

Confession of Faith

of the
Empire State Fellowship
of Regular Baptist Churches

I. Of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written was verbally inspired and the product of Spirit-controlled men and therefore has truth without any admixture of error for its matter. We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions, shall be tried (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:19-21).

II. Of the True God

We believe there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Rule of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor; confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Exodus 20:2-3; I Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11; I John 5:7).

III. Of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person; equal with God the Father and God the Son; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil One until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that His is the agent in the New Birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer (John 14:16, 17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; Luke 1:35; John 14:26; Genesis 1:1-3; John 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5, 6; Eph. 1:13, 14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Rom. 8:14, 16, 26, 27).

IV. Of the Devil, or Satan

We believe in the personality of Satan, that he is the unholy god of this age, and the author of all the powers of darkness, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire (Matt. 4:1-3; II Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10).

V. Of the Creation

We accept the Genesis account of creation and believe that man came by direct creation of God and not by evolution (Gen. 1; 2; Col. 1:16, 17; John 1-3).

VI. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but of choice; and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse (Gen. 3:1-6, 24; Rom. 5:19; Rom. 3:10-19; Rom. 1:32; Rom. 1:18; Rom. 5:12).

VII. Of the Virgin Birth

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God, and God, the Son (Gen. 3:15; Isa.7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14).

VIII. Of the Atonement for Sin

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death, as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust; Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead, He

is now enthroned in Heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection. He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and all-sufficient Saviour (Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; Isa. 53:4-7; Rom. 3:25; I John 4:10; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21).

IX. **Of 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 Cor. 5:17; I John 5:1; John 3:6, 7; Acts 16:30-33; II Peter 1:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1; II Cor. 5:19; Col. 2:13; John 3:8).

X. **Of Justification**

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification: (a) That justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; (b) That it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed to us (Acts 13:39; Isa. 53:11; Zech. 13:1; Rom. 5:1, 9; 8:1).

XI. **Of Faith and Salvation**

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation (Acts 16:31).

XII. **Of the Local Church**

As a Fellowship of congregational governed churches, 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; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers are pastors, 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 it has opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy; and 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; on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final (Acts 2:41, 42; I Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22, 23; Eph. 4:11; Acts 20:17-28; I Tim. 3:17; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23, 24; Acts 15:13-18).

XIII. **Of 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 Saviour, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privilege of a church relation. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He come, should be preceded always by solemn self-examination (Acts 8:36-39; John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-5; Matt. 3:16; Col. 1:12; I Cor. 11:23-28).

XIV. **Of the Security of the Saints**

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:16; John 10:28, 29; Rom. 8:35-39; Jude 1) (R. V.).

XV. **Of 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 sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteousness 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; Gen. 18:23; Rom. 6:17, 18; I John 5:19; Rom. 7:6; Rom. 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:19-31; Matt. 25:34-41; John 8:21).

XVI. Of 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 (Rom. 13:17; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21, 22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:20; Acts 4:19, 20; Dan. 3:17, 18).

XVII. Of the Resurrection, Visible, Pre-Millennial Return of Christ, and Related Events

- a. We believe in the Bodily Resurrection (Matt. 28:6, 7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; I Cor. 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-6).
- b. The Ascension (Acts 1:9-11; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Rev. 3:21; Heb. 12:2).
- c. The High Priesthood (Heb. 8:6; I Tim. 2:5; I John 2:1; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 5:9, 10).
- d. The Second Coming (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; I Thess. 4:16; James 5:8; Heb. 9:28).
- e. The Resurrection of the Righteous Dead (I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:42-44; I Cor. 15:52).
- f. The Change of the Living in Christ (I Cor. 15:51-53; I Thess. 4:13-18; Phil. 3:20, 21).
- g. The Throne of David (Luke 1:32; Isa. 9:6, 7; Acts 2:29,

30).

- h. The Millennial Reign (I Cor. 15:25; Isa. 11:4, 5; Psalm 72:8; Rev. 20:14; Rev. 20:6; Isa. 32:1).

CONSTITUTION OF THE FELLOWSHIP

ARTICLE I

Name

Empire State Fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches

ARTICLE II

Purpose

To provide a Biblical fellowship for Baptist Churches which shall raise a scriptural standard of separation from worldliness, modernism and apostasy; to maintain a platform for sound Biblical teaching; and to promote missions, evangelism, education, camps and other worthwhile ministries. This Fellowship shall maintain the independence of such local churches.

ARTICLE III

Meetings and Voting Privileges

Section 1: The Fellowship shall conduct at least one Bible Conference during the year, including an Annual Business Meeting which shall meet in October. Other meetings or seminars may be conducted as deemed advisable by the Council. A special business meeting of the Association may be called by the Council of Ten upon 30 days written notice to the churches. (Whenever possible, such special business meetings shall coincide with conferences already scheduled.) Admissions or dismissals of churches from the Fellowship and the passing of resolutions may be done at any conference without the prior notification.

Section 2: No limit shall be placed on the number privileged to attend the Annual or Special Business Meetings from any Fellowship church, but each church shall designate three (3) of its members as messengers who shall be entitled to vote at all sessions of the Annual or Special Business Meetings.

Section 3: Salaried servants shall not be entitled to vote.

Section 4: All business sessions of the Fellowship and the Council shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE IV

Fellowship

Section 1 - Admissions

Any Baptist Church in New York State which subscribes to the Constitution and Articles of Faith, and is not in fellowship or in cooperation with any Association or group which permits the presence of modernists (including neo-liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, neo-evangelicalism, neo-pentecostalism or any group favoring ecumenical trends) may, upon securing a favorable report from a Baptist Recognition Council and submitting to the secretary written notice that it desires fellowship, and, if recommended by the Council of Ten, be submitted to the Fellowship for vote of admission.

Section 2 - Dismissal

Any fellowshipping church may withdraw from the Fellowship at any time for any reason sufficient to itself. Any fellowshipping church which is publicly known to be no longer in agreement with the Constitution and Articles of Faith of the Fellowship, and has not voluntarily withdrawn itself from the Fellowship, may, upon satisfactory evidence of disagreement being presented the Council, and upon its recommendation, be removed from the rolls by majority vote of the Fellowship.

ARTICLE V

Officers and Personnel

Section 1: The officers of the Fellowship shall consist of a Council of Ten, men who are members from as many Fellowship churches, five of whom shall be elected for two (2) years, annually. After having served two consecutive terms on the Council, a member shall be ineligible for reelection until one year has lapsed. Vacancies occurring during the year may be appointed by the Council of Ten until the next Annual Meeting.

Section 2: The Council shall be elected in the following manner: Each fellowshipping church shall at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting select and send to the secretary five (5) nominations for the Council. The secretary shall tabulate all lists and the ten (10) highest names shall be considered the nominees. The annual election shall take place at the call of the chairman who shall present the names of the ten (10) nominees, whereupon the voting messengers present shall each vote by ballot for five (5) members of the Council. The five (5) nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be considered elected.

Section 3: The Council shall appoint annually a chairman who shall preside at the annual business meeting and it shall appoint a secretary and treasurer of the Fellowship and such other officers and committees as may be deemed necessary.

Section 4: It shall be the duty of the Council to make recommendations to the Fellowship for the furtherance of its work, and to implement and put into operation all actions and policies of the Fellowship. The Council shall be authorized to secure the services of such office personnel as shall be required to carry on the work of the Fellowship, except for the State Representative. He shall be recommended by the Council and approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the messengers present and voting at any duly called meeting of the Fellowship. All salaries shall be determined by the Council. Its authority is that which is committed to it by the Fellowship, and any

of the actions of the Council or of any salaried servant of the Fellowship may be called up for review by the Fellowship at any Annual meeting.

ARTICLE VI

Recognition of Organizations

Section 1 - Purpose

In addition to those organizations and agencies approved by the GARBC, the ESRBC will recognize certain organizations whose operation and appeal is centered in New York State. Recognition by the Empire State Fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches means that the Fellowship believes a given organization meets a need in serving our churches. Recognition is not a sponsorship. Recognition is not a judgment implying that other organizations have no valid reason for existence, nor that other organizations are necessarily denied conference exposure. By this recognition the Fellowship brings to the attention of our churches such independent organizations and their specialized ministries within our State that could assist churches in the broadening of their ministry and outreach.

Section 2 - Policy

1. The State Fellowship does not intend to control the recognized organizations.
2. The organization must seek and request recognition.
3. The Fellowship will consider only organizations which meet the following qualifications:
 - a. They must be Baptist in name and doctrine.
 - b. They must be fundamentalist in position and separatist in practice.
 - c. They must agree with the Confession of Faith of the Fellowship.
 - d. All directors, administrators and teaching personnel must be members of independent Baptist churches.
- e. They shall be known for their Christ-honoring ethics in policy and programs, and in harmony with the philosophy and thrust

of the churches of our Association.

- f. They must be above reproach and be Christ-honoring in their business and administrative practice.
4. Once approved, such organizations will be subject to annual review.

Section 3 - Procedure

1. The responsibility for examination will rest with the Council of Ten.
2. Fellowship recognition will be granted by action of the Fellowship upon recommendation of the Council of Ten at the Annual Business Meeting or at any regular conference provided that the churches have been instructed to send voting messengers.

ARTICLE VII

Amendments

This Constitution may be revised or amended at any Annual Meeting of the Fellowship provided notice and copy of amendments are sent to the churches at least sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Meeting of the Fellowship and approved by 2/3 vote of the messengers present and voting.

HOW TO ENTER THE FELLOWSHIP

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§ Refer to Article IV, Section 1 Admissions.

§ (NOTE: Those local churches having conflict with organizations and movements as listed under Section 1, must officially sever these relationships before applications will be considered.)

§ In entering the Fellowship, churches should in no way feel that they are giving up their autonomous character nor in any way submitting to an ecclesiastical overlordship for such unscriptural practices have no part in the Fellowship as constituted. Each fellowshiping church is totally independent.

§ **APPLICATION**

§ Name of Church: _____

§ Address: _____

§ _____

§ Phone: _____

§ Pastor: _____

§ Address: _____

§ _____

§ Phone: _____

§ E-Mail: _____

§ _____

§ Has the church read and agreed with the Constitution and Confession of Faith of the Fellowship? _____

§ Date when the church voted to fellowship with the Empire State Fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches. _____

§ Is the church a member of a denomination or affiliated with another association? (If so, which?) _____

Date of Recognition Council or when the church was incorporated.

List some of the churches represented at the Council:

Briefly state how and why the church came into existence.

Are all church members born again and been baptized by immersion?

Number of members in the church: _____

Signed by Pastor: _____

Date: _____

Signed by the Church Clerk: _____

Date: _____

Mail this form and three copies of your church's Constitution and Articles of Faith to:

Craig Golden, State Representative
1726 Union Center Highway
Endicott, NY 13760
Phone: 607/748-0860
E-Mail: craiggolden@juno.com