or be represented at all Church conferences, to keep accurate record of all business transactions and to prepare the annual Associational letter. He/she shall have the responsibility to issue letters of recommendation as authorized by the Church, and secure letters of membership. He/she shall preserve all valuable letters and records that belong to the Church and maintain a true history of the Church. All letters and records so kept are to be considered Church property. It shall also be the duty of the Clerk to keep an accurate roll of the Church membership, resident and non-resident, with dates and method of admission or termination of Church membership, change in name or other pertinent information. The Assistant Clerk will aid the Clerk in these duties and fill-in during the Clerk's absence.

Section 5. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected annually. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to keep in a bank, and disburse by check upon proper authority, all money that is given to the Church, and keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements; rendering regular account to the Church to be preserved by the Church Clerk. The Treasurer's books, records and accounts shall be considered the property of the Church. The Assistant Treasurer will aid the Treasurer in these duties and fill-in during the Treasurer's absence. In the event an audit is requested, the Church Council will appoint a committee to conduct such an audit.

Section 6. Moderator

The Moderator of this church shall be the Pastor. He shall be the presiding officer at any meeting or conference of the Church. In the absence of the Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons shall preside. In the event that the Chairman of the Deacons is not

available, the Vice Chair will preside and if this person is not available, the Church Clerk shall appoint a Moderator for that particular meeting. The Moderator shall not vote on any issue.

Section 7. Supply Preacher and Interim Pastor

A. Supply Preacher: In the event of the resignation or termination of the Pastor, the Deacon Body shall be responsible to find someone to fill the pulpit until the Church chooses to elect an Interim Pastor or elects a full-time Pastor.

B. Interim Pastor

1. Election: An Interim pastor shall be chosen and nominated by the Deacon Body whenever the Church decides to call an interim. Due notice shall be given of the date of this meeting. An affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (66 2/3%) of those members present at the Church Meeting shall be necessary to call an interim.

2. Terms of Office: The interim shall serve as such as long as he and the Church feel the relationship should be maintained or until the Church calls a full time pastor. In the event that either party comes to believe that the relationship should be terminated, the party initiating the termination shall give the other party not less than 14 days notice. Should the interim initiate the termination, he shall present a letter of resignation to the Church. Should the Church initiate the termination, it shall be necessary to secure a majority vote of members present at a Sunday morning business meeting of the Church called for that purpose. Notice of this meeting shall be given to the membership at least 14 days in advance of the meeting.

3. Duties and Salary: The interim pastor's duties and salary will be determined by the Board of Deacons and voted on with a majority vote by the Church at a business meeting.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS OF ORGANIZATIONS OR DEPARTMENTS

Section 1. Sunday School Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

The Sunday School Superintendent shall be elected annually by the Church. He/she shall be the general administrator of the Sunday School and direct its work. It shall be the duty of the Superintendent to be in charge of the Sunday School opening assembly. It shall also be part of his/her duty to have periodic teachers' meetings for sharing information, training, receiving suggestions from co-workers for the enhancing of the total Sunday School program.

The Assistant Superintendent will also be elected annually by the Church and will assist the Superintendent in administrating and directing the work of the Sunday School.

Section 2. Woman's Missionary Union Director

The Director of the WMU and all other officers of the WMU including directors of its youth organizations will be elected annually by a vote of the organization. Nominees for positions will be presented to the Organization by the Baptist Women's Nominating Committee.

The Director shall be the general administrative officer of the WMU along with the other officers. She shall seek to enlist all the women and young people of the Church in a program of missions, training, and giving according to the plans promoted by the WMU.

Section 3, Brotherhood Director

The Brotherhood Director shall endeavor to promote the work of the Brotherhood in the Church, and seek to enlist the men to the Church in an active program of missions, training, giving, and fellowship. He shall be assisted in coordinating the work of the Brotherhood by other elected Brotherhood officers. The men's group shall be the support behind the Royal Ambassadors.

Nominations for Brotherhood Director will come from within the Brotherhood and that person will be elected annually by the Brotherhood. The Director of the R.A.'s will be nominated from within the active Brotherhood and will be elected annually by the Brotherhood. The R.A. Director will be assisted in his duties by counselors who should also come from the ranks of, and be approved by the Brotherhood.

Section 4. Church Musician

The Musician shall play for all public services and shall assist the Music Director in a suitable program of music for the Church.

Section 5. Music Director

The Music Director shall be responsible for the music program of the Church and shall work in close counsel with the Pastor and Church Musician. It will be the duty of the Music Director to conduct choir practices, plan special music for the services and plan and conduct special musicals at appropriate seasons in the church year.

Section 6. Sunday School Secretary and Assistant Secretary

It shall be the responsibility of the Sunday School Secretary to keep accurate records of attendance in the various Sunday School Departments. He/she shall also count and record the offerings received during the Sunday School. The Assistant will aid the Secretary in these duties and fill-in during the Secretary's absence.

Section 7. Youth Group Leader(s)

The Youth Group Leader(s) shall have the responsibility of leading the youth in Christian growth through Bible Study, prayer, and fellowship. They should seek to guide the youth into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and then into responsible commitment to the total life of the church.

ARTICLE VIII. CHURCH COMMITTEES

Section 1. The Church Council

The Church Council shall consist of the Pastor, Deaconate Chairman, and the leaders of the Church's organizations and committees.

The primary functions of the Council shall be to recommend to the Church suggested objectives and Church goals: to review and coordinate program plans

recommended by Church officers, organizations, and committees; and to recommend to the Church, the nominees for the coming year, which will be elected in August to enter responsibilities in September.

The Church Council will also act as the Budget committee. The committee shall meet during October and November to work on the presentation of a budget for the first Sunday in December.

Section 2. Music Committee

The Music Committee shall consist of the Music Director, the Church Musician, and two other members. The committee and the Pastor shall have general charge of the music program of the Church. They shall recommend the appointment, or employment of the Musician and Music Director should these positions be vacated.

They shall periodically assess the music needs of the Church, making recommendations where needed and following through with any actions necessary to enhance the Church's music program.

Section 3. Baptism Committee

The Baptism Committee shall be elected annually and shall be composed of at least 3 (three) members. It shall be the duty of this committee to make all the necessary arrangements for the ordinance of Baptism and to render assistance to the Pastor and the Candidates for baptism as may be necessary.

Section 4. Communion Committee

The Communion committee shall consist of at least 2 (two) members. It shall be the duty of this committee to make all necessary preparations for the observance of the Ordinance of Communion by the Church. It shall also be responsible for the cleanliness and care of the items used in the administration of this Ordinance.

Section 5. Social/Bereavement Committee

This committee shall be elected annually by the Church. It shall consist of a member of the WOM, a representative from the youth leaders, a chairperson and at least 4 (four) other members. The duties of this committee are: to prepare for Church meals and other special occasions; and to provide for food and lodging of Revival speakers or other persons who are guests of the Church. Upon the death of a member of Tabernacle or family member, if the family so desires the committee will have a meal at the church at a time selected by the family.

Section 6. Building and Grounds Committee

This committee shall be elected annually by the Church and shall consist of at least 3 (three) members. It shall be the duty of this committee to see to the care, up-keep, maintenance, and repair of the Church Building; Church equipment; or any property, land, or equipment acquired in the future.

Section 7. Cemetery and Grounds Committee

This committee shall be elected annually by the Church and shall consist of at least 3 (three) members. It shall be the duty of this committee to see to the upkeep and proper use of the Cemetery and grounds surrounding it. The committee shall also be responsible for the receipt, recording of, and disbursement of Cemetery Fund monies. It shall also keep accurate records of burial plots and any other transactions relating to the Cemetery. This committee shall also manage care of the Church lawn.

This committee shall present an annual report to the Church of the Cemetery Fund monies at the January business meeting. In the event an audit is requested, the Church Council will appoint a committee to conduct such an audit.

Section 8. Revival Committee

The Revival Committee shall be elected annually by the Church and shall consist of at least 4 (four) members. It shall be the duty of this committee to work closely with the Pastor in deciding on the most appropriate date for a revival and the best available person to preach for the revival. The Revival Committee shall be responsible for the special music during the Revival. The committee shall coordinate said music with the Music Committee.

This committee shall also be responsible for working with other committees in preparation for revival. It shall also be in charge of motivating and organizing the Church to pray for revival and publicizing the revival through every available means.

Section 9. Vacation Bible School Committee

This committee shall be elected annually by the Church and shall consist of at least 3 (three) members. It shall be the duty of this committee to decide on VBS materials, enlist teachers and other volunteer helpers, plan and organize and promote the Vacation Bible School of our Church.

Section 10. Representative to Concord Baptist Association

This person will be elected annually by the Church and will serve as the Church representative at the quarterly meetings of the Concord Baptist Association. This person will also serve as one of the messengers at both the Fall and Spring meetings of the Concord Baptist Association.

Section 11. Pastor Search Committee

A Pastor Search Committee will be elected by the Church immediately whenever a vacancy in the Pastorate occurs. Nominations will be taken from the Church and will be presented to the Deacons. The Deacons will select, as best as possible, 5 (five) nominees representing a cross section of the Congregation. At least 1 (one) nominee will be a Deacon. These 5 (five) nominees will be presented to the Church at the next Business Meeting as the Pastor Search Committee to be voted on by the Church.

This committee shall proceed promptly and diligently to seek a pastor who by calling, training and proven ability is qualified spiritually, mentally, and physically to lead this Church in its God directed mission. No prospective candidate will fill the pulpit in the absence of a pastor, except for the Trial Sermon.

Members of this committee shall be reimbursed by the Church Treasurer for any necessary travel and subsistence expenses which are incurred in the performance of their duties.

When the committee has decided upon a candidate for pastor, they shall present to the Church a report of pertinent information concerning the person, and at the Church's request, set up a date for the person to come preach before the Church.

If the Church votes to extend a call to the prospective pastor, the committee shall notify the prospect of the Church's action. If the prospective pastor rejects the call or if the Church votes not to call the prospect, the committee shall seek out another.

The committee shall submit only one person for consideration at a time to the Church. The committee and Church should be guided in their selection of a pastor by I Timothy 3:1-7.

Section 12. Local Mission Fund Committee

A community missions fund has been established to assist people in our local community in a time of need. This committee consists of the Chair of the Deacons, the President of the WOM and one Trustee. A report will be made in each quarterly Treasurer's Report of the monies disbursed, and an annual report submitted in January of each year. In the event an audit is requested, the Church Council will appoint a committee to conduct such an audit.

Section 13. Facility Use and Wedding Committee

This committee shall be elected annually by the Church and shall consist of at least 3 (three) members. They will assist people in use of the church as outlined in the Facility Use Policy of Tabernacle Baptist. It shall also be the duty of this committee to assist couples before, during, and after their weddings as outlined in the Wedding Policies of Tabernacle Baptist.

ARTICLE IX. RULES OF ORDER FOR BUSINESS

RULE 1: Any member of this Church shall have the right to introduce any business, make any motion, and vote on any question equally with all other members.

RULE 2: All ordinary business may be decided by a two-thirds majority vote of the present voting members. A member may motion for the vote to be taken by written ballot.

RULE 3: Business meetings shall be held regularly on the first Sunday of the month unless there arises a need for a special business session. In such a case, due notice of at least one week shall be given to the whole Church of the time, date, and reason for the meeting.

RULE 4: All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

RULE 5: Every business meeting is to be presided over by the Pastor as Moderator, or in his absence, the Chairman of the Deacons or Vice-Chair. If neither are available the Church Clerk shall appoint a Moderator.

RULE 6: Only one subject will be discussed at a time and all remarks must be on that subject and addressed to the Moderator. No subject shall be considered without a motion and a second, but an issue can be clarified without a second.

RULE 7: No person should speak more than twice on the same subject without special permission from the Church. This enables every member to voice his/her opinions without any one person monopolizing the floor.

RULE 8: The Moderator shall not discuss subjects without asking for a substitute, nor shall the Moderator vote on any issue when conducting the meeting.

RULE 9: No un-Christian conversation or manners will be allowed in the Church Business Meeting.

ARTICLE X. SPECIAL PROVISIONS

Section 1: This Constitution and By-laws shall be considered and in immediate effect when two-thirds (66 2/3%) of the members present at a business meeting for such a purpose vote in favor of its acceptance.

Section 2: This Constitution may be amended, altered, or repealed by a two-thirds (66 2/3%) vote of the members present at a business meeting; providing that such amendments, alteration, appeals, be submitted in writing to the Church Clerk who will present the proposed changes to the Church at least (30) thirty days prior to the time the vote is taken.

ARTICLE XI. ARTICLES OF FAITH

1963 Baptist Faith and Message as Amended in 1998 with Scriptural References is attached.

1963 Baptist Faith and Message

Adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention
May 9, 1963

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE

The 1962 session of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Francisco, California, adopted the following motion.

"Since the report of the Committee on Statement of Baptist Faith and Message was adopted in 1925, there have been various statements from time to time which have been made, but no overall statement which might be helpful at this time as suggested in Section 2 of that report, or introductory statement which might be used as an interpretation of the 1925 Statement.

"We recommend, therefore, that the president of this Convention be requested to call a meeting of the men now serving as presidents of the various state Conventions that would qualify as a member of the Southern Baptist Convention committee under Bylaw 18 to present to the Convention in Kansas City some similar statement which shall serve as information to the churches, and which may serve as guidelines to the various agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is understood that any group or individuals may approach this committee to be of service. The expenses of this committee shall be borne by the Convention Operating Budget."

Your committee thus constituted begs leave to present its report as follows:

Throughout its work your committee has been conscious of the contribution made by the statement of "The Baptist Faith And Message" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925. It quotes with approval its affirmation that "Christianity is supernatural in its origin and history. We repudiate every theory of religion which denies the supernatural elements in our faith."

Furthermore, it concurs in the introductory "statement of the historic Baptist conception of the nature and function of confessions of faith in our religious and denominational life." It is, therefore, quoted in full as part of this report to the Convention.

(1) That they constitute a consensus of opinion of some Baptist body, large or small, for the general instruction and guidance of our own people and others concerning those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us. They are not intended to add anything to the simple conditions of salvation revealed in the New Testament, viz., repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

(2) That we do not regard them as complete statements of our faith, having any quality of finality or infallibility. As in the past so in the future Baptists should hold themselves free to revise their statements of faith as may seem to them wise and expedient at any time.

(3) That any group of Baptists, large or small have the inherent right to draw up for themselves and publish to the world a confession of their faith whenever they may think it advisable to do so.

(4) That the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Confessions are only guides in interpretation, having no authority over the conscience.

(5) That they are statements of religious convictions, drawn from the Scriptures, and are not to be used to hamper freedom of thought or investigation in other realms of life."

The 1925 Statement recommended "the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, revised at certain points, and with some additional articles growing out of certain needs ..." Your present committee has adopted the same pattern. It has sought to build upon the structure of the 1925 Statement, keeping in mind the "certain needs" of our generation. At times it has reproduced sections of the Statement without change. In other instances it has substituted words for clarity or added sentences for emphasis. At certain points it has combined articles, with minor changes in wording, to endeavor to relate certain doctrines to each other. In still others e.g., "God" and "Salvation" it has sought to bring together certain truths contained throughout the 1925 Statement in order to relate them more clearly and concisely. In no case has it sought to delete from or to add to the basic contents of the 1925 Statement.

Baptists are a people who profess a living faith. This faith is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Therefore, the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is Jesus Christ whose will is revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

A living faith must experience a growing understanding of truth and must be continually interpreted and related to the needs of each new generation. Throughout their history Baptist bodies, both large and small, have issued statements of faith which comprise a consensus of their beliefs. Such statements have never been regarded as complete, infallible statements of faith, nor as official creeds carrying mandatory authority. Thus this generation of Southern Baptists is in historic succession of intent and purpose as it endeavors to state for its time and theological climate those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us.

Baptists emphasize the soul's competency before God, freedom in religion, and the priesthood of the believer. However, this emphasis should not be interpreted to mean that there is an absence of certain definite doctrines that Baptists believe, cherish, and with which they have been and are now closely identified.

It is the purpose of this statement of faith and message to set forth certain teachings which we believe.

Herschel H. Hobbs, Chairman Howard M. Reaves Ed. J. Packwood C.Z. Holland W.B. Timberlake C.V. Koons Malcolm B. Knight Dick H. Hail, Jr. Charles R. Walker Walter R. Davis Garth Pybas V.C. Kruschwitz Luther B. Hall Robert Woodward Douglas Hudgins Paul Weber, Jr. R.A. Long Nane Starnes C. Hoge Hockensmith Hugh R. Bumpas David G. Anderson E. Warren Rust James H. Landes R.P. Downey

I. THE SCRIPTURES

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of 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. 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. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

Ex 24:4; De 4:1-2; 17:19; Jos 8:34
Psa 19:7-10; 119:11, 89, 105, 140
Isa 34:16; 40:8; Jer 15:16; 36:1-32
Mat 5:17-18; 22:29; Lu 21:33; 24:44-46
Joh 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Ac 2:16; 17:11
Rom 15:4; 16:25-26; 2Ti 3:15-17
Heb 1:1-2; 4:12; 1Pe 1:25; 2Pe 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. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.

The eternal 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 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.

Gen 1:1; 2:7; Ex 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11; 20:1
Lev 22:2; De 6:4; 32:6; 1Ch 29:10; Psa 19:1-3
Isa 43:3, 15; 64:8; Jer 10:10; 17:13
Mat 6:9; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11
John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7
Rom 8:14-15; 1Co 8:6; Gal 4:6; Eph 4:6
Col 1:15; 1Ti 1:17; Heb 11:6; 12:9; 1Pe 1:17; 1Jo 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 the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His 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, partaking of the nature of God and of man, and 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.

Gen 18:1; Psalm 2:7; 110:1; Isa 7:14; 53:1-12
Mat 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16, 27
Mat 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
John 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
Rom 1; 3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3, 34; 10:4
1Co 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8, 24-28; 2Co 5:19-21
Gal 4:4-5; Eph 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Php 2:5-11
Col 1:13-22; 2:9; 1Th 4:14-18; 1Ti 2:5-6; 3:16
Tit 2:13-14; Heb 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28
Heb 9:12-15, 24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1Pe 2:21-25; 3:22
1Jo 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2Jo 7-9
Rev 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. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. 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 assurance of God to 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.

Gen 1:2; Jud 14:6; Job 26:13; Psa 51:11; 139:7
Isa 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32
Mat 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mk 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 Acts 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6
Rom 8:9-11, 14-16, 26-27; 1Co 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11
Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1Th 5:19
1Ti 3:16; 4:1; 2Ti 1:14; 3:16; Heb 9:8, 14
2Pe 1:21; 1Jo 4:13; 5:6-7; Rev 1:10; 22:17

III. MAN

Man was created by the special act of God, in His own image, and is the crowning work of His 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, and as soon as they are capable of moral action 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 man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Gen 1:26-30; 2:5, 7, 18-22; 3; 9:6
Psa 1:1-6; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isa 6:5; Jer 17:5
Matt 16:26; Acts 17:26-31
Rom 1:19-32; 3:10-18, 23; 5:6, 12, 19; 6:6
Rom 7:14-25; 8:14-18, 29; 1Co 1:21-31; 15:19, 21-22
Eph 2:1-22; Col 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, sanctification, and glorification.

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.

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 into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

B. 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 perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

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

Gen 3:15; Ex 3:14-17; 6:2-8
Mat 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
John 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31
Acts 17:30-31; 20:32; Rom 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3
Rom 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18; 29-39; 10:9-10, 13
Rom 13:11-14; 1Cor 1:18, 30; 6:19-20; 15:10
2Co 5:17-20; Gal 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15
Eph 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Php 2:12-13; Col 1:9-22; 3:1
1Th 5:23-24; 2Tim 1:12; Titus 2:11-14
Heb 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8, 14
James 2:14-26; 1Pe 1:2-23; 1Jo 1:6-2:11
Rev 3:20; 21:1-22:5

V. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, 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 a 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, 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.

Gen 12:1-3; Ex 19:5-8; 1Sa 8:4-7, 19-22
Isa 5:1-7; Jer 31:31
Mat 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
John 15:16; 17:6, 12, 17-18; Acts 20:32
Rom 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7, 26-36
1Co 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Eph 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11
Col 1:12-14; 2Th 2:13-14; 2Ti 1:12; 2:10, 19
Heb 11:39-12:2; 1Pe 1:2-5, 13; 2:4-10
1Jo 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2

VI. THE CHURCH

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation members are equally responsible. Its Scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.

Mat 16:15-19; 18:15-20
Acts 2:41-42, 47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23, 27
Acts 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Rom 1:7
1Co 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12
Eph 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11, 21; 5:22-32
Php 1:1; Col 1:18; 1Ti 3:1-15; 4:14

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 Lords 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.

Mat 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mk 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
Rom 6:3-5; 1Co 10:16, 21; 11:23-29; Col 2:12

VIII. THE LORD'S DAY

The first day of the week is the Lords Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, and by refraining from worldly amusements, and resting from secular employments, work of necessity and mercy only being excepted.

Ex 20:8-11; Mat 12:1-12; 28:1; Mk 2:27-28; 16:1-7
Luke 24:1-3, 33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1, 19-28
Acts 20:7; 1Co 16:1-2; Col 2:16; 3:16; Rev 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.

Gen 1:1; Isa 9:6-7; Jer 23:5-6
Mat 3:2; 4:8-10, 23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29
Mk 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32
Luke 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36
Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Rom 5:17; 8:19
1Co 15:24-28; Col 1:13; Heb 11:10, 16; 12:28
1Pe 2:4-10; 4:13; Rev 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.

Isa 2:4; 11:9; Mat 16:27; 18:8-9
Mat 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
Luke 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3
Acts 1:11; 17:31; Rom 14:10; 1Co 4:5
1Co 15:24-28, 35-58; 2Co 5:10; Php 3:20-21
Col 1:5; 3:4; 1Th 4:14-18; 5:1; 2Th 1:7; 2:1-17
1Ti 6:14; 2Ti 4:1, 8; Tit 2:13; Heb 9:27-28
James 5:8; 2Pe 3:7; 1Jo 2:28; 3:2
Jude 14; Rev 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. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Gen 12:1-3; Ex 19:5-6; Isa 6:1-8
Mat 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19
Mat 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
Rom 10:13-15; Eph 3:1-11; 1Th 1:8; 2Ti 4:5
Heb 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1Pe 2:4-10; Rev 22:17

XII. EDUCATION

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 schools 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.

De 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Neh 8:1-8; Job 28:28
Psa 19:7; 119:11; Pro 3:13; 4:1-10; 8:1-7, 11; 15:14
Ecc 7:19; Mat 5:2; 7:24; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40
1Co 1:18-31; Eph 4:11-16; Php 4:8; Col 2:3, 8-9
1Ti 1:3-7; 2Ti 2:15; 3:14-17; Heb 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 Redeemers cause on earth.

Gen 14:20; Lev 27:30-32; De 8:18; Mal 3:8-12
Mat 6:1-4, 19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29
Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47
Acts 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Ro 6:6-22; 12:1-2
1Co 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2Co 8-9; 12:15
Php 4:10-19; 1Pe 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.

Ex 17:12; 18:17; Jud 7:21; Ezr 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15
Ne 4; 8:1-5; Mat 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20
Mk 2:3; Luke 10:1; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1; 4:31-37; 13:2-3
Acts 15:1-35; 1Co 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2Co 8:1-9:15
Gal 1:6-10; Eph 4:1-16; Php 1:15-18

XV. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life 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 Christ Jesus. The Christian should oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. 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.

Ex 20:3-17; Lev 6:2-5; De 10:12; 27:17
Psalm 101:5; Mic 6:8; Zech 8:16
Mat 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35
Mk 1:29-34, 2:3; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25
John 15:12; 17:15; Rom 12-14; 1Co 5:9-10; 6:1-7
1Co 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Gal 3:26-28; Eph 6:5-9
Col 3:12-17; 1Th 3:12; Phm 1:1-25; Jas 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.

Isa 2:4; Mat 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38
Rom 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Heb 12:14; Jas 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.

Gen 1:27; 2:7; Mat 6:6-7, 24; 16:26; 22:21
John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Rom 6:1-2; 13:1-7
Gal 5:1, 13; Php 3:20; 1Ti 2:1-2; Jas 4:12
1Pe 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19

XVIII. THE FAMILY (Added in 1998)

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 for 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.

Ge 1:26-28; 2:18-25; 3:1-20; Ex 20:12; De 6:4-9; Jos 24:15
1Sa 1:26-28; Ps 78:1-8; 127:1-4; 128:1-6; 139:13-16
Pro 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24
Pro 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15
Pro 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31
Ec 4:9-12; 9:9; Mal 2:14-16
Mt 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9
Mr 10:6-12; Ro 1:18-32; 1Co 7:1-16
Eph 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col 3:18-21; 1Ti 5:14; 2Ti 1:3-5
Tit 2:3-5; Heb 13:4; 1Pe 3:1-7