

# CONSTITUTION

## CORNERSTONE BIBLE CHURCH OF SANFORD, NC

10/19/23

### 1) PREAMBLE

Having decided to constitute<sup>1</sup> a church in the region of Sanford, NC, it is recognized that the organization of this church must be documented in clear, unambiguous terms. Encoding such terms will allow local believers to covenant together for the cause of Christ. For this reason, the value and practicality of a written constitution is acknowledged and has resulted in the following church constitution.

### 2) NAME

The name of the church will be “Cornerstone Bible Church of Sanford.” (hereafter, CBC)

### 2) PURPOSE STATEMENT

CBC exists to worship God and promote His name and glory on the earth.<sup>2</sup>

### 3) MISSION STATEMENT

CBC will glorify God by joyfully:

- evangelizing – introducing Him to those who don't know Him
- instructing – renewing the minds of those who know Him
- honoring – living life to please Him.

CBC holds that the church’s mission (privilege) is to worship God, to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to disciple those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.<sup>3</sup> The discipleship process includes (but is not limited to) the regular gathering of believers for worship, Bible instruction, participating in the ordinances (baptism and the Lord’s Supper),<sup>4</sup> and fellowship. The goal of discipleship is to develop disciples of Christ who model biblical truth by loving God, loving the brethren, and loving one’s neighbor.<sup>5</sup> Knowing the irreplaceable role of the church in God’s plan of redemption, CBC will strive to plant local, autonomous churches, both at home and abroad.

### 4) CORE VALUES

- **Truth** – The Bible is divinely revealed truth. Therefore, we believe that understanding the Bible will help us understand God, ourselves and the created world we live in. This drives us to preach

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1 To constitute means to establish a set (or sub-set). The act of constituting forms a set, where a set did not previously exist. In the case of the church, constituting takes place wherever a group of people profess Jesus as the Christ. Such a group of people now form a set where, a set did not previously exist.

2 CBC is organized exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes, including but not limited to, worship, discipleship and evangelism. CBC is organized within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law). Apart from remuneration given to CBC staff, no member of CBC will profit financially from the church’s assets.

3 Mt 28:18-20

4 Exo 3:12; Jos 1:8; Psalm 1, 112:1, 119; Mt 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26, 14:25-26; Php 3:2-3; 2 Tim 2:1; Rev 15:4

5 Mt 22:37-40; John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:21

and teach verse by verse so that we grow in our understanding of both the details and the whole of the Bible. Then our appreciation of and love for God will increase and our lives will be shaped for our good and for His glory.

- **Identity** – The Christian is God's child. This privileged identity must be understood and constantly reaffirmed. This is done as God's children consistently gather as a church family for fellowship, encouragement and instruction. Such gatherings positively impact how the Christian thinks, speaks and acts in regard to God, himself and others.
- **Purpose** – The mission is comprehensive. As we seek God together and individually, He will gradually and steadily transform each of us into the image of His Son. As He does, we will shine as gospel lights in our homes, churches, workplaces, and communities. Wherever our God takes us, we will encounter the joyous rewards of living as full-time ambassadors for our King.

## 5) STATEMENT OF FAITH

Everyone has a worldview. A worldview is one's core beliefs that determine priorities, define relationships (both to God and to others), interprets the meaning of ideas and events, and justifies one's actions. Thus adopting a particular worldview results in a life lived in a particular manner. This is true for both individuals as well as constituted groups. As a church, CBC is a constituted group whose worldview is drawn from Scripture. Thus CBC's worldview (it's core beliefs) are presented in the following Statement of Faith:

### **Bible**

CBC affirms that the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments were written by holy men of God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> Thus the Scriptures were verbally (every word), plerarily (the whole), and inerrantly (free from error) inspired by God in the original manuscripts.<sup>7</sup> This divine inspiration extended equally and fully to all the literary types employed by the biblical writers (narrative, poetry, law, prophecy, etc). The Holy Spirit's work of superintending the biblical authors ensured the inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures<sup>8</sup> without compromising the humanity of the authors. This unique compound of divine and human effort resulted in God's revelation in understandable, human literature.<sup>9</sup> To state this positively, God's revelation to man was captured using ordinary and accessible elements of written language (grammar and syntax). To state this negatively, God's revelation to man was *not* captured in a manner that violated the ordinary and accessible elements of written language. As such, Scripture is understandable, albeit through concerted effort. Furthermore, CBC holds that Scripture is comprehensive, sufficient, and final. Mankind has no need of further revelation from God. Through the Scriptures, God has fully equipped man with all the information necessary for life and godliness.<sup>10</sup>

### **God**

CBC affirms monotheism; that there is only one God<sup>11</sup> who possesses all of the following

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6 Luke 24:44; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:19-21

7 2 Sam 7:28; Prov 30:5; Mt 24:35; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18; 2 Pt 3:14-16 Divine inspiration does not extend to copies of manuscripts, though God providentially preserved His word through an overwhelming abundance of manuscript copies

8 Psalm 19:7, 119:89, 105; Mt 5:18

9 Deut 30:11-14; Isa 45:19; Rom 1:1-2

10 Deut 4:2; 2 Pet 1:3; Rev 22:18-19

11 Isa 46:9

attributes. God is eternal, meaning His existence is endless having no beginning and no end.<sup>12</sup> God is immutable (unchanging)<sup>13</sup> and infinite (not bound by time or space).<sup>14</sup> God is holy, being free from all evil and entirely pure.<sup>15</sup> God is love, which means to seek the highest good of another.<sup>16</sup> God is omnipotent (all-mighty), meaning He possesses the power to do anything that is consistent with His nature.<sup>17</sup> God is omnipresent, being near throughout all of creation.<sup>18</sup> God is omniscient, meaning He constantly knows every aspect of both the physical and spiritual realms.<sup>19</sup> God is righteous, meaning His actions are always in agreement with His law. With regard to creation, God is righteous in that He always decrees and dispenses correct moral judgments.<sup>20</sup> God is sovereign. He alone is the highest authority and governs history according to His incontestable will.<sup>21</sup> God is true. Everything about His being is in accord with factual reality. God only conveys that which is right, making Him wholly consistent and trustworthy.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, CBC affirms that God is Trinitarian.<sup>23</sup> He exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity possesses all of the aforementioned attributes. Therefore, all three are equally worthy of worship, trust and obedience. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are differentiated by their past, present and future actions. Thus, CBC declares the following:

God the Father – God the Father created all things through the agency of His Son.<sup>24</sup> He rules all of creation and guides all things according to His sovereign and perfect will.<sup>25</sup> Presently, the Father is in the process of redeeming creation to glorify Himself.<sup>26</sup> This process includes graciously calling/drawing sinners out of their innate rebellion and reconciling them to Himself.<sup>27</sup> When the redemption of creation is near, God the Father will pour out His wrath on mankind to prepare the earth for the reign of His Son.<sup>28</sup> When redemption is complete, the Father will rule over and live with the angels and those whom He has redeemed in an eternal, sinless existence.<sup>29</sup>

God the Son – CBC affirms God the Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus was the agent of creation and is the promised offspring of Eve that crushed Satan’s head through His death and resurrection.<sup>30</sup> His humanity began when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary.<sup>31</sup> Thus He was born fully God and fully man.<sup>32</sup> As a human, He was tempted in every way yet remained sinless.<sup>33</sup> Jesus accomplished man’s redemption by wholly identifying with humanity and offering Himself as the

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12 Psalm 90:2; Isa 57:15; Heb 1:10-12  
13 Psalm 102:25-27; Mal 3:6; James 1:17  
14 1 Ki 8:27; Jer 23:24; Acts 17:24-27  
15 Lev 11:44-45; Psalm 99:9; Isa 40:25; 1 Pet 1:14-16  
16 Eph 2:4-8; Heb 12:4-7; 1 John 4:8  
17 Gen 17:1; Ex. 6:2-3; Isa 46:10; 2 Cor. 6:16-18; Rev 1:8; 19:6  
18 Psalm 139:7-12; Pr 15:3; Jer 23:24  
19 Job 12:13, 21:22; Psalm 147:4-5; Isa 40:13-14  
20 Psalm 11:7; 19:9; Acts 17:31  
21 Deut 10:17; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 1:5  
22 2 Ch 15:3; John 7:28; 1 John 5:20; Rev 3:7, 6:10  
23 Mt 3:16-17  
24 Gen 1:1-31; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 3:9  
25 Mat 5:45; 1 Pet 5:11; Jude 1:24-25  
26 Isa 65:17; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1  
27 Rom 1:7, 8:29-30; 1 Cor 1:9; Gal 1:6; 1 Pet 1:15  
28 Col 3:6; Rev 19:15-16  
29 Rev 7:11-12, 11:15, 21:2-4  
30 Gen 3:15; Col 1:16; Heb 2:14  
31 Isa 7:14; Mat 1:20  
32 John 1:1-3; Phil 2:5-8; Col 2:9  
33 Heb 4:15

necessary sacrifice for sins.<sup>34</sup> Jesus was resurrected from the dead and ascended on high where He presently sits at the right hand of the Father.<sup>35</sup> He is currently acting as the only mediator between God and man.<sup>36</sup> Jesus is our Advocate and the head of the church.<sup>37</sup> He will one day return to earth in bodily form.<sup>38</sup>

God the Holy Spirit – CBC affirms God the Holy Spirit.<sup>39</sup> He eternally exists as a distinct person and gave life to creation.<sup>40</sup> The Holy Spirit was the agent of divine revelation from God to man.<sup>41</sup> This activity ceased with the completion of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit was also the agent of miracles, signs and wonders.<sup>42</sup> The purpose of miracles, signs and wonders was to affirm those whom God had chosen to deliver divine revelation (to speak or write on His behalf).<sup>43</sup> Since the purpose of miracles, signs and wonders was to affirm God's spokesmen and since divine revelation ceased with the close of the New Testament, miracles, signs and wonders are no longer necessary. Currently, He is the agent of salvation, regenerating spiritually dead men so that the Father can draw them to the Son.<sup>44</sup> The Holy Spirit indwells, seals, and baptizes into the Body of Christ all those who have placed their faith in Christ.<sup>45</sup> He also fills and empowers every believer so that they may live a life that pleases God.<sup>46</sup> He is the divine Teacher who transforms believers by enabling them to grasp the significance of Scripture and apply it practically.<sup>47</sup> The Holy Spirit also intercedes before the throne of God on behalf of believers, offering prayers when man does not know how to pray.<sup>48</sup>

### **Sin**

CBC affirms that sin is deviating from the divine standard of holiness, in either thought or action.<sup>49</sup> Sin stems from the fallen human heart.<sup>50</sup> It is the root cause of all that is wrong in the world and the only explanation for the steady decline of the entire creation.<sup>51</sup> It is (fundamentally) rebellion against God and universally practiced by all mankind.<sup>52</sup> The manifestation of man's sin is refusing God and His will in order to follow his own self-serving desires and preferences.<sup>53</sup> Sin taints every aspect of man, leaving him spiritually dead unable to do anything of spiritual value.<sup>54</sup>

### **Satan**

CBC affirms that Satan is the author of sin.<sup>55</sup> His beginning was a created angel adorned with stunning beauty.<sup>56</sup> He later became prideful, rebelled against God and was subsequently banished

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34 1 Cor 15:3-4  
35 Rom 8:34  
36 1 Tim 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Heb 7:25  
37 Col 1:18  
38 Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 1:10; 2 Thess 1:10  
39 Acts 5:3-4  
40 Gen 1:2; Job 33:4  
41 Acts 1:16; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pt 1:20-21  
42 Mt 12:28; Rom 15:18-19; Heb 2:4  
43 Exo 4:1-9; John 14:17; Acts 2:1-22; 1 Cor 6:19, 12:13; Heb 2:1-4  
44 John 3:5-8, 6:44; Titus 3:5  
45 Eph 4:30  
46 Rom 8:6-14, 14:17; Gal 5:22:23;  
47 1 Cor 2:14-16  
48 Rom 8:26-27  
49 Gen 6:5; Psalm 14:1; Ecc 7:20; 1 Jn 3:4  
50 Gen 6:12; Mt 15:19  
51 Rom 8:19-22; 1 John 5:17; Jam 1:15  
52 1 Ki 8:46; 2 Ki 17:21; Rom 3:10-12  
53 Rom 1:16-32  
54 Job 14:4; Isa 64:6; Rom 8:6-7  
55 1 John 3:8  
56 Eze 28:11-14

from heaven.<sup>57</sup> Thereafter, Satan led Adam and Eve into transgression by provoking them to likewise rebel against God.<sup>58</sup> This action subjected Adam and Eve and every future generation to sin and the power of Satan.<sup>59</sup> Satan is the enemy of God and the father of lies.<sup>60</sup> Satan's destructive influence in the world will continue until he is permanently cast into the lake of fire.<sup>61</sup>

### **Man**

CBC affirms that on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation God created Adam and Eve in His image and likeness as a unique part of creation. At that time, they experienced the fullness of human life by living in harmony with their Creator.<sup>62</sup> This harmony, however, ended when Adam and Eve fell under the power of sin through the temptation of Satan (the devil) and the ensuing disobedience of Adam.<sup>63</sup> From that point, Adam and Eve were spiritually dead, cut off from the spiritual lifeline that extends from the Creator.<sup>64</sup> This condition (spiritual death) rendered Adam and Eve unable (and unwilling) to be reconciled to God. Thereafter they began producing offspring, all of whom were marred by sin and spiritually dead.<sup>65</sup> This is mankind's universal heritage. Thus all have been rendered unable (and unwilling) to be reconciled to God.<sup>66</sup> In this condition, mankind is under the just condemnation of God without defense or excuse and rightly destined to eternal punishment in hell.<sup>67</sup>

### **Salvation**<sup>68</sup>

God's means of salvation - CBC affirms that the risen Lord Jesus is God's means of salvation. Man's spiritual death stems from his inborn sin nature and results in sins committed against God. And since God is just,<sup>69</sup> all sin must be punished.<sup>70</sup> As the rightful authority over all creation, God determined that the punishment for sin would be eternal separation from Him in Hell.<sup>71</sup> However, God earnestly desires to save (rescue) sinners from their predicament and to live eternally with them.<sup>72</sup> In anticipation of this situation, God determined from eternity past to offer a perfect sacrifice to pay sin. Being motivated by grace and love, God came in the person of Jesus Christ, took the sins of mankind upon Himself, and surrendered His life to God the Father.<sup>73</sup> Jesus became the perfect sacrificial payment for sin. His resurrection three days later affirmed Jesus and all He taught about Himself...His sacrifice was sufficient, sin's debt had been paid in full.<sup>74</sup> This is God's means of salvation and is applied to all who believe in Jesus, repent of self-rule and follow (live for) Jesus as Lord.<sup>75</sup>

God's grace in salvation - CBC affirms that before creation, God elected some for salvation based

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57 Eze 28:15-19

58 Gen 3:1-7

59 Rom 5:12; 1 John 5:19

60 John 8:44

61 Rev 20:10

62 Gen 1:26-31

63 Gen 3:1-24

64 Gen 2:16-17

65 Eph 2:1-2

66 Psalm 14:1-3, 51:5; Jer 17:9; John 3:19, 5:40, Rom 5:18

67 Rom 1:18-20; Eph 2:1-3

68 The term "salvation" denotes personal rescue from the penalty and unrestrained power of sin

69 Deut 32:4

70 Exo 34:6-7

71 Mt 23:33

72 Isa 1:18; Eze 18:23; Mic 7:18; Luke 13:34

73 Heb 10:5-9

74 Acts 17:30-31; Eph 1:18-23

75 Mt 16:24; Luke 14:27; John 14:15; Acts 2:36-39

on divine foreknowledge directed toward individual sinners.<sup>76</sup> Foreknowledge is God's saving love imparted to the elect, whom He would in turn save from eternal condemnation.<sup>77</sup> The salvation of the elect comes about when God exercises His grace. He graciously regenerates, calls and draws the elect to Himself through the work of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of the gospel.<sup>78</sup> The elect will thereafter express faith in and repentance toward the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>79</sup> This process results in justification, whereby the elect are given the righteousness of Christ.<sup>80</sup> Justification binds God and the elect together in the New Covenant in Christ. And by God's nature as covenant keeper<sup>81</sup>, the elect are kept by the power of God, permanently born into His family, legally adopted as an heir of God in Christ and sealed with the Holy Spirit.<sup>82</sup> There is no possibility of a believer losing his salvation.<sup>83</sup> Thus salvation is wrought by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.<sup>84</sup>

### **The Church**

CBC affirms that God has always (in every age) had a contingent of people on earth whom He calls His own. God's people have always been marked by faith in God, submission to God, and worship for God. Since Christ's first coming, God's people have been marked by faith in Christ, submission to Christ and worship for Christ. People defined by the latter are collectively known as the church.<sup>85</sup>

The church was eternally in the mind of God and initiated by Jesus Christ.<sup>86</sup> Thus, the church is not a man-made institution and draws its structure and purpose from the Bible. It began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (50 days after Jesus' death on the cross). On that day, the gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed and those who believed and repented of their sins were water baptized and became the initial members of the church.<sup>87</sup> This set the precedent for all subsequent believers, who likewise repent, believe and are baptized. Believers throughout the world comprise the church, also known as the body of Christ.<sup>88</sup>

Scripture defines the relationship between Christ and the church in three ways. 1. As a bride betrothed to her husband.<sup>89</sup> This means that the church's fidelity is toward Christ above all earthly powers and pursuits.<sup>90</sup> 2. As the body of Christ.<sup>91</sup> The church is the present manifestation of Christ tasked with bearing His name and glorifying Him in the world until He returns.<sup>92</sup> 3. As a slave joyfully submitting to his benevolent Master. The church is most content when doing the will of her Lord, Jesus Christ.<sup>93</sup>

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76 Rom 8:29

77 Some believe that God's foreknowledge is the result of His pre-creation survey of human history in order to discover who would exercise saving faith. Based on this vision into the future, God determined to save those who would believe. CBC does not hold this position.

78 John 1:12-13, 3:3-5, 5:24, 6:39, 10:27-29; Eph 2:1-9; 1 Pt 1:3

79 Acts 17:30; Rom 2:4, 3:21-25, 28; 2 Cor 7:9-10; Eph 2:8

80 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9

81 1 Ki 8:23

82 Rom 8:15-17; Eph 1:13-14; 1 Pt 1:5

83 Rom 8:38-39

84 Acts 4:12; Rom 10:9-11

85 Jer 31:7; Rom 9:25-26, 11:1-5

86 Mt 16:13-18; Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:6-10; col 1:25-26

87 Acts 2

88 Acts 2:37-41; Rom 16:25-27; 1 Cor 12:12-14; Col 1:24-26

89 2 Cor 11:1-2; Eph 5:25-32

90 Acts 5:26-29; 1 Cor 6:15-17

91 Rom 12:2-5

92 Mt 5:14-16; Phil 2:14-15; Col 3:16-17; 1 Pt 2:12

93 John 14:15; Col 1:9-10

Finally, the worldwide church is composed of small congregations. These congregations are known as local churches. Biblical support for the local church comes from greetings to churches<sup>94</sup> and from overt statements that affirm the co-existence of churches.<sup>95</sup> Each local church is an autonomous organism with Christ as its head<sup>96</sup> and a minimum of one ordained elder.<sup>97</sup> The local church may also have deacons, although they are not necessary.<sup>98</sup>

## 6) ORDINANCES

CBC believes the New Testament stipulates baptism and the Lord's supper as the only two ordinances to be observed in the church.<sup>99</sup>

### **Baptism**

CBC believes in and practices believers baptism because the New Testament records only the baptisms of those who profess Jesus Christ.<sup>100</sup> While a profession of faith in Jesus Christ is a personal/private matter,<sup>101</sup> baptism is a public ceremony with solemn implications. Baptism is a symbolic portrayal of new life.<sup>102</sup> Submersion into the water pictures the death and burial of a life once astray from Christ<sup>103</sup> and rising from the water pictures a new life now committed to Christ.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, baptism is one's open declaration of a life-long obligation to Jesus Christ, His word and His church.

The New Testament also records baptisms of people whose profession of Christ later proved to be insincere.<sup>105</sup> In light of this ongoing possibility, the church must practice its baptismal authority<sup>106</sup> with discretion. The church is wise to admonish baptism candidates as to the gravity of baptism. To that end, CBC requires an elder interview prior to baptism, at which the extensive biblical demands of new life in Christ will be presented.<sup>107</sup> Baptism will be granted to those who acknowledge these demands and agree to live by them.

When a baptism candidate is a dependent child, the elder interview will include the child's parents/guardians. The purpose is to encourage parents/guardians in their primary discipleship responsibility of the baptized child.

There are divergent views on baptism among Christian denominations due to disagreements in the meaning and/or purpose of baptism. Such divergence can raise challenges when a Christian seeks membership at a different church. When visitors seek CBC membership, prior baptisms are addressed as follows:

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94 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; Rev 2:1, 8, 12, 18, 3:1, 7, 14

95 Acts 15:41; Rom 16:4; 1 Cor 7:17; Gal 1:1-2

96 Eph 1:22, 5:23; Col 1:18

97 Acts 14:21-23; Titus 1:5

98 Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-13

99 Baptism: Mt 28:19; Acts 2:37-41, 8:12, 35-38, 9:17-18, 10:45-48; et al. The Lord's Supper: Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:15-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26

100 Acts 2:41, 8:12, 35-36, 9:17-20, 10:34-38, 16:14-15, et al.

101 Jn 20:31; Acts 2:38, 17:30; Rom 10:9-10

102 Rom 6:1-7

103 Isa 53:6

104 2 Cor 5:15

105 Acts 8:14-23, 20:30; 1 Tim 1:18-20, 6:20-21; 1 Jn 2:19

106 Matt 18:18, 28:19; 1 Pt 2:6

107 Two great commandments Matt 22:36-40, self-denial Matt 16:24, prayer Lk 18:1, Bible study Ps 1:1-3, evangelism Matt 28:18-20, family obligations Eph 5:22-6:4, submission to church authority Heb 13:17, commitment to and service in the local church Eph 4:14-16, separation from the world Jas 4:4, the likelihood of persecution Jn 15:18-20, the agony of God's transforming work Heb 12:3-6, et al.

- Child baptism – this may or may not warrant baptism. Child profession/baptism generally yields one of two results: a consistent life of faithfulness to Christ or years of indifference/rebellion toward Christ followed by repentance as an adult. In either case, one seeking CBC membership must decide the validity of his/her childhood profession and baptism. If the conclusion is that the child profession/baptism were not genuine, he/she should make a genuine profession of Christ and follow His command to be baptized. If the conclusion is that the child profession/baptism were genuine, no baptism is necessary for CBC membership.
- Protestant infant baptism (paedo-baptism) – CBC treasures its broad doctrinal agreement with a variety of protestant denominations. However, CBC disagrees with paedo-baptism due to an infant's inability to profess Christ. Therefore, CBC requires new members with a paedo-baptism to be baptized as a professing believer in Jesus Christ.
- Non-Protestant and heretical baptism – CBC considers illegitimate any baptism performed under false doctrines regarding Tri-unity and salvation. Baptisms must be in the name of Jesus, the eternal second member of the Triune God,<sup>108</sup> and into salvation by faith apart from works. Therefore, CBC requires new members with a non-protestant or heretical baptism to be baptized as a professing believer in Jesus Christ.

Finally, CBC believes that baptism is a precursor to church membership. At salvation, a repentant sinner becomes an eternal member of the world-wide body of Christ. Upon baptism, the new believer is to (in part) demonstrate his/her commitment to Christ by committing to a local church.<sup>109</sup> and participating in the work of ministry.<sup>110</sup> In the case of baptized dependent children, it is acknowledged that such lack the maturity to carry out the work of ministry. Therefore, church membership will be delayed until it is evident that the child has matured and possesses the seminal mental/spiritual faculties to participate in the work of ministry.

### **The Lord's Supper**

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper just prior to His arrest. As part of that special event, He prescribed a repeating celebration by all His disciples until He returns.<sup>111</sup> The Bible does not dictate a frequency for the Lord's Supper, but CBC will celebrate it as a gathered church at least once per month.

## **7) MEMBERSHIP**

CBC believes a roster of its members is important for three reasons. First, a roster encourages brothers and sisters in Christ to make a *biblical* commitment to a local church.<sup>112</sup> Christ called His children to love one another.<sup>113</sup> To love someone is to be concerned for his/her spiritual and physical well being. To carry out such love requires some measure of intimacy. Therefore, love demands that a relationship be initiated and maintained. Relationships of this sort cannot be

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<sup>108</sup> Mt 28:18-20

<sup>109</sup> Non-commitment to Christ's church raises concerns for one's commitment to Christ.

<sup>110</sup> making disciples (Matt 28:18-20), accountability (Heb 10:24-25; James 5:16), church discipline (Mt 18:15-17; 2 Cor 2:6), counseling (Rom 15:14; Gal 6:1), mutual submission (Eph 5:21), bearing one another's burdens (Gal 6:2), single-mindedness (1 Cor 1:10; Php 2:2), et al.

<sup>111</sup> Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:14-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26

<sup>112</sup> Jn 13:35; 1 Thess 4:9-10; 1 Jn 4:20-21

<sup>113</sup> Jn 13:34-35



harmonized with non-commitment, especially regarding the church. Being uncommitted to a local church keeps the body of Christ at a distance. Love does not keep its object at a distance.

The second reason CBC maintains a member roster is to protect the church from false converts and deceptive teachers. The New Testament is replete with warnings about false converts/teachers infiltrating the church.<sup>114</sup> To guard against this, the CBC membership process provides ample time for the church and prospective members to get acquainted. During this time, the salvation and doctrine of prospective members is assessed. While the salvation of a prospect must be dutifully affirmed, there are many variables that prevent rigid doctrinal affirmation. Allowance must be made so that believers within a doctrinal spectrum can join CBC. However, the doctrine of prospective members should be such that peace in the church is retained when prospects are welcomed as members.

The third reason CBC maintains a member roster is for the safety of the church. CBC stipulates that only members or their dependent children are allowed to serve in ministry. This promotes the integrity and safety of CBC ministries, especially in childcare. A roster also protects the congregation in the event that a disorderly individual must be legally restrained from CBC gatherings. A restraining order can be placed on anyone whose name is not on the CBC roster.

## 8) OFFICERS AND STAFF

CBC affirms two offices in the church; elder and deacon.

### **Elders:**

The book of Acts and the New Testament epistles stipulate and demonstrate the appointment of male leadership in the local church.<sup>115</sup> The terms used to describe leaders in the church are elder, bishop and shepherd.<sup>116</sup> All three terms are used to describe the same office or individual.<sup>117</sup> The combination of these terms defines the role of a church leader as one who feeds the flock with the word of God, offers spiritual guidance and watch care, and exercises loving oversight.

Scripture indicates a minimum of one elder in every church with the distinct possibility of multiple elders.<sup>118</sup> In light of this, CBC will make every effort to maintain at least one biblically qualified elder. However, there are two biblical reasons for a local church to maintain a plurality of elders. First, the book of Proverbs indicates that wise decisions are made through a community of counselors.<sup>119</sup> Second, the Scriptures warn of the distinct possibility of sin and apostasy arising from within the church, including its leaders.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, since there is wisdom in community decision making and to guard against sin/apostasy within church leadership, CBC will endeavor to maintain at least three biblically qualified elders. The elder board can exceed three if the needs of the CBC ministry demand it.

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<sup>114</sup> Mt 7:15; Acts 20:28-31; Gal 1:6-7; 2 Pt 2:1; 1 Jn 2:19; Jude; et al.

<sup>115</sup> Acts 14:23; 1Tim 2:12; Titus 1:5

<sup>116</sup> CBC generally uses the terms elder or pastor interchangeably in referring to leadership.

<sup>117</sup> Acts 20:17-28; 1 Pt 5:1-2

<sup>118</sup> Acts 14:23; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:5; 1 Pt 5:1

<sup>119</sup> Prov 12:15, 15:22, 20:18, 24:6. In the event that CBC has only one elder, he will strive to seek the counsel of mature CBC men when making decisions.

<sup>120</sup> Acts 20:30; 2 Pt 2:1; 1 John 2:19

### **Deacons:**

Deacons are male servants<sup>121</sup> in the church who meet specific, practical, ongoing needs of the church, allowing the elders to concentrate on the ministry of the Word and prayer.<sup>122</sup>

## **9) MEETINGS AND ADMINISTRATION**

CBC believes in gathering every Sunday morning for worship, biblical edification, and fellowship. These meetings will consist of (but are not limited to):

1. The proclamation of God's word. Since CBC holds that God's word contains everything needed for life and godliness,<sup>123</sup> a consistent effort will be made to understand it, proclaim it and apply it. A critical means of accomplishing this is to dedicate a significant portion of the Sunday morning worship service to the preaching of God's word. While CBC believes in and practices edification through small group Bible study and dialogue, we also believe in a time of edification without dialogue.<sup>124</sup> This is accomplished through Spirit-filled preaching and Spirit-filled listening.
2. Distinctly Christian, God-honoring music. Distinctly Christian music is identified as those pieces that were written by God's people, for God and for God's people (refer to CBC bylaws for music selection and performance policy).

In addition to the Sunday gathering, CBC believes in meeting regularly during the week. The book of Acts portrays the early church as people who were committed to Jesus and to each other.<sup>125</sup> They met frequently and developed relationships such that they knew each other's needs and were thus able to meet those needs. The epistles echo this pattern.<sup>126</sup> To promote this level of community within CBC, weekly group discipleship is part of covenant life at CBC (refer to CBC bylaws for weekday meetings policy).

CBC will also gather periodically throughout the calendar year<sup>127</sup> to discuss administrative issues such as ministry planning, budget, staff appointments/reduction, etc. These gatherings will be titled "family meetings" because CBC will gather as a family to discuss matters related to the CBC family.

## **10) CHURCH BUILDING**

Should the Lord bless CBC with its own property and building, the grounds will be used for worship and disciple making in accordance with the great commission.

1. Worship – this refers to the Sunday gatherings and special worship events
2. Prayer – corporate/group prayer meetings
3. Small groups – weekday discipleship gatherings

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121 1 Tim 3:12. Deacon's wives may serve with their husbands so long as they meet the qualifications listed in verse 11.

122 Acts 6:1-6

123 Josh 1:8; Job 23:12; Psalm 1:1-6, 19:7, 119:1, 2 Pt 1:1-3

124 Deut 1:1-5, 31, 10-13; Exo 24:1-7; Josh 8:30-35; 2 Ki 23:1-3; Neh 8:1-13, Isa 61:1; Mark 1:38, Luke 4:43; Acts 2:14-40; 3:12-26, 8:9-13, 11:19-21, 17:22-34, 18:4, 24-28, 1 Cor 1:17, 2:4-5, 14:1-33, 2 Tim 4:1-2.

125 Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35, 5:42

126 Rom 15:14; 1 Cor 12:22-25; Eph 4:25; 1 Pt 1:22-23; 1 John 3:13-16; et al.

127 CBC will hold at least 3 family meetings annually

4. Ministry – any short-term or long-term program<sup>128</sup> whose primary objective is to develop biblical skill(s) to be used in a local church.<sup>129</sup> Such ministries may include (but are not limited to) biblical instruction, biblical counseling/discipleship, church leadership development, apologetics/worldview, evangelism, etc.
5. Celebrations for CBC members<sup>130</sup> – weddings, funerals, church-wide fellowships, baptisms, baby dedications, etc.
6. Outreach – sporadic events where activities, food and fellowship are prepared by CBC for the community at large to enjoy. The purpose of outreach events is to tell the community about Christ and to extend an invitation to visit CBC.

It is the responsibility of the CBC elders to evaluate and unanimously approve all events/programs to be held on CBC grounds prior to their initiation. The elders will also supervise the events/programs on CBC grounds to ensure their continued biblical moorings and intent.

## 11) DISPUTE RESOLUTION

CBC believes that church members should resolve disputes through peaceful discussion, with forbearance and a spirit of yieldedness.<sup>131</sup> Such discussions will take place among members without calling on the secular legal system.<sup>132</sup> If a resolution cannot be attained, CBC members agree to seek third party arbitration. The arbitrator will be a non-CBC Christian man who is serving or has served as an elder<sup>133</sup> and who agrees with the CBC statement of faith. The decision of the third party arbitrator will be binding and final. Therefore, CBC members agree to refrain from filing lawsuits against CBC, its members and/or its leadership.

## 12) SOCIAL ISSUES

### Sexual orientation

CBC affirms that God created man and woman with distinct and permanent<sup>134</sup> sexual orientations. This diversity allows men and women to share physical intimacy in the God ordained covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. Therefore, by design and decree, physical relations are limited a man and a woman who have entered the biblical covenant of marriage. Attempting to reorient one's sex and/or participating in physical intimacy outside of the marriage covenant is a perversion of God's design and decree and thus sinful. Thus, CBC will only preside over marriages that acknowledge God's design and decree. In the same way, CBC grounds will only host marriages that acknowledge God's design and decree. However, no one involved with sexual perversion has sinned themselves beyond God's grace. His forgiveness of sin is offered to all. Hope, healing and restoration are available to all who call upon God for forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ. CBC pleads with anyone bearing the guilt of sexual perversion (or any other sin) to turn to God, whose grace is greater than all our sins.<sup>135</sup>

128 Program is defined as a recurring activity

129 The purpose of this definition is to prohibit programs *on church grounds* that concentrate on and/or develop non-essential life skills, such as athletics or hobbies. The danger is that such programs will become sanctioned by CBC, requiring church resources and elder oversight. This threatens to distract the church from its biblical commission to make disciples. CBC members are free to institute and oversee evangelistic programs of their own accord.

130 Events for extended family of CBC members will be granted at the discretion of the CBC elders

131 Prov 19:11; Mt 5:7, 9, 6:15; Eph 4:32; Jas 1:19

132 Mt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 6:1-7

133 This is to ensure that the arbitrator is not a new convert (one of the qualifications of an elder).

134 Gen 1:27. Mt 19:4; Mark 10:6 Science has confirmed Scripture by discovering that human sexual orientation is determined at conception. The sperm/egg combination forms an XX chromosome (female) or an XY chromosome (male). This chromosome cannot be changed, rendering sexual orientation permanent and thus unalterable.

135 Rom 5:20-21

### **13) PRIVATE INUREMENT/CONFLICT OF INTEREST CLAUSE**

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that CBC shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the tax-exempt purposes of CBC.

### **14) POLITICAL ACTIVITIES CLAUSE**

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

### **15) EXEMPT ACTIVITIES CLAUSE**

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) or by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

### **16) DISSOLUTION**

Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the corporation in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, educational, scientific or literary purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code as the Board of Directors shall determine, or to federal, state, or local governments to be used exclusively for public purposes. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Superior Court of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organizations, such as the court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes, or to such governments for such purposes.

### **17) AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the CBC Constitution and Bylaws will be initially presented to the congregation and discussed at a family meeting. A ballot to approve the amendments will be distributed to CBC members at the meeting and available to CBC members after the meeting. For two weeks following the meeting, completed ballots will be accepted and tallied. A two-thirds vote of the collected ballots will approve the amendments.

## 18) COVENANT

Having been brought by Divine Grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we solemnly and joyfully devote ourselves to the following covenant:

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, exercising an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other, faithfully admonishing and entreating one another as the occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together in congregational worship or in discipleship groups

We will pray for ourselves and for others.

We will endeavor to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We will seek the salvation of our family and friends by speaking truth to them and living truth before them.

We will rejoice at each other's happiness and bear each other's burdens with tenderness and sympathy.

We will, with God's help, strive to live carefully in the world, refusing ungodliness and subduing worldly pursuits, remembering that we were voluntarily baptized into new life and thus have a special obligation to lead a holy life.

We will work together for a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, sustaining its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines.

We will regularly and willingly contribute to the financial needs of the ministry to support the staff, provide help to those in distress (both inside and outside our church) and to spread the Gospel in our community and to all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, unite with some other church where we can resume an evangelical ministry.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.