

*MERIDIAN BAPTIST CHURCH*

*1130 West Broadway*

*Newton, Kansas*

*Statement of Faith*

*Constitution*

*Bylaws*

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE MERIDIAN BAPTIST CHURCH

## PREAMBLE

Reposing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, believing in the teachings and practices of the Baptists and in those great distinctive principles for which they have stood, namely:

1. The preeminence of Christ as our Divine Lord and Master.
2. The supreme authority of the Bible and its sufficiency as our only rule of faith and practice.
3. The right of private interpretation and competency of the individual soul in direct approach to God.
4. The absolute separation of Church and State.
5. A regenerate church membership.
6. The ordinances of Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper in obedience to the command of Christ.
7. The complete independence of the local church and its interdependence in associated fellowship with the other Baptist churches.
8. The solemn obligation of majority rule, guaranteeing equal rights to all and special privileges to none.
9. The spiritual unity of all believers in the local assembly.
10. A world-wide program of missionary fervor and evangelism in obedience to the final command of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Further accepting the general summary of doctrines and duties of the Church Covenant; we therefore, band ourselves together as a body of baptized (immersed) believers in Jesus Christ and adopt for our government, plan of worship, and service, the following articles:

## ARTICLE I -NAME

This organization shall be known as the Meridian Baptist Church.

## ARTICLE II -PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be the advancement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It shall seek to attain this end through the public worship of God, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor, and Christian education.

## ARTICLE III -DECLARATION OF FAITH

The Meridian Baptist Church of Newton, Kansas, was conceived in the hearts of a small group of God's children, who felt that FREEDOM and LIBERTY of the individual Christian was to be expressed in some more far-reaching manner than just giving lip service to the basic principle. To this end, a plan of action was placed into motion. A truly INDEPENDENT, FUNDAMENTAL, MISSIONARY, EVANGELICAL, AND BAPTISTIC Church was brought into being, not to merely say, "thus and so", but to place into action the principles they so dearly loved and held sacred.

BIBLE DOCTRINE AND BIBLE PRINCIPLE MUST BE INSEPARABLE COMPANIONS IF THE CHURCH IS TO BE TRUE TO THE WORD OF GOD.

THEREFORE, we thus set forth to you, THE THINKING CHRISTIAN, what we believe to be true BIBLE DOCTRINE and PRINCIPLE, finding no room for compromise of those things which we hold dearer than life itself.

### BIBLE DOCTRINE

#### (A) THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

WE BELIEVE the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and God-breathed. (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21).

#### (B) THE GODHEAD

WE BELIEVE in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deuteronomy 6:2-4; II Corinthians 13:14).

#### (C) THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. (John 1:12-14; Luke 1:35).

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Romans 3:24; I Peter 2: 24; Ephesians I: 7)

WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Hebrews 9:24; Romans 8:34).

#### (D) THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit is a person Who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them until the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; II Corinthians 3:6; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9).

WE BELIEVE that He is the Divine Teacher Who guides into all truth, and that it is the privilege and duty of all to be filled with the Spirit. (John 16:13; I John 2:20-27; Ephesians 5:18).

#### (E) THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

WE BELIEVE in the personality of Satan, that he is the unholy god of this age, the author of all the powers of darkness, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire. (Matthew 4:1-3; II Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10).

#### (F) THE CREATION

WE ACCEPT the Genesis account of creation and BELIEVE that man came by direct creation of God and not by evolution. (Genesis I and 2; Colossians 1:16-17; John 1:3).

(G) THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN

WE BELIEVE that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God: and that man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3).

(H) SALVATION

WE BELIEVE that salvation is a free gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:18-19).

(I) GRACE IN THE NEW CREATION

WE BELIEVE that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again: that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus: that it is instantaneous and not a process: that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God: that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel: that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life. (John 3:3; II Corinthians 5:17; I John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 16:30-33; II Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; II Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 2:13; John 3:8).

(J) THE ETERNAL SECURITY AND ASSURANCE OF BELIEVERS

WE BELIEVE that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27; Romans 8:1,38,39; I Corinthians 1: 4-8; I Peter I: 5) .

WE BELIEVE that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

(K) THE TWO NATURES OF THE BELIEVER

WE BELIEVE that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit: and that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. (Romans 6:13; 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; I Peter 1:14-16).

(L) SEPARATION

WE BELIEVE that all the saved should live in such a manner as to not bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord: that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded by God. (II Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; I John 2:15-17; II John v s. 9-11).

(M) THE LOCAL CHURCH

WE BELIEVE that a local church is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel: observing the ordinances of Christ: governed by His laws: exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word: that its officers are pastor and deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures.

WE BELIEVE the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations: that the one and only Superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit: that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel: that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation: that on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, and of benevolence, the will of the local church is final. (Acts 2:41-42; I Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:11; Acts 20:17-28; I Timothy 3:1-7;

Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23-24; Acts 15:13-18) .

(N) BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

WE BELIEVE that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life, that it is a prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. (Acts 8:26-39; John 3:23; Romans 6:3-5; Matthew 3:16; Colossians 2:12; I Corinthians 11:23-28).

(O) THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

WE BELIEVE that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked: that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem: while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. (Mal. 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17, 7:6; 3:23; I John 5:19; Proverbs 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matthew 25: 34-41) .

(P) CIVIL GOVERNMENT

WE BELIEVE that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ Who is the only Lord of the conscience and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth. (Romans 13:1-7; II Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21-22; Acts 4:19; 5:20; 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Daniel 3:17-18).

(Q) SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

WE BELIEVE in the "Blessed Hope", the personal imminent, pretribulation and pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His Millennial Kingdom. (I Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11; 20:1-6; Revelation 3:10).

BIBLE PRINCIPLES

We know that the following statements could quite conceivably fall into the category of DOCTRINE... but in order to make our position clear, we will place it under the heading of BIBLE PRINCIPLE.

BIBLE PRINCIPLE TO US IS THAT ATTITUDE OF MIND AND ACTION WHICH CARRIES A CHURCH FORWARD IN THE STRENGTH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD AND NOT THE ENERGY OF THE FLESH.

THEREFORE, along with correct fundamental doctrine, a true New Testament Church must not incur the wrath of our Lord Jesus Christ by holding a principle or practice which Christ hates. Our Savior irrevocably states: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." Revelation 2:6

## ARTICLE IV -CHURCH COVENANT

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

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for advancement of this church in scriptural knowledge and holiness, to regularly attend its three weekly services, to attend baptismal services and the Lord's Supper, to submit to its discipline, and to contribute weekly with tithes and offerings to its support.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions, to bring up our children in the Christian way of life, to seek the salvation of our family and friends, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drink as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rule of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

Humbly confessing our sins, we pray for grace and strength to keep this covenant in letter and in spirit to the glory of God.

## ARTICLE V -MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church shall consist of such believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as have been baptized in water, who take the Holy Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, and who agree to be governed by this Constitution.

Any person may become a member of this Church upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons and Pastor and by vote of the Church, in each case a candidate giving evidence of a change of heart and testimony of a Christian life and having adopted the views of faith and practice held by this church:

1. Upon confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and baptism by immersion.
2. By letter from some other Baptist Church of like faith and order.
3. By statement or restoration. (If once a member of this or another Baptist Church, where regular Church Letter is not available).

The Pastor of the Church and the Board of Deacons of the Church shall examine all applicants for membership on the following questions:

1. Have you accepted Christ as your personal Saviour, and have you now peace with God through Him?
2. As a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, have you been baptized by immersion?
3. Will you study earnestly to know your duty as a Christian Steward, and will you contribute to the support of the Gospel as God prospers you?

4. Do you cheerfully accept the obligation imposed on all members by our Covenant and Constitution?
5. Have you read and do you agree with the Articles of Faith as set forth in the Constitution of this church?

In order that persons applying for church membership may be informed of the duties of members, they shall have the Church Covenant presented to them by the Pastor or the Board of Deacons, and they shall subscribe to it, both in letter and in spirit. Members in good standing will strive to keep their Covenant obligations. They will honor and esteem their Pastor, pray for him daily and assist him in carrying out the program of the Church. They will endeavor to preserve the unity of the church. If at any time they find themselves opposed to the fundamental doctrines of the church, or if for any other reason are unable to harmonize with others, they will not seek to disrupt its fellowship but will quietly withdraw from its membership.

Members may be dismissed from the church as follows:

1. Voluntary. Members in good standing may, at their own request, have their church letter sent directly to the church with which they desire to unite. Letters are not granted to persons to carry or keep in their possession. Members leaving the city remain members of this church until they withdraw by letter or until their names are dropped from the roll.
2. By Exclusion. Any member who is guilty of serious misconduct and who persists in the same after due admonition of the Pastor and Board of Deacons (This is to be done according to Matthew 18:15-17) may be excluded from the membership of the church by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting, provided notice of the contemplated action shall have been announced at the regular midweek meeting and to the offending member for two weeks prior to action. Any member under disciplinary action shall not be entitled to vote.

Any member guilty of continued absence and lack of interest for six months shall automatically be placed on an inactive membership roll and shall lose his voting privileges. Reinstatement to active membership status can be granted by making such request to the Pastor and Board of Deacons and by faithful attendance for at least six weeks. If a person remains on the inactive roll for twenty-four months he shall no longer be considered a member in any form. Anyone known to have joined another church shall be removed from the membership roll. The Deacons shall give their attention to church membership standing every six months and instruct the church clerk as to any changes in the membership status of any member.

Non-resident members are expected to report to the church or to the Pastor at least every six months, and are also expected to continue their financial support of the church, remitting to the Financial Secretary quarterly.

#### ARTICLE VI ORGANIZATION

The Officers of this Church shall consist of the following: a Pastor, a Clerk, a Financial Secretary, a Treasurer, a Board of Deacons, a Board of Trustees, an Auditing Committee, a Nomination Committee and such other officers as the Church may decide. Officers of all auxiliary organizations shall be elected by their respective organizations, the candidates having been first approved by the Church.

The Pastor of this Church shall be a believer in and preacher of the Gospel and the fundamental doctrines of faith as held by this Church in its Declaration of Faith.

The Pastor of this Church must be required to affirm his faith in this Statement and sign the same annually in the presence of the Board of Deacons. The qualifications of the Pastor are given in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1: 5-9.

The Pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly, administer the ordinances, act as moderator of all meetings of the Church for the transaction of business, supervise the teaching ministry of the church, tenderly watch over its membership and its spiritual interests, and organize and develop its strength for the best possible service. He shall be a member of all Boards and Committees of the Church and its auxiliary organizations. It shall be his duty to publicly inform all newly-elected officers of the particular functions and responsibilities of their respective offices. He shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and perform such other duties as generally appertain to such a position.

The salary of the Pastor shall be fixed at the time of call, and also may be changed by vote of the Church at any regular business meeting.

Deacons shall be elected to serve for two years, half the number being elected each year. There shall be a minimum number of four. Two of the deacons elected at the first election shall serve a one year term.

The Board of Deacons shall assist the Pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in organizing and developing its strength for the best possible service, and in conducting the religious services and all other work of the church. It shall make proper provision for the observance of the ordinances of the Church, members of the Board serving the elements of the Lord's Supper, and with the Pastor, consider all applications for Church membership. It shall assist the Pastor in home visitation and other personal work, and all other evangelistic efforts of the church. It shall assist the Pastor and the Board of Trustees in securing the funds necessary to maintain and advance the work of the church, and it shall cooperate with the Pastor in providing the supply and leaders of the prayer meeting in his absence. The Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall act as moderator in the Pastor's absence.

Immediately following the Annual Business Meeting, the Board of Deacons shall assemble and from their own number elect a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The Board of Deacons shall act as the Pulpit Committee. The qualifications of deacons are those given in Acts 6:1-6 and I Timothy 3:8-13.

The Board of Trustees shall consist of three or more members, whose duty it shall be to acquaint themselves with the laws of the State pertaining to churches and church property, and to see that the church faithfully complies therewith. They shall exercise general oversight of all church property and shall make recommendations to the church concerning needed repairs. Minor emergency repairs are to be cared for whenever needed, the bills to be presented at the next regular business meeting. Trustees are wholly subject to the will of the church regarding the church property.

Immediately after their election the Board of Trustees shall assemble and elect from their number a President, Vice President and Secretary. They shall also elect from their number a House Committee whose duty it shall be to have charge of the church building and grounds. A majority of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

The Clerk shall keep a correct record of the proceedings of the church, of all baptisms, issue letters, and certificates of Christian character as directed by the church, conduct all official correspondence, and preserve all documents, papers and letters coming into his hands during his term of office and deliver the same with all records kept by him to his successor. He shall keep an account of any special events in the life of the church which are of historical interest and value.

The Financial Secretary shall receive all funds of the Church, make a proper record of same, and deposit in the bank designated by the church. He shall send to every member a report of their tithes and offerings.

The Treasurer shall receive a report from the Financial Secretary of all funds contributed and shall disperse the same as ordered by the church. He shall present a written report of itemized disbursements at the regular monthly business meeting showing the actual financial condition of the church. All expenditures of the church shall be paid by check.

The Auditing Committee shall audit the books of the Treasurer connected with the work of the church at

the close of the fiscal year.

The Nominating Committee shall prepare a list of candidates for the various offices to be filled and report at the business meeting preceding the annual business meeting. Other nominations may be made by members at the time of election.

#### ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

The church shall meet each Sunday for Public Worship both morning and evening and at least once during the week for Bible study and prayer.

A monthly business meeting shall be held at which time the regular business shall be conducted. All business transactions must be approved by 51% of the voting membership present. Any member may present any item of business at any regular business meeting.

The Pastor or the Board of Deacons may call a special meeting by giving notice of such meeting and the purpose for which it was called to the church.

The Fiscal Year of the church shall begin with the first of January and end December 31.

#### ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be revised or amended by two-thirds vote of the voting membership of the church at any regular business meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced two weeks before the vote is taken.

#### BYLAWS

Each member of the church, above 18 years of age and in good standing, shall be entitled to vote on all matters, except as otherwise provided in Article V, Section 2. The above defines the term "voting Membership."

All business meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer for Divine guidance and blessing.

Thirty percent (30%) of the active voting membership constitutes a quorum for conducting business at all business meetings.

All questions of order shall be settled by the customary rules governing deliberative bodies, as given in "Robert's Rules of Order".

All appointments for public worship and Bible Study, and the arrangements thereof including time and place, and the use of the property belonging to the church for purposes other than the stated appointments, shall be under the control of the Pastor and Board of Deacons as ordered by the Church.

The Annual Business Meeting shall be the regular Business Meeting in December.

These Bylaws may be altered, suspended or amended at any business meeting of the Church by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting membership.

All business meetings shall be adjourned by vote.

All terms of office excepting Deacons and Trustees shall be one year.

Other officers and committees as deemed necessary shall be elected by the church.

All Elections shall be by secret ballot.