

Constitution and By-Laws



Raleigh Road Baptist Church
Wilson, North Carolina

Approved December 7, 2016

Table of Contents

Constitution	1
Article 1: Preamble	1
Article 2: Name and Principal Office	1
Article 3: Mission Statement	1
Article 4: Statement of Faith	2
4.1 The Scriptures.....	2
4.2 God.....	2
4.3 Humanity.....	3
4.4 Salvation.....	3
4.5 God’s Purpose of Grace.....	4
4.6 The Church.....	5
4.7 Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.....	5
4.8 The Lord’s Day.....	5
4.9 The Kingdom of God.....	5
4.10 Last Things.....	6
4.11 Evangelism and Missions.....	6
4.12 Education.....	6
4.13 Stewardship.....	7
4.14 Cooperation.....	7
4.15 The Christian and the Social Order.....	7
4.16 Peace and War.....	8
4.17 Religious Liberty.....	8
4.18 The Family.....	8
4.19 Authority of the Statement of Faith.....	9
Article 5: Membership Covenant	9
Article 6: Polity and Relationships	10
By-Laws	11
Article 1: Church Membership	11
1.1 General.....	11
1.2 Qualification for Membership.....	11
1.3 Rights of Members.....	11
1.4 Termination of Membership.....	12
1.5 Discipline.....	12
1.6 Restoration of Membership.....	12
Article 2: Church Officers, Committees and Messengers	12
2.1 Church Officers.....	13
2.2 Church Ministries and Other Staff.....	19
2.3 Church Messengers.....	21
Article 3: Congregation	21
Article 4: Church Ordinances	22
4.1 Baptism.....	22
4.2 The Lord’s Supper.....	22
Article 5: Church Meetings	22
5.1 Worship Services.....	22
5.2 Regular Business Meetings.....	22
5.3 Special Business Meetings.....	22
5.4 Quorum.....	23
5.5 Parliamentary Rules.....	23

Article 6: Church Finances	23
6.1 Budget.....	23
6.2 Accounting Procedures	23
6.3 Fiscal Year	23
6.4 Required Books and Records.....	23
Article 7: Amendments	23
APPENDICIES	24
Appendix A: Qualification of Elders	24
Appendix B: Deacon Covenant.....	26
Appendix C: The Raleigh Road Vision (Adopted 1995)	28
Appendix D: The Raleigh Road Baptist Church Membership Covenant.....	29

Constitution

Article 1: Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner, as a local church, consistent with biblical teaching. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

This Constitution replaces and supersedes any and all prior Constitutions of Raleigh Road Baptist Church.

Article 2: Name and Principal Office

The name of this church shall be known as “Raleigh Road Baptist Church”, and will further be referred to in these Articles and in the By-Laws as the “Church”.

The Church is presently meeting and maintains its principal office at 4150 Raleigh Road Parkway West, Wilson, North Carolina. A change of the physical address by agencies of the federal, state or local government shall be noted by amending this section to state the new physical address.

For legal and business purposes, the Church has been incorporated.

Article 3: Mission Statement

As a Church, we exist to glorify God and exalt Jesus by reaching up through worship and prayer, reaching in through discipleship and fellowship, and reaching out through evangelism and ministry. All those who unite with the fellowship of this church shall work together to accomplish this mission by living lives marked by faithfulness and growth in these areas:

3.1 In worship through:

- Active learning when the Bible is being preached
- Passionate participation in corporate singing
- Cheerful and sacrificial giving to support the ministries and mission of the church

3.2 In prayer through:

- Consistent intercession for the needs of fellow believers as well as the lost in our community and around the world
- Heartfelt praise and thanksgiving to God

3.3 In discipleship through:

- Significant engagement in a small group
- Learning to read, study, and obey the Bible
- Identifying my spiritual gifts and using them to strengthen the church

3.4 In fellowship through:

- Developing meaningful relationships and partnering together to care for and love others within my church

3.5 In evangelism through:

- Growing in compassion for those who do not know Christ

- Cultivating relationships with the lost and intentionally seeking opportunities to verbally share the gospel

3.6 In ministry through:

- Caring for and participating in meeting the tangible needs of those in my community and around the world

Article 4: Statement of Faith

4.1 The Scriptures

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

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

4.2 God

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

4.2.1 God the Father

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

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

4.2.2 God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was

with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

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

4.2.3 God the Holy Spirit

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

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

4.3 Humanity

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

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

4.4 Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense

salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

4.4.1 Regeneration

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.

4.4.2 Justification

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

4.4.3 Sanctification

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

4.4.4 Glorification

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

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

4.5 God's Purpose of Grace

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

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

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

4.6 The Church

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

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

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

4.7 Baptism and the Lord's Supper

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

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

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

4.8 The Lord's Day

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

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

4.9 The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that

the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

4.10 Last Things

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

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

4.11 Evangelism and Missions

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

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

4.12 Education

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

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

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

4:11-16; *Philippians* 4:8; *Colossians* 2:3,8-9; *1 Timothy* 1:3-7; *2 Timothy* 2:15; 3:14-17; *Hebrews* 5:12-6:3; *James* 1:5; 3:17.

4.13 Stewardship

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

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

4.14 Cooperation

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

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

4.15 The Christian and the Social Order

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

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

4.16 Peace and War

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

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

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

4.17 Religious Liberty

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

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

4.18 The Family

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

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

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

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

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

4.19 Authority of the Statement of Faith

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members. All activities occurring in church facilities or on church property must be consistent with the church's Statement of Faith. All literature used in the Church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.

Article 5: Membership Covenant

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord by faith, and having publicly confessed Him by baptism in the name of God as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we freely and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body of Christ.

We pledge, therefore, by the aid of God's Spirit, glorify God and exalt Jesus as we work for the advancement of God's kingdom through His church as we reach up through worship and prayer, reach in through discipleship and fellowship and reach out through evangelism and prayer. We will seek to grow in knowledge, holiness, and mutual care through discipleship, fellowship and ministry; to support its ministry by a faithful stewardship of money, time, and talents; and to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and disciplines.

We also pledge to maintain family and private worship; to rear our children in the nurture and spirit of the Lord; to seek salvation of all members of our families and or our acquaintances; and to strive for maturity in ourselves and in our fellow Christians.

We further pledge to follow Christian principles of morality in our daily living; to be ethical in our dealings and faithful in our commitments; to promote the unity of fellowship by proper attitudes and careful speech; and to be zealous in our efforts toward the advancement of the kingdom of God here and throughout the world.

The content of this covenant is summarized in our membership materials as our Membership Covenant (see Appendix D. The Raleigh Road Baptist Church Membership Covenant).

Article 6: Polity and Relationships

Ultimate authority lies in Christ as the head of the Church and in the Bible as the basis for all faith and practice. The government of this church is vested in its membership and administered by its officers. In function, final authority shall reside in the membership as led by the Holy Spirit. They shall approve and/or affirm biblically-qualified leadership to carry out Christ's purposes.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with support the South Roanoke Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

By-Laws

Article 1: Church Membership

1.1 General

1.1.1 This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the sole right to determine who shall be members of this church and the biblical qualifications for and conditions of such membership.

1.1.2 Church members are to actively participate in the life of the church and use their gifts to do works of service for the building up of the body of Christ (*Ephesians 4:12, Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-12, 1 Peter 4:10-11*).

1.1.3 Church members are responsible to elect their officers and they are to obey and submit to their leaders' (the Elders) authority (*Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9*).

1.1.4 The congregation ministers under the direction of the Elders and under the auspices of the Strategic Leadership Council. The congregation ministry is facilitated by various teams and/or ministry directors for each major ministry.

1.2 Qualification for Membership

The minimum qualifications for membership are:

1.2.1 A Personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation;

1.2.2 Baptism by immersion as a testimony of Salvation; if not previously baptized by immersion.

1.2.3 Completion of the Church's membership class; and

1.2.4 A commitment to abide by the Church's membership covenant (See Constitution Article IV and Appendix D. Raleigh Road Baptist Church Membership Covenant).

1.3 Rights of Members

1.3.1 Every member of the church 18 years and older is entitled to vote concerning matters brought to the church (within the list of things considered by the church at large) provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

1.3.2 Every member of the church 18 years and older is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church except for the offices of Elder and Deacon.

1.3.3 Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

1.4 Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

1.4.1 Death of the member

1.4.2 Admission to another church

1.4.3 Exclusion upon the recommendation of the Board of Elders and 3/4 vote of the church membership as a result of church discipline, or

1.4.4 Erasure upon request or upon the recommendation of the Board of Elders after the member fails to participate in some area of church life for a period of one year

1.4.5 Recommendations of the Board of Elders in (3) or (4) above will be presented at the next available business meeting for church action.

1.4.6 Upon written request from the member that their membership be terminated and receive a vote of approval from the Board of Elders

1.5 Discipline

1.5.1 It is God's desire for every Christian to live a disciplined life so that he will glorify God. The pattern of Scripture is for every individual to exercise self-discipline. Scripture also indicates that mutual discipline may be necessary to encourage or exhort persons to live the life God desires for them. The attitude of members toward one another shall always be guided by concern for redemption, repentance, and love rather than for punishment. The Bible also indicates that the church should exercise discipline on individuals when other means fail.

1.5.2 Should a member continue to flagrantly disobey Scripture, members of the Board of Elders will follow the pattern and principles of Matthew 7:1-5, Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5:1-13, Galatians 6:2, and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, upon recommendation from the Board of Elders, a 3/4 vote, by secret ballot, of the members present is required at a meeting called for this purpose with no less than a 10-day notice; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

1.6 Restoration of Membership

Dismissed members may be restored by the recommendation of the Board of Elders and church acceptance by 2/3 vote according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, when their lifestyles are deemed to be in accordance with the membership covenant.

Article 2: Church Officers, Committees and Messengers

All who serve as church officers, on standing committees or as messengers shall be members of the Church.

2.1 Church Officers

The leadership structure of Raleigh Road Baptist Church is based upon the nature of the Church as revealed in Scripture, as well as necessary legal requirements for a recognized religious organization. The leadership structure is intentionally designed to accommodate growth, unity and biblical teaching while keeping polity organizations as simple as possible. The officers of this church shall be the Senior Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Elders, Deacons and Corporate Officers (including chair of stewardship ministry).

2.1.1 The Office of Elder

Christ alone is the Head of the Church (*Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 1:22-23*). Yet for the purpose of order and in accordance with the Word of God, certain individuals have been charged with leadership according to their spiritual giftedness (*Ephesians 4:11-13*). Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the same Church Leader(s): “poimen” (Pastor), “presbuteros” (Elders), and “episcopos” (lit. Bishop (meaning Overseer or Guardian)). These terms are used interchangeably and reflect the different functions of the same office. The New Testament Church had a plurality of leadership in each local Church setting, herein referred to as the Elder Body or Elders. The primary Shepherd is Jesus, and then by extension the under-shepherds, or Pastors/Elders, lead the flock (*1 Peter 5:1-2, Acts 20:17-18, Titus 1:5-7, 1 Timothy 5:17*).

It is impossible for one individual or group of individuals to provide primary care for a growing Church (Exodus 18:17-23, Acts 6:1-7). To burden the Elder Body with functions unrelated to their primary areas of responsibility is to rob them of study time and devotion to the Word, and forces them to function in areas other than their primary calling and responsibility. This can lead to inaccurate teaching and poor leadership, which in turn weakens the body (Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 2:4-5, Titus 1:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12, James 2:22, 1 Timothy 1:13, 1 Timothy 2:15). Therefore, Pastors and Elders are to be liberated and equipped to devote themselves to the teaching of the Word of God, prayer, the gospel and the leadership of the Church.

2.1.1.1 Qualifications, Character and Beliefs

2.1.1.1.1 The Elders are men called of God who aspire and are elected by the church to be overseers (bishops) and shepherds (pastors) of the church (*Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-3*). They include vocational Pastors and do not include other church staff or those employed by the church with the title of ministry director. They are to be men (*1 Timothy 2:12*) and number no less than six. Normally, a majority of them shall be members not in the regular pay of the church, although the church may honor their service with financial gifts (*1 Timothy 5:17, 18*).

2.1.1.1.2 Elders must meet the applicable qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, as interpreted in Appendix A of these By-Laws, pertaining to personal integrity, family relationships, and doctrinal fidelity.

2.1.1.1.3 All Elders are to annually affirm the Statement of Faith of the church.

2.1.1.1.4 No one may simultaneously serve as Elder and Deacon.

2.1.1.2 Duties & Responsibilities

2.1.1.2.1 The Elders are charged with overall spiritual responsibility for the church before God, including the exercise of doctrinal oversight, the oversight of the Strategic Leadership

Council and oversight of church resources (*1 Timothy 4:14; 5:17; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians. 5:12; Titus 1:5; Acts 20:17, 28–31; 1 Peter 5:1–2*).

2.1.1.2.2 The Senior Pastor, assisted by the Associate Pastors, will be the Elders charged with the primary preaching and teaching ministry of the church as well as the oversight of the day-to-day operation of the church and church staff (*1 Timothy 5:17; Acts 20:28–31*).

2.1.1.2.3 The Elders must be able to and may be called upon to teach (*1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9*).

2.1.1.2.4 The Elders are to oversee caring for the needs of individual church members (*Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2*).

2.1.1.2.5 The Elders are to carry out and oversee proper church discipline as needed (*Matthew 18:15-17; Titus 1:9,13; 3:10*; see section 1.5 Discipline).

2.1.1.2.6 The Elders are charged with overseeing the Deacon ministry of the church.

2.1.1.2.7 The Elders are responsible for instructing new members and assimilating new members into the church.

2.1.1.2.8 The Elders may establish and recommend to the church through the Personnel Ministry team the need for new church positions. If the need arises, the Elders will oversee the search process for a new vocational Pastor (see Method of Call) and fulfill other necessary functions.

2.1.1.2.9 The Elders are responsible for reviewing the proposed annual budget as prepared by the Stewardship Ministry prior to submission to the church membership for approval.

2.1.1.2.10 The Elders are responsible for responding to recommendations and concerns from the staff, deacons, ministries, or the congregation.

2.1.1.2.11 The Elders are responsible for reviewing the Constitution and By-laws annually to ensure compliance and/or as needed, making recommendations for changes to the congregation,

2.1.1.2.12 The Elders are responsible for directing the worship of the church in accordance to the Raleigh Road Vision (See Appendix C. The Raleigh Road Vision).

2.1.1.2.13 The Elders will be active, regular attenders of the worship services and activities of the church unless providentially hindered.

2.1.1.2.14 The Elders will be active in the leadership and execution of their assigned ministry areas, faithfully executing their duties as assigned in their individual job descriptions.

2.1.1.2.15 The chairman of the Elders, who will normally be non-vocational, will convene all the Elders at least once a month to a regular Elders' meeting. The chairman will be chosen by the Elders for a one-year term, which may be extended for one additional year. After a maximum of two years, a new chairman must be chosen.

2.1.1.2.16 The Elders will recruit volunteers for the personnel ministry, the stewardship ministry and the missions ministry. The Elders will recommend to the church annually, for

election, the names of those who have agreed to serve on the aforementioned ministry teams for affirmation by majority vote of those voting.

2.1.1.3 Method of Call & Term of Service

2.1.1.3.1 Through prayerful consideration and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church membership shall elect qualified Elders.

2.1.1.3.2 A man must be a member of the church for at least three years before being considered as a candidate for the office of Elder. The three-year requirement does not apply when a call is extended to a vocational Pastor.

2.1.1.3.3 The Senior Pastor and another Elder, plus three members (who are active in the life of the church and have been members for more than two years) will be chosen at a regular or specially called business meeting and shall constitute the Elder nomination team. The team will compile a list of potentially qualified men, who will be examined as to their character, ability and beliefs. After sufficient examination and prayer, the candidate(s) for the office of Elder will be presented to the church and voted upon after two weeks. A secret ballot 3/4 majority of those voting at a church business meeting will be required to approve an Elder.

2.1.1.3.4 Initially before the first non-vocational Elders are chosen, the Senior Pastor plus a group of four representatives from the congregation chosen at a church business meeting will function as the Elder nomination team.

2.1.1.3.5 The church will be called upon to reaffirm a non-vocational Elder after three years of service for a second three-year term. After serving two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of Elder after at least a one-year sabbatical. In order to provide for continuity and to ensure staggered rotation, a given Elder may serve less than his full term.

2.1.1.4 Relationships

2.1.1.4.1 Relationship with the Congregation

The Elders' responsibilities are (as with all Christians) to glorify God and minister to others, in this case, the congregation. The Elders should lead the congregation by example and exhortation to strive to know and follow the leadership of God in the conduct of the church, its ministries, and in their personal lives so that God may be glorified and true worship preserved. The Elders should be open about the business of the church, when appropriate, and seek input from the church body. They should not lord over but exhort, teach, and lead the congregation in sound doctrine, often seeking congregational input which includes voting on appropriate matters and issues.

The Elders may be available for consultation should there be a problem among the body; however, in accordance with Matthew 18, members are always directed to approach the person or persons with whom they disagree directly before approaching the Elders. Matters still unresolved may, as a last resort, be brought to the attention of the entire body at a regularly scheduled business meeting.

2.1.1.4.2 Relationship with the Strategic Leadership Council

The Strategic Leadership Council is responsible for implementing the church's various ministries. The Elders will set the spiritual direction and goals for the church.

The Elders exercise oversight for the work of the Strategic Leadership Council. The chairman of the Elders, together with the Senior and Associate Pastors, will represent the Elders as voting members on the council.

All the Elders of the church are to meet quarterly in joint session with the members of the Strategic Leadership Council in order to discuss church business and to prepare motions for the quarterly church business meetings. The Strategic Leadership Council may choose to affirm or not to affirm the Elders' motions or suggest revisions to the motions. The council's action will be duly noted when the Elders' motions are brought to the entire church. Members of the Strategic Leadership Council may likewise bring motions to the joint session, which may be adopted, rejected or adopted with revisions prior to being brought before the church.

2.1.1.4.3 Relationship with Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors and Church Staff

The church Elders shall assist the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors and church staff with the administrative and committee responsibilities as they help them to lead the ministry of the church. The church Elders shall serve as a sounding board for the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors and church staff, pray with them, and encourage them. The Elders shall provide spiritual accountability for the pastor, staff, and for one another.

2.1.1.4.4 Relationship with the Deacons

The Elders will make themselves available to deacons for consultation and spiritual guidance. The Elders will use the deacon body as a sounding board; thereby giving input into any decisions which the Elders might discuss with them. The Elders are encouraged to use this body as its connection to the individuals who make up the congregation.

2.1.1.5 Termination

An Elder may resign or be dismissed at any time. Discipline of an Elder is to be carried out keeping with biblical procedure (*1 Timothy 5:19–21; cf. Matthew 18:15–17*). At least three members of the congregation with reason to believe that an Elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the Elders and, if needed, directly to the congregation during a regular business meeting. The dismissal of an Elder shall be by a two-thirds majority secret ballot vote of those voting at a special called church business meeting, for which at least two weeks' notice must be given.

2.1.2 Senior and Associate Pastors

2.1.2.1 Description

The Pastors shall be men called of God and ordained to the gospel ministry. They will be financially supported by the church (*Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 5:17,18*).

2.1.2.2 Spiritual Qualifications

The Pastors, as vocational Elders, must exemplify the godly characteristics as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-3 (See 2.1.1 The Office of Elder).

2.1.2.3 Duties

2.1.2.3.1 The Pastors are to be teachers of the Bible to believers and proclaimers of the gospel to unbelievers (*Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2, 5*). They are to equip members of the church, helping them to carry out their ministries as they utilize their spiritual gifts (*Ephesians 4:12*), and they are to be shepherds to the congregation (*1 Peter 5:2*, See 2.1.1 The Office of Elder)

2.1.2.3.2 The Senior Pastor is charged with the primary preaching, teaching and shepherding ministry of the church and the oversight of the church staff. The Associate Pastors and other Elders are to assist him in these areas. The Senior Pastor, along with the Elders is responsible for providing biblical vision and direction to the church, including goals and objectives for the church and leading the church to accomplish these goals and objectives.

2.1.2.3.3 Further duties of the Pastors are detailed in their respective ministry descriptions. Under the supervision of the Elders, the personnel ministry team is responsible for developing ministry descriptions and lists of qualifications for each position.

2.1.2.4 Method of Call

2.1.2.4.1 Pastors shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

2.1.2.4.2 On the Sunday following the announcement of a pastoral vacancy, or as soon after as practically possible and no later than three Sundays following the announcement of a pastoral vacancy, the members of the church shall be invited to submit, for one week, to the church office recommendations for persons to serve on the pastor selection committee. These nominees shall be reviewed by and contacted by the Elders and Deacons to determine their willingness to serve. The names of those nominees willing to serve and the number to be elected will be submitted to the church by the Elders as soon as possible. On the following Sunday, this pastor search committee will be elected by majority vote of those church members present.

2.1.2.4.3 The pastor selection search committee will be responsible to seek out potentially qualified men, who will subsequently be examined as to their character, ability and beliefs. Any church member has the privilege of making other recommendations for pastor to the pastor search committee. The team shall recommend their preferred candidate to the Elders, who will meet with the candidate and vote on whether to recommend him to the congregation for approval. The pastor search committee shall bring to the consideration of the church one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmation vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.

2.1.2.5 Term of Service

The pastor's term of service may be ended by either:

2.1.2.5.1 A pastor may relinquish his office by giving at least thirty days' notice to the church at the time of resignation

2.1.2.5.2 The church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the Personnel Ministry and the Elders or by written petition signed by not less than one-third of the resident church members. The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and he shall be someone other than the pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot; an affirmation vote of three-fourths of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor so excluded from office, the church will compensate the pastor with not less than one-twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate, and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

2.1.3 Deacons

2.1.3.1 Qualifications, Character and Beliefs

2.1.3.1.1 The Deacons are to be men of God called to be servants of the church. The office of Deacon does not entail governing nor teaching authority.

2.1.3.1.2 The qualifications for deacon are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. Care should be given to selecting individuals in the Scriptural guidelines for the office of deacon. (See Appendix B. Deacon Covenant)

2.1.3.2 Duties

Deacons shall serve the church body through ministry by maintaining open communication with and praying for their assigned members. They are directed to learn the physical and spiritual needs of their assigned members and to help fill those needs when possible. The deacons should largely operate as an autonomous body under the oversight of the Elders. They shall gather regularly and be directed by the Elders.

2.1.3.3 Method of Call

2.1.3.3.1 The church shall elect a number of deacons that is capable of serving the needs of the church body well, as determined by the Elders, with a goal of no fewer than 12 deacons in service at a time.

2.1.3.3.2 Every two years, or as needed, the church body will nominate men who are capable of serving in this ministerial role for two-year terms. Those who are nominated will be interviewed by the Elders for confirmation. Within a reasonable time after confirmation, the church will elect the pre-determined number of deacons from those who were confirmed. The election will be on a Sunday morning. After the final election, all who have not been ordained by a Southern Baptist church will be ordained as a deacon by Raleigh Road Baptist Church.

2.1.3.3.4 Active deacons may elect to continue service after their two-year term expires, if reaffirmed by the Elders.

2.1.3.4 Termination

A Deacon's term may end by resignation or dismissal at any time. The dismissal of a Deacon shall come by recommendation of the Elders to the church and a two-thirds majority secret ballot vote of those voting at a special called church business meeting, for which at least a two-week notice must be given.

2.1.3.5 The Service of Women

The church will also recognize the service of women within the church. The Elders shall derive from the church a list of potentially qualified women willing to serve, who after examination, will be called upon to assist in ministering to the needs of women and children within the church; to care for the sick, shut-ins and widows; to assist the Deacons; and to perform other services as directed by the Elders. (*Romans 16:1; 1 Timothy 3:11*).

2.1.4: Corporate Officers

Three corporate officers will serve as advisors on legal and other matters and as officers for the church. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing such action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of the corporate officers are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church approved matters. The Corporate Officers shall have no decision-making authority, and shall be appointed by the Elders. The names of the corporate officers shall be available at the church office.

2.2 Church Ministries and Other Staff

2.2.1 The Strategic Leadership Council

2.2.1.1 Purpose

The Strategic Leadership Council is responsible for coordinating the ministries of the church at the direction of the Elders.

2.2.1.2 Composition and Term

2.2.1.2.1 The Strategic Leadership Council shall consist of the following individuals: the Chairman of the Elders, the Pastoral and Ministry Staff, the Chairmen of the various administrative and ministry teams and one Deacon representative. The council shall annually elect a chairman, whose term is renewable. The Chairman of the Strategic Leadership Team cannot simultaneously serve as the Chairman of the Elders.

2.2.1.2.2 The tenure of each member of the Strategic Leadership Council is one year (renewable).

2.2.1.3 Relationship with Elders

See section 2.1.1.4.2 entitled "Relationship with the Strategic Leadership Council

2.2.2 Support Staff

2.2.2.1 The church shall add Support staff as needed, who will serve under the supervision of the Pastors and the other Elders. The Personnel Ministry team is responsible for developing ministry descriptions and lists of qualifications for each position. All staff members shall affirm and support the Statement of Faith of the church and shall exemplify godly character.

2.2.2.2 Support staff may be terminated by recommendation of the Elders and supported by the majority of the members of the Personnel Ministry Team.

2.2.3: Missions Ministry

The Missions Ministry will develop an overall missions strategy for the church, including:

2.2.3.1 The development and management of local and international missions partnerships,

2.2.3.2 The promotion, selection and development of missions teams for missions trips

2.2.3.3 Communicating missions needs to the church body

2.2.4: Personnel Ministry

The personnel ministry will assist the church in matters related to employed personnel administration, including those called by church action. Their work includes:

2.2.4.1 Employing ministerial staff, to include recommendation to the church body

2.2.4.2 Annual salary budgeting, salary reviews and approvals
Review of benefits, as required

2.2.4.3 Review and approval of other compensation

2.2.4.4 Review and approval of personnel related policies

2.2.4.5 Review, modification, and creation of job descriptions

2.2.4.6 Bi-annual review of salaries to market compensation

2.2.4.7 Dealing with other personnel issues, as needed

2.2.5 Stewardship Ministry

2.2.5.1 The stewardship ministry develops and recommends an overall stewardship plan and church budget. The committee is responsible for these items to be presented to the Church body for approval.

2.2.5.2 It advises and recommends in the administration of the gifts of the church members and others using sound principles of financial management.

2.2.5.3 The stewardship ministry has oversight responsibilities for the preparation and presentation to the church of required reports regarding the financial affairs of the Church.

2.2.6 Ministry Directors and Lay Leaders

2.2.6.1 Other Ministry Directors may be hired as needed in accordance with the above stated areas of responsibility, the annual budget, and well as the personnel and financial policies of the Church. Such staff members shall be responsible to their immediate supervisors (Pastors or Elders) or designated staff persons. Qualifications and responsibilities of ministry directors shall be set forth in job descriptions created by the Personnel Ministry.

2.2.6.1 Ministry Lay Leaders are those who lead or chair a ministry group of the church under the direction of the Elders and the Strategic Leadership Council. Ministry Lay Leaders must meet biblical requirements for godly leadership.

2.3 Church Messengers

Messengers of the church to all associational meetings, State or Southern Baptist Conventions shall be duly elected by the church each year. They shall be elected by popular vote of those church members present in a regular or called business meeting.

Article 3: Congregation

The role of the congregation, as a whole, is vitally important as the church accomplishes its God-given purposes. The congregation shall be involved in the decision-making processes of the church in that the following things shall be voted upon by the congregation:

3.1 To call or dismiss the Senior and/or Associate Pastors in accordance with Article 2, Section 2.1.2.3 “Method of Call”

3.2 Approve the call or dismissal of non-pastoral Ministerial staff members based on the recommendation of the Elders

3.3 To incur debt

3.4 To approve the Annual Church Budget

3.5 To buy, sell, or expand real property

3.6 To approve the Elder recommendations for Missions, Stewardship, and Personnel ministries

3.7 Call and Termination of Deacons in accordance with Article 2, Section 2.1.3.3 “Method of Call” and Section 2.1.3.4 “Termination”

3.8 Call, Reaffirmation and Termination of Elders in accordance with Article 2, Section 2.1.1.3 “Method of Call & Term of Service” and Section 2.1.1.5 “Termination”

3.9 To Change the Constitution and By-Laws in accordance with Article 7 “Amendments”

3.10 To elect messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and South Roanoke Baptist Association in accordance with Article 2, Section 2.3 “Messengers”

3.11 To start a new mission or church plant

3.12 To act on the Elders recommendations regarding the termination of membership as a result of church discipline or inactivity or the Elders recommendation for Restoration of Membership in accordance with Article 1, Section 1.4 “Termination of Membership”, Section 1.5 “Discipline” and Section 1.6 “Restoration of Membership”.

Article 4: Church Ordinances

4.1 Baptism

This church shall receive, for baptism, any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

4.1.1 Baptism shall be by immersion in water

4.1.2 The Senior Pastor, or whomever the Elders shall authorize, shall administer baptism

4.1.3 Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church

4.1.4 A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the Senior or Associate Pastors, Elders or Deacons

4.2 The Lord’s Supper

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper regularly. The pastor and deacons, as needed, shall administer the Lord's Supper. This ordinance is intended for those who know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Article 5: Church Meetings

5.1 Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The pastor shall direct and/or coordinate the services for all the church members and for all others who may chose to attend.

5.2 Regular Business Meetings

The church shall hold regular business meetings quarterly on a designated Wednesday night. The Senior Pastor shall be moderator of all meetings of the church in conference for the transaction of business, unless, at his option, he chooses to relinquish this duty. In the absence of the Senior Pastor, the Chairman of the Elders or an Elder appointed by the Chairman of the Elders shall preside.

5.3 Special Business Meetings

The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one-month notice must be given for the specifically called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, and time and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting.

5.4 Quorum

The quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

5.5 Parliamentary Rules

"Roberts Rules of Order, Revised," is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church. However, such rules shall not be used as a technical device for obstructing the conducting of business.

Article 6: Church Finances

6.1 Budget

The Stewardship Ministry, in consultation with other organizations in the church, the Senior Pastor and the Elders, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget. It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church through the Biblical example of tithes and offerings.

6.2 Accounting Procedures

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the financial secretary with input from the church stewardship ministry. An annual review of the church's financial statement is required. Audits will be requested, as needed, by the stewardship ministry.

6.3 Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall run from January 1 to December 31.

6.4 Required Books and Records

The church shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and make them available for inspection and copying as required by the state of North Carolina. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office or other designated location.

Article 7: Amendments

Changes in the constitution and by-laws may be made at any regular or specially called business meeting of the church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. A minimum of a one-month notice is required for conducting a special business meeting for the purpose of voting on amendments to the constitution and by-laws. Amendments to the constitution shall be by three-fourths vote of church members present. Amendments to the by-laws shall have a constitution of a majority of the members present and voting. Voting by proxy is not permitted.

APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Qualification of Elders

The biblical qualifications for Elder (Overseer) are expected of anyone serving the Church as Senior Pastor, Pastoral Staff, or as an Elder elected by the church body. In keeping with New Testament teaching, the office of Elder is reserved for men only.

According to the 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9, the minimum qualifications for one who oversees the church as an Elder are, a man who is:

1. **Above reproach** (1 Timothy 3:2) - Must have a lifestyle free of consistent patterns of sin.
2. **Husband of one wife** (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6) - If married, must be devoted to his spouse and family. An Elder must have a healthy, Bible-based view of marriage and the home. A man shall be eligible for serving as an Elder provided he has not experienced a divorce within the past ten years and his immediate family is presently in stable condition. The previous marital history of his spouse shall not be taken into consideration. Men who have never been married or widowers are not to be excluded from the deacon body.
3. **Temperate** (1 Timothy 3:2) - Must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
4. **Prudent** (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8) - Must be sober, sensible, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
5. **Respectable and Hospitable** (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8) – Live a well-ordered life and engage in honorable behavior.
6. **Able to Teach** (1 Timothy 3:2) - Must be able to communicate truth and sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.
7. **Not addicted to wine** (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7) – Must be free from habits or excesses which might injure his testimony for Christ and be willing to limit his liberty for the sake of others. Although total abstinence is not mandated by the Scripture, with respect to consuming alcohol, Elders should be guided by Rom 14:1-21 and 1 Cor 6:12-13.
8. **Not pugnacious or quick tempered** (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7) - Must be gentle, patient, and able to exercise self-control in difficult situations
9. **Not contentious** (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7) - Must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.
10. **Free from the love of money** (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7) - Must not be stingy, greedy, out for sordid gain, or preoccupied with amassing material things
11. **Manage own household** (1 Timothy 3:4, Titus 1:6) - Must have a well-ordered household and a healthy, balanced family life.
12. **Not a new convert** (1 Timothy 3:6) - Must be a Christian long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and depth of their spirituality. Must not be a new believer.

13. **Good reputation with outsiders** (1 Timothy 3:7)- Must be well-respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy.
14. **Not self-willed** (Titus 1:7) - Must not be stubborn, prone to force opinions on others, or abuse authority. Must be a servant-leader.
15. **Loving what is good** (Titus 1:8) - Must desire the will of God in every decision.
16. **Just** (Titus 1: 8) - Must desire to be fair and impartial, and base judgments on scriptural principal.
17. **Devout** (Titus 1:8) - Must be devoted Christ-follower seeking to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Must be committed to prayer, worship, the study of Scripture, and guarding their walk.
18. **Holding fast the faithful Word** (Titus 1:9) - Must be stable in their faith, obedient to the Word of God, and continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Appendix B: Deacon Covenant

The office of deacon is an honored one in a Southern Baptist Church. It is an office filled by men of mature spiritual character who have been set apart by the church for service. In the Greek language, the word "deacon" means servant or minister. Being a servant or minister is, as Jesus once said, the highest calling. He said, "He that is greatest among you shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Matthew 23: 11-12).

As we come to consider the scriptural qualifications for deacon, let us keep in mind that the deacon is first a servant and minister to his church. He is a man willing to give of himself so that the church of Jesus Christ might progress along the course set out for the church by Jesus in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

It goes without saying that a deacon will be a Christian, but a mere profession of faith does not qualify a man to be ordained to this office. A deacon is a special brand of Christian who has proven himself to be a faithful, disciplined, and mature follower of Christ who is able to work well with others.

In order to be considered as a Deacon with Raleigh Road Baptist Church, one must have been a member of Raleigh Road Baptist Church for no less than one year.

SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

1. **Full of the Holy Spirit** (acts 6:3) He will depend upon God's leadership in his total life and will always be in the process of allowing the Lord to mold his life according to His will. He is more than a good and moral man. He is one who depends upon God for life and direction.
2. **Full of Wisdom** (Acts 6:3) This wisdom is the result of walking with God daily. It is wisdom born in a personal relationship with God through Christ. It is more than natural common sense or a formal education.
3. **Full of Faith** (Acts 6:5) Stephen was a man full of faith. It is the kind of faith that enabled him to give his total life for the cause of Christ. Deacons are to be faith-filled individuals. Their wisdom is built upon faith. Leaders in a church with only a little faith are prone to quench the Holy Spirit in the fellowship. It is faith based upon a good understanding of the facts found in God's Word.

MORAL QUALIFICATIONS

1. **Of Good Reputation** (Acts 6:3) A deacon must be an honest man with a good reputation.
2. **Worthy of Respect** (Timothy 3:8) A deacon will be a man who is worthy of respect. He will possess a certain reverence for spiritual things and a certain seriousness concerning life. This does not rule out a good sense of humor. He will take God into account in the problem-solving processes of personal and church life.
3. **Not Double-Tongued** (1 Timothy 3:8) The deacon will be honest in his speech and will have control of his tongue. This implies an absence of gossiping, backbiting, slandering, and the telling of lies. The deacon will be slow to speak in anger, but quick to speak for Christ. He will be consistent with words and actions.
4. **Not Addicted to Much Wine** (1 Timothy 3:8) This verse implies that the deacon must be free from habits or excesses which might injure his testimony for Christ and be willing to limit his liberty for the sake of others. Although total abstinence is not mandated by the Scripture, with respect to consuming alcohol, deacons should be guided by Rom 14:1-21 and 1 Cor 6:12-13.

5. **Not Pursuing Dishonest Gain** (Timothy 3:8) A deacon should be free from an obsession for material possessions. He should be free from a covetous spirit and satisfied with what the Lord has entrusted to him. This verse implies stewardship of total life which includes money and time. A deacon will be a faithful and consistent tither and should present this example to the church as a mature spiritual leader.

DOCTRINAL QUALIFICATIONS

1. **Holding to the Mystery of Faith with a Clear Conscience** (1 Timothy 3:9) The deacon will be a man of firm convictions. His doctrine will be sound and in keeping with the scriptures as set forth in the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000.
2. **Let These Also First Be Tested** (Timothy 3:10) A deacon's doctrinal beliefs should be proven by his service in the church. We require a deacon to have been a member of Raleigh Road Baptist for at least one year prior to election. Before a man is asked to be a deacon, he should be given other jobs in the church as a test of his character and ability. He should do well in these tasks, and this should be witness by the church.
3. **Beyond Reproach** (1 Timothy 3:10) The deacon is one who has as his goal for living Christ likeness. He will depend upon the Holy Spirit to help him grow toward that goal. He should be above reproach in his personal life and beliefs

FAMILY RELATIONSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

1. **Husband of Only One Wife** (1 Timothy 3:12) We believe that God has placed the responsibility of the office of deacon upon men (Acts 6:3). A deacon must have a healthy, Bible-based view of marriage and the home. A man shall be eligible for serving as an Elder or Deacon provided he has not experienced a divorce within the past ten years and his immediate family is presently in stable condition. The previous marital history of his spouse shall not be taken into consideration. Men who have never been married or widowers are not to be excluded from the deacon body.
2. **Good Managers of Their Children and Their Own Household** (1 Timothy 3:12) A deacon must give evidence of being the head of his house and be its spiritual leader.
3. **Dignified Wives, not Malicious Gossips but Temperate, Faithful in All Things** (1 Timothy 3:11) The wife plays important part in the service of the deacon. She should be in agreement concerning the office he holds and not detract from it in any way by her life.

Appendix C: The Raleigh Road Vision (Adopted 1995)

It is the dream of 2,000 members gathering weekly to worship God and share in Christian fellowship as we are reminded of God's plan for our lives, God's forgiveness of our sins and God's joy for our living.

It is the dream of individual believers growing together in spiritual maturity. (Beginning as those seeking a relationship with Christ and then moving toward full maturity.) A place where people can be trained, equipped and motivated to serve Christ in their own arena using their own gifts and abilities.

It is the dream of supporting missions by our financial and personal involvement as we support thousands of missionaries and send out hundreds to be personally involved in spreading the gospel to countries around the world. It is the dream of starting new churches in other communities.

It is the dream of a body active in ministry, touching people's lives where they are, having an impact on those lives with the end result of growing, encouraging, and strengthening them as we point them to Jesus Christ.

It is the dream of a wonderful facility to be used for the glory of God and the health of His church. This to include 10 plus acres of land on which will be built a worship center, facilities for prayer, counseling and training, missionary housing, and recreation facilities as well as expansive outdoor play areas. These facilities will be placed in the midst of a beautiful physical setting.

It is the dream of a large regional church, one of the driving forces and central hubs of the community, driven by its purposes, held by its message and changing in its methods. It is the dream of a church that dares to be dynamic, flexible and creative for the sake of reaching people for Jesus Christ.

Appendix D: The Raleigh Road Baptist Church Membership Covenant

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord by faith, and having publicly confessed Him by baptism in the name of God as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we freely and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body of Christ.

We pledge, therefore, by the aid of God's Spirit, glorify God and exalt Jesus as we work for the advancement of God's kingdom through His church as we reach up through worship and prayer, reach in through discipleship and fellowship and reach out through evangelism and prayer. We will seek to grow in knowledge, holiness, and mutual care through discipleship, fellowship and ministry; to support its ministry by a faithful stewardship of money, time, and talents; and to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and disciplines.

We also pledge to maintain family and private worship; to rear our children in the nurture and spirit of the Lord; to seek salvation of all members of our families and or our acquaintances; and to strive for maturity in ourselves and in our fellow Christians.

We further pledge to follow Christian principles of morality in our daily living; to be ethical in our dealings and faithful in our commitments; to promote the unity of fellowship by proper attitudes and careful speech; and to be zealous in our efforts toward the advancement of the kingdom of God here and throughout the world.

We commit to fulfilling this covenant by living a life marked by faithfulness and growth in these areas:

In worship through:

- Active learning when the Bible is being preached
- Passionate participation in corporate singing
- Cheerful and sacrificial giving to support the ministries and mission of the church

In prayer through:

- Consistent intercession for the needs of fellow believers as well as the lost in our community and around the world
- Heartfelt praise and thanksgiving to God

In discipleship through:

- Significant engagement in a small group
- Learning to read, study, and obey the Bible
- Identifying my spiritual gifts and using them to strengthen the church
- In fellowship through:
- Developing meaningful relationships and partnering together to care for and love others within my church

In evangelism through:

- Growing in compassion for those who do not know Christ
- Cultivating relationships with the lost and intentionally seeking opportunities to verbally share the gospel

In ministry through:

- Caring for and participating in meeting the tangible needs of those in my community and around the world