

Harmony Baptist Church
Monroe, Georgia

CONSTITUTION

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PREAMBLE:

We declare and establish this Constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, so this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the Holy Scriptures and for the purpose of preserving the liberties of each individual member of this Church and the freedom of action of this body of believers with respect to its relation to other churches of the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE I. – NAME:

This body, having been constituted as Harmony Baptist Church on November 27, 1886, became known as the Harmony Baptist Church, Walton County, Georgia.

ARTICLE II. – OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE:

The object and purpose of this body shall be to win souls in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to proclaim His Gospel and practice His teachings, to promote the spiritual and moral welfare of its members, to advance and promote the Christian faith and religion, and to help, as far as practical, the needy and suffering persons within the sphere of its influence.

It shall be the denominational policy of this Church, to the fullest possible extent consistent with the independent character of a Baptist Church, to support all missionary and benevolent undertakings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Georgia Baptist Convention and the Appalachee Baptist Association.

To place our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, believing in the teachings and practices of Baptists and in those great distinctive principles for which they have ever stood, we therefore, band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and adopt for our government, plan of worship and service, our Statement of Faith, Articles of Faith and Covenant.

ARTICLE III. – STATEMENT AND ARTICLES OF FAITH:

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in the one true and living God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Scripture of the Old and New Testament are the work of God and are the only sufficient rule of Faith and practice. We believe that the Scriptures are most perfectly interpreted by the life of Christ, the Living Word of God.

We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of Baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation. The ordinances of the Church are Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Harmony Baptist Church hereby subscribes to the doctrinal statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, May 1963.

Preamble:

- (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 Baptist 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 Baptist 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.

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 Savior, 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 Savior, 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 believers faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believers 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, (Supplemented by HBC to state: unless physically handicapped or physically impaired.)

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 Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, and 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

ARTICLE IV. – CHURCH COVENANT:

"Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ."

"We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian Love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality, to sustain its worship ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations."

"We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of, and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; and/or the illegal use of chemical substances in any form; to use our influence to combat the spread of pornography; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior."

"We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay."

"We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word."

ARTICLE V. – POLITY:

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Southern Baptist churches. This Church shall be affiliated with The Appalachee Baptist Association, The Georgia Baptist Convention, and The Southern Baptist Convention and shall, insofar as possible cooperate with these groups and support their programs.

ARTICLE VI. – CONFLICT:

There shall be no worship, education, services by members or fellowship conducted which is in conflict with this constitution. The church shall not conduct any business transaction contrary to the Constitution.

All rules, regulations, bylaws and policies previously approved, if any, by this Church, in conflict with this Constitution are each and all hereby repealed, set aside and superseded.

This Constitution shall be and is, hereby established as the sole “Constitution” for this Church.

No rules, regulations, bylaws or policies may be established which conflict with this Constitution.

In the event of conflict between this Constitution and the Church’s ByLaws, the provisions of the Constitution shall take precedence.

ARTICLE VII. – AMENDMENTS:

Amendments to this Constitution shall be made by following procedures stated in By-Laws, Article IX, Section 3.

ARTICLE VIII. – QUORUM:

A quorum shall be defined for purposes of all Church congregational conference meetings as a minimum of thirty five Church members, eighteen years or older. The number of Church members present shall be determined by a show of hands and counted by the moderator or their designee.

ARTICLE IX. – INDEMNITY:

The Church shall indemnify any current or former Trustee, Officer, Employee or Agent of the Church and their heirs, successors, and assigns against any and all expenses, including amounts paid upon judgments, attorneys’ fees, and amounts paid in settlements, actually and reasonably incurred by such persons in connection with the defense or settlement of any claim, action, suit, or proceeding in which they, or any of them, are made parties, or party, or which may be asserted against them or any of them, by reason of having been Trustees, Officers, Employees or Agent of the Church. Such indemnity shall not be owed or paid by the Church with respect to: (a) any matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged in such action, suit, or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his or her duties as Trustee, Officer, Employee, or Agent (b) any matter settled or compromised, unless the Church has consented in advance to such settlement or compromise.