

# **PLANO BIBLE CHAPEL**

## **Newcomers and New Members Information**





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## History of Plano Bible Chapel

In 1966, while still a student at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dr. Tom Constable and his wife, Mary, moved to Plano, Texas, with the vision of starting a Bible-centered church. Plano Bible Chapel began quietly as a small Bible study that started in the summer of 1968. This study consisted of six families who lived in Plano. Five of these families attended Believer's Chapel in Dallas, and wished to attend church closer to their homes. Two of the six charter families are still members of our congregation. This Bible study continued through the winter of 1967, when they moved to Jim and Sherry Lewis' living room.

Tom Constable and Jim Lewis became the first two elders of Plano Bible Chapel at its official founding in 1968. For the first 12 years of the church's history, the elders were responsible for the teaching during the Sunday morning Worship Service. In 1980, Jim Lewis began to serve as full-time pastor. As the pastoral staff grew, Jim Lewis assumed the role of Senior Pastor and continued to do the majority of the preaching until his retirement in 2002. Larry Murray was called to serve as Lead Pastor in 2004.

PBC's operates under the biblical principal that Jesus determines His will for His church through the good intentions of godly, yet imperfect people to lead His Body of believers. The Governing Board of Elders lead and shepherd God's people. Deacons serve and facilitate the ministry needs of the church. Pastors and administrative staff implement the vision of the Elders and coordinate ministry with various other leaders and communicate with the PBC family and community.

Staff members include Larry Murray (Lead Pastor), Ryan Rives (Associate Pastor -Student and Worship Ministries), Craig Williams (Associate Pastor – Outreach and Spanish Ministries), Donna Blackmon (Office Manager), and Jennifer Edmunds (Financial Bookkeeper).

For over 50 years, the people of Plano Bible Chapel have been faithfully following Jesus, loving each other, and serving the world for the glory of God. Our mission is to lead all people to a life changing, ever-growing relationship with Jesus.

Whether you're single, newlyweds, a large family, or empty-nester, welcome to PBC.

For more information about PBC ministries and service opportunities, visit the following:

- Church Center App: <https://planobible.churchcenter.com/pages/home>
- Plano Bible Chapel Website: [www.planobiblechapel.org](http://www.planobiblechapel.org)
- PBC on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PlanoBibleChapel](http://www.facebook.com/PlanoBibleChapel)
- PBC on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/PBCconnection>
- PBC on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/planobiblechapel/>
- PBC Online Directory: <https://planobiblechapel.adjace.com/>
- Event Registrations: <https://planobible.churchcenter.com/registrations/events>
- Prayer: [pbcc-prayer@googlegroups.com](mailto:pbcc-prayer@googlegroups.com) and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/130384343720581/>



# What We Believe as a Church and Why We Believe It

Everything we believe at Plano Bible Chapel is built on 5 foundational biblical truths:

**1. The God of the Bible exists, and we can know Him personally. Eternal life is knowing God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ forever.**

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen 1:1) Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him. (Heb 11:6) This is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ. (Jn 17:3)*

**2. God has revealed Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in His Word, the Bible. The Bible tells us how to know God and His will for our lives.**

*Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, He has spoken to us by [His] Son.... (Heb 1:1) "...I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ... [My goal] is to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death... (Phil 3:8-10)*

**3. God inspired the Bible so that it was written without error in the original manuscripts, which God preserved through accurate copies and which we can read in good Bible translations.**

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17) Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. (Jn 17:17) The entirety of Your word is truth... (Ps 119:160)*

**4. Because the Bible has no errors, it contains no contradictions. We resolve apparent Biblical discrepancies by allowing the Bible to interpret itself.**

*...No prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, moved by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God. (2 Pet 1:20-21)*

- **We use the majority of verses to interpret the minority:** Over 100 vs that teach that salvation is through faith in Christ alone (Jn 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:29; 20:31; Rom 1:16; 3:22; 4:5; 5:1; 10:4; Gal 3:22) help us interpret 6 verses that some use to teach that baptism saves us: Mk 16:16; Jn 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Titus 3:5, and 1 Pet 3:21.
- **We use the clear verses to interpret the unclear:** 1 Cor 15:29 is the only vs that mentions baptism for the dead; we cannot base a major doctrine on such an unclear vs!
- **We use later verses to interpret earlier ones in God's progressive revelation:** Lk 16:19-31; 2 Cor 5:8; Rev 6:9-11; 14:9-11 affirm our conscious awareness after death, not "soul sleep" as Eccl 9:5 is sometimes misunderstood.
- **We use the NT to interpret the OT:** Jn 12:37-38; Rom 10:16; and 1 Pet 2:21-25 tell us that the Suffering Servant in Is 52:13-53:12 is Jesus the Messiah.

**5. We interpret the Bible normally (literally) in context accepting each part at face value for what it says or claims, whether history, poetry, or prophecy.**

- *Symbols of real people in poetry and prophecy: Ps. 22:12-21; Rev 13:1-8*

These five truths form the foundation—the "why?"—of our doctrine as a church. Everything we teach is traceable to these five foundations.

# Six Distinctive Teachings and Practices at PBC

**1. We believe God has governed human history in periods of time called dispensations.**

The word "dispensation" means an economy (like capitalism, socialism, or communism) or an administration, (like our 44 U.S. presidential administrations or like how parents relate differently to their children as they grow up). Understanding the different dispensations is one of our greatest tools to help interpret the Bible correctly. For example, God's has given distinct promises to both Israel and the church. If we confuse these 2 sets of promises, we misinterpret the Bible!

**2. We believe Christ will return in the future in two phases: In the air to rescue His church (the Rapture) and to the earth to rescue Israel and rule the nations (the Second Coming).**

These two events are separated by at least seven years of worldwide disaster and war called the Tribulation. Distinguishing these two phases of Christ's coming helps us correctly interpret many Biblical passages and preserves the immanency of Christ's return for us believers.

**3. We believe the miraculous New Testament sign gifts, such as speaking in tongues and healing, are not normative for the worldwide church today, nor are they signs of a believer's salvation or spiritual maturity.**

Our church believes in miracles! We pray weekly for God to heal the sick and intervene in people's lives. And He does! We see God save people and change them over time. We send out missionaries who study foreign languages so they can preach the Gospel in those cultures, and see God transform people. But we do not believe God gives the gift of speaking foreign languages or healing to every Christian and church in the world today. God gave those sign gifts to prove the truth of the apostles' message before they wrote the NT. Now that we have a complete, inspired Bible, we don't need miracles to prove it—the Bible itself is the miracle!

**4. We believe God saves us, forgives us and gives us eternal life only by His grace through faith alone in Christ alone.**

Today, the Gospel is presented in as many different ways in evangelical circles as there are different Gospel tracts. Most of these Gospel presentations call for faith plus any number of additional steps, promises, or commitments. Our church preaches the message that salvation is by faith alone in Jesus: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (Acts 16:32)

**5. We believe the NT model of the local church is to be governed by a team of elders who shepherd and oversee our flock and a team of deacons who serve us, all under Jesus Christ, our Chief Shepherd.**

A team of elders protects us from 3 extremes in local churches: an outside hierarchy controlling us, a one-man dictatorship, or a congregation democracy where immature believers take charge. We believe God uses the good intentions of the elders, who are godly, yet imperfect men to determine His Will and decide the direction & policies of our church. They provide representative leadership, getting input from our staff, deacons, and ministry leaders. Our paid pastors and workers carry out the daily operation of the church. Our deacons serve us by taking care of ministry needs like facilities and finances. Our ministry leaders guide our members in carrying out our ministries. Our members vote to express their affirmation of major decisions like recognizing new elders and deacons. Legal decisions are made by a joint elder and deacon committee called the Trustees.

**6. We observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday and baptize believers as a public confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ.**

Observing Communion every week (Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26) increases our worship and appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ and His great sacrifice on the cross for us. It requires us to examine our hearts (1 Corinthians 11:28-29) in order to love God and love others as Jesus has loved us. Water baptism by immersion is a physical demonstration of the spiritual transformation that happens the moment a person believes in Jesus Christ. Baptism was commanded by Jesus Christ as a testimony of faith in Him (*Matthew 28:18-20*). Baptism identifies the believer with Jesus and with His body (*1 Corinthians 12:12-13*).

## MISSION AND VISION

***The mission of PBC is to lead all people to a life changing, ever growing relationship with JESUS.*** We are becoming a diverse family of believers in Jesus devoted to following Him, loving others, and serving the world for the glory of God. Our vision is about our desires and dreams of what could be as the Lord Jesus leads us, changes us, and provides for us as His church (Proverbs 16:9; Matthew 16:18-19; James 4:13-15).



***Our vision is to be a WORSHIPING church*** – Our desire for regular worship services is to equip, encourage, and energize the congregation in singing praises to God for who He is, what He has done, and what He promises to do (Psalm 145; Hebrews 13:15). Prayer will be a priority for PBC people, ministries, and leaders; depending upon God to give us boldness and grace to share the message of Christ through the power of His Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 1:3-6; Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 1 Peter 4:7). We'll encourage each person to worship the Lord in every way for everything beyond the walls of the chapel into the communities where we live, love, and serve (1 Corinthians 10:31).



***Our vision is to be a GOING church*** – reaching the community surrounding Plano Bible Chapel (over 200,000 people within a 5-mile radius) with the Good News of Jesus Christ. We envision making disciples who make disciples by sharing the gospel with other people in personal evangelism. We long to love others, show hospitality, coordinate outreach events, serve others in our neighborhoods, work with city leaders, help in our local schools, and collaborate with other like-minded churches and ministries (Matthews 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5). We will continue sending missionaries around the world to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and plant churches. We also envision church sponsored short-term mission trips and will also encourage individuals to pursue short-term missions service opportunities on their own (Acts 13:2-3; Philippians 1:3-7). We seek to expand the impact of God's Word around the world through the faithful teaching and preaching of the Bible by utilizing social media, internet, and other communication resources.



***Our vision is to be a GROWING church*** – creating environments that foster genuine, sanctifying relationships through congregational worship services, Bible classes and studies, small group ministries, and one-on-one discipleship for believers to become more like Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; Colossians 2:6-7; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 1:5). We want to model safe, healthy relationships where people can accept, love, shepherd, encourage, forgive, protect, serve, and pray for one another (Romans 12:9-21; Colossians 3:12-17; Hebrews 10:19-25; James 5:13-16). We will help broken, hurting families, strengthening parents and grandparents in their God-given roles, and providing a safe place for children and students to know Jesus (Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 10:14).



***Our vision is to be an EQUIPPING church*** – preparing children, students, and adults with a biblical worldview in order to effectively engage the empty philosophies of the world through strategic, biblical apologetics (Romans 1:18-20; Colossians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:5). We will help children, students, and adults discover their divine design so each one can utilize their unique skills and abilities to serve Christ effectively within the church family and in the local community (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10). We will seek to maximize the facilities of our campus in order to accommodate growth, accessibility to our community, and reflect our dreams to reach future generations (Psalm 78:4-7, 145:3-4). We will be a warm and welcoming place to host classes, small groups, Bible studies, prayer, ministry team meetings, and groups that benefit our church body and local community (Ephesians 5:15-16).



***Our vision is to be a UNIFYING church*** We will reflect the various, diverse families, cultures, ethnicities, and generations in our community. We recognize the image of God in each person and realize that believers in Jesus Christ will come from every language and people group (Genesis 1:27; Revelation 5:9). We will stand up and speak out for the equality, justice, and fairness of the poor, oppressed, and exploited by serving the often overlooked neighbors of our community and people of our world (Proverbs 14:31; Micah 6:8, Zechariah 7:10) so that God's character is glorified and the Gospel of Christ is magnified (Deuteronomy 10:18, 32:4; Psalm 72:12-14; Matthew 22:38-39; James 1:27, 2:8-9). We will offer multiple worship services and ministries in different languages spoken by the people in our local community (John 17:21-23; Ephesians 2:12-16, 4:1-6). We will focus on essential Biblical Convictions and the person of Jesus whom we share in common rather than the differing opinions, personal convictions, and preferences that would threaten to divide us (Romans 14:1-23; 1 Corinthians 10:23-33).

# WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT SALVATION

## Salvation Is Needed Because Humans Are Depraved

Salvation is the great work of God (Jonah 2:9) in which He forgives sin and gives eternal life to a believing sinner as a free gift of His grace (Eph. 2:8-9). Forgiveness is needed because all people are born sinners showing their sin nature soon after birth (Gen. 6:5; Ps. 14:1-3; 51:5; Rom. 3:10-18). New life is needed because all people are born spiritually dead, separated from God (Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3). Having a sin nature and being spiritually dead results in people being totally depraved meaning that they are unable to please God by the good deeds they may achieve (Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Mk. 7:20-23; I Cor. 2:14; Gal. 5:19-21). The sinner is under the just condemnation of God who is perfect in holiness, purity, and righteousness (Ezra 9:15; Ps. 22:3; Ps. 48:10; Isa. 6:3; Jer. 9:24; Hab. 1:13) and must judge sin (Ezek. 18:4; Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 6:23).

## What Is Sin?

Sin is any lack of conformity to the holy character of God (Rom. 3:23). The sin nature is expressed in selfish thoughts and actions and rebellion against the will and plan of God (Jn. 3:19-20; Gal. 5:19-21). The creature expressing its will over the will of the Creator is sin because the Creator has the right of authority over His creation for His will to be done (Isa. 14:12-15; Rom. 1:18-32, 8:5-8; 9:19-21).

## Sin Has A Penalty

God loves all people and desires them to be with Him, but He cannot tolerate sin and sinners in His presence because of His holiness and righteousness. He must condemn and judge sin. The penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Gen. 2:16-17; Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23). Physical death is separation from life in this world; spiritual death is separation from God. Sinners are unable to die for their sins and live, and are unable to make themselves acceptable to God by any works of righteousness (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 8:7-8; Tit. 3:5). God's righteous justice must be satisfied another way. Motivated by love, mercy, and grace (1 Jn. 4:8) God devised a plan to pay the price Himself in order to save and make people right before Him and welcome in His presence.

## The Work Of Christ

To accomplish His plan, God sent His Son to be joined to humankind (Jn. 1:1-2, 14). This occurred in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20-23). The plan included Jesus, the Christ, dying by crucifixion as a substitute for all sinners (Ps. 22:1, 11-18; Isa. 53:3-12; Rom. 5:6-8). Jesus had no sin of His own but permitted all sins to be placed upon Himself (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:21-24). He evidenced being separated from God in the words, "Why have you forsaken me," spoken from the cross (Matt. 27:46). His words, "It is finished," declared the payment to be completed (Jn. 19:30). His resurrection from the dead three days later proved that sin and death had been conquered, the price fully paid (Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3-5, 20-23). His separation from God in death and the shedding of His blood paid the redemption price (Eph. 1:7) fully satisfying God's righteous justice (1 Jn. 2:1-2) and providing the basis for sinners to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18-19). His death rendered God propitious or free to extend His mercy.

## The Work Of The Holy Spirit

Christ's payment of the price for sin freed God to save sinners. This work in an individual begins with the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit creating a consciousness of sin and a sense of need for salvation (Jn. 16:8-10). When the truth of the gospel that Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for sin is learned, the Holy Spirit illumines the individual so that the message may be understood (1 Cor. 2:11-12) and believed.

## The Responsibility Of Sinners

Sinners receive redemption by believing that Jesus Christ died for their sins and was raised from the dead (Jn. 1:12, 3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 1:16-17, 10:9-14; 1 Cor. 15:1-5). Believing is trusting in or relying upon Christ and not on self-works or anything else to save from sin. The faith that God requires to give salvation is the opposite of "doing" anything; it is depending on the Savior to do the work of saving. The New Testament mentions "faith" or "believe" as God's only requirement to be saved in more than one hundred verses such as those cited in the first sentence of this paragraph.

## **Regeneration Gives New Life**

When sinners receive Christ as Savior by faith, God forgives all sins and gives eternal life (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; 1 Jn. 5:13). This new life is spiritual and imparted by the regenerating ministry of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5); it is a new birth (Jn. 3:3-8) making believers born again children of God (1 Jn. 3:1-2). This eternal life is received by grace through faith alone apart from any works of righteousness (Jn. 3:17-18, 36; 20:30-31; Eph. 2:4-9).

## **Additional Benefits For Believers**

Many other blessings are received at salvation including being justified or declared righteous by faith (Rom. 3:21-26, 4:1-8), being baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (Acts 1:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:13), being indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16-17; Rom. 8:9-11), being adopted as a son or daughter into the family of God (Eph. 1:3-5), and being transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13).

## **The Role Of Repentance**

Trusting in Christ as Savior requires a change of mind about being a sinner, about the awfulness of sin, about not being able to make oneself acceptable to God by good works, and about who Jesus is and what He did. It also requires a change of confidence from self or any other to confidence in Jesus to save. This change is called repentance (1 Thess. 1:9-10). Being convicted of sin and changing the mind about being a sinner can and should produce regret about being sinful. But sorrow alone is not sufficient.

True repentance is also a conscious decision to trust Christ as Savior, a transfer of confidence from self to the Savior. The free gift of God's grace is received. Peter told those who had crucified the Lord Jesus that His resurrection and ascension into heaven proved He is both Lord and Christ. They were challenged to repent to receive forgiveness (Acts. 2:22-38). This meant to change their minds about Jesus being the Messiah (Christ). They did, and their change of mind is described as "those who had received his word" (Acts. 2:41); their repentance was shown in believing the message.

Paul coupled repentance with faith as two parts of one message (Acts. 20:21). And in Romans, he wrote that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). Then he stated that the kindness of God leads to repentance (Rom. 2:4). After that, he described being justified by faith (Rom. 3:21-28). This sequence demonstrates that belief is the crucial issue in being saved and that a change of mind in repentance is included in believing. The mind is changed transferring a person's trust from self to the Savior. Further proof that repentance does not need to be a separate or distinct act from faith is the Gospel of John. It is the one New Testament book written to tell someone how to be saved (Jn. 20:21), and the only requirement John gives is "believe" (Jn. 3:16, 18; 5:24).

## **Sanctification Begins At Salvation**

When an individual becomes a child of God by faith, a new nature is given (2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Pet. 1:2-4). Then God begins transforming the life and producing good works. This is called progressive sanctification.

Positional sanctification is also given at the new birth; the new believer is immediately set apart to God in holiness and completely acceptable to God (1 Cor. 1:30, 6:11; Eph. 2:19; Heb. 10:10, 14). For example, the Corinthians were called saints (1 Cor. 1:2), but they needed to correct their behavior as described in the remainder of the epistle. Ultimate sanctification refers to the complete perfection in holiness that the believer will experience in the presence of God when glorified (Rom 8:29-30; Eph. 1:4, 5:27; 1 Jn. 3:1-3; Jude 1:24).

In the present the believer is to put away sin and practice righteousness becoming sanctified (Rom. 6:1-22, 12:1-2). God's plan and will is that good works be done by every believer (Eph. 2:10; Tit. 3:8). The indwelling Holy Spirit provides supernatural power to produce the character qualities of Christ and to do good deeds that honor God (Rom. 8:2-4, 11-14; Gal. 5:22-25). Sanctification or becoming more like Christ is to continue throughout life (Rom. 8:28-30; Phil. 1:6). However, the lives of many Biblical characters as well as many Biblical passages show clearly that sanctification in the life of a believer may take place rapidly or slowly and include a great amount of sin and failure (1 Cor. 3:14-15; 5:3-5; 6:6-8; Heb. 5:11-12; 11:32-34; 2 Pet. 2:7-8; Rev. 2-3).

## **The Lordship Of Christ And The Believer**

Since God is the all powerful Creator (Gen. 1:1; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17) and completely sovereign (Ps. 103:19), and since Jesus Christ is declared to be the Head of the church which is His body (Eph. 5:23-24), believers who are subjects in the Kingdom of God and members of the Body of Christ owe Him allegiance and submission to His authority and direction (Rom. 12:1-2). A decision to make Christ Lord in life may happen at the time of receiving Him as Savior, but it may also occur later. This is a process and a walk that continues throughout the life of a believer. Honest Christians cannot claim that Jesus Christ is Lord of every area of their lives at any one point.

In the name “Lord Jesus Christ,” the word Lord emphasizes His deity, the name Jesus is the human name given because He is the Savior (Matt. 1:21), and the title Christ is the Messiah, the Anointed One (Jn. 1:41), chosen to be the exclusive Savior (Acts 4:12). The commands to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31), to confess Him as Lord (Rom. 10:9), and to call on the name of the Lord (Rom. 10:13) all refer to believing in His deity, that He is God. Lordship in life is the work that God begins to effect when a person is saved and new life has begun; this work continues throughout the life of the believer.

## **The Believer Can Have Assurance Of Salvation**

Assurance of salvation is possible by knowing what the Word of God gives as the requirement for salvation and by knowing that the requirement has been met. It is stated above that faith in Jesus Christ as Savior is the only requirement to be saved. John 3:36 declares that the believer has eternal life. John 5:24 states that the believer has eternal life, will not come into judgment, and has passed out of death into life. These present tense verbs mean that eternal life is a present possession of the believer.

The Apostle Paul instructed the Philippian jailer to, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). The Apostle John explained that eternal life is a gift that God has given in His Son, that those who have the Son have life, and that those who believe in the name of the Son of God can know that they have eternal life (1 Jn. 5:13). Thus, knowing that God’s requirement is to believe, that faith is sufficient, and that faith has been placed in Christ gives assurance that salvation is real and possessed.

## **The Believer’s Salvation Is Eternally Secure**

Eternal life is declared to be the present possession of the believer in Christ as Savior (Jn. 3:36; 5:24). And since eternity is forever, the life possessed is not temporary; it is permanent. Eternal life has begun and there will be no end to it. Jesus stated that those whom He gives eternal life will never perish because He holds them in His hands, and they are securely in the Father’s hands also. None is able to snatch them out of their hands (Jn. 10:27-30). This promise assures that believers have eternal security.

Romans 8 begins with the affirmation that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (placed there by Spirit baptism at the instant of salvation). The chapter ends with the assurance that nothing can separate believers from the love of God. This truth also assures that believers are eternally secure. Salvation is a present permanent possession of every believer!

**Constitution  
and  
Doctrinal Statement  
of  
Plano Bible Chapel  
Plano, Texas**

**Article I – Name**

The name of this church shall be Plano Bible Chapel and it shall be located in Plano, Texas.

**Article II – Purpose and Goals**

**Section 1 – Purpose**

This church shall be a body of professing Christians who have joined together for the purpose of glorifying God individually and collectively (I Cor. 10:31).

**Section 2 – Goals**

We will have a threefold goal as a church. It shall be our goal to evangelize our community and the world by introducing individuals to the grace of God and by inviting them to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8). It shall be our goal to edify believers in Jesus Christ, building them up in their faith, so that they may become mature, reproducing Christians (Eph. 4:11-16). It shall be our goal to develop leaders who will be able to assume positions of responsibility in this and other churches (2 Tim. 2:2).

**Article III – Doctrine**

**Section 1 – The Scriptures**

We believe the Bible to be the verbally inspired word of God, without error in the original writings, and the supreme and final authority in doctrine and practice, for both this church and every individual Christian (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).

**Section 2 – The Godhead**

We believe in one God who eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each person of the Godhead possesses the same nature and attributes, but each is distinct in office and activity (Deut. 6:4; Matt.28:19).

**Section 3 – Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, that he became man without ceasing to be God having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, that He lived a sinless life, that he died as a substitutionary sacrifice for every human being, that He was physically raised from the dead by divine power, that he presently serves in heaven as our Intercessor and Advocate, and that He will return to earth (John 1:1, 14; 5:18; 2 Cor. 5:21; Acts 2:31-33; 1 John 2:1-2; John 14:1-2).

## **Section 4 – The Holy Spirit**

We believe that God the Holy Spirit is a person who restrains evil in the world, convicts men of sin, regenerates those who trust Christ as Savior, baptizes them into the body of Christ, indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, bestows spiritual gifts on each one, and fills those yielded to Him. We believe that some gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and miraculous healings, were given as authenticating signs in the early church and were temporary. We believe, however, that God answers prayer for the sick in accordance with His will (John 16:7-11; 3:8; I Cor. 12:4-11, 13; John 14:16-17; Eph. 4:30; 5:18; I Cor. 14:22-24; Heb. 2:4; I John 5:14-15; Jas. 5:15-16).

## **Section 5 – Angels**

We believe that angels are spiritual beings which were created sinless. Presently angels exist in both fallen and unfallen states, the former state including Satan and his demons. We believe that Satan is a personal being who is the enemy of God and all Christians (Heb. 1:13-14; 2 Pet. 2:4; Isa. 14:12-14; Gen. 3:1-19; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 20:10).

## **Section 6 – Man**

We believe that man was created by God as a human being and that he did not evolve from a lower form of life. We believe that he was created innocent and in the image of God. Through their own choice, Adam and Eve fell and their sin has resulted in physical and spiritual death to themselves and their posterity. We believe that man is totally depraved, that is, in no way is he able to commend himself to God. He has inherited a sinful nature, is alienated from God, and in need of salvation (Gen. 1:1, 27; Col. 1:16-17; Gen. 2:17; 3:19; Eph. 2:1-2).

We believe that God administers His purpose on the earth through man under varying responsibilities, stewardships, or dispensations. These dispensations may be distinguished in Scripture through a consistent use of the normal method of biblical interpretation. We believe that God has a plan and program for Israel that is distinct from His plan and program for the church (Eph. 3:2-6, 9-11; Col. 1:25-27; Rom. 6:14; Heb. 7:18-19; I Cor. 10:32).

## **Section 7 – Salvation**

We believe that salvation is a gift of God and is received by man through personal faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sin. We believe that man is justified by grace through faith apart from works, and that all true believers are kept secure in Christ by the power of God forever (Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 8:1, 38-39; John 10:27-30).

We believe that sanctification is positional, progressive, and ultimate. Christians are called to a holy life of fellowship, service, and testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit. God will reward the faithfulness of Christians at the Judgment Seat of Christ (John 17:17; Eph. 5:25-27; I Thes. 5:23; Heb. 10:10, 14; I Pet. 1:15-16; I Cor. 3:12-17; John 14:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:10).

## **Section 8 – The Church**

We believe that the universal church, the body of Christ, is a spiritual organism composed of all genuine Christians who live between the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and the Rapture (I Thes. 4:16-17). A believer becomes a member of this church by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit at the moment he trusts Christ as his Savior (I Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18).

We believe that the local church is an assembly of professing Christians who voluntarily join together in one locality to worship God, study the Bible, observe the ordinances, practice Christian fellowship, pray, evangelize the lost, and be equipped for Christian service (Acts 2:42-47; I Cor. 1:1-2; Eph. 4:11-13).

We believe that Christ instituted the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper which are to be observed by believers until He returns, and that these are the only ordinances He so appointed. By water baptism a believer identifies himself publicly with Christ and His people. Water baptism is intended to be for believers only and by immersion whenever possible. The Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's death, the elements being symbolic of His body and blood. Every believer should partake of the Lord's Supper frequently (Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 6:1-14; I Cor. 11:23-26).

## **Section 9 – The Future**

We believe in the personal, imminent return of Jesus Christ for the church. This event (the Rapture) will be followed in order by the Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ to earth, the Millennial Reign of Christ on the earth, and entrance into the Eternal State.

We believe that the souls of believers in Jesus Christ pass immediately into His presence at death and remain there in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming for the church, when soul and body will be reunited and joined with Him forever. We believe that after death the souls of unbelievers remain in conscious misery in Hades until the final judgement of the Great White Throne at the close of the Millennium when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord. We believe in a literal heaven and a literal hell (Luke 16:19-26; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 2 Thes. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15).

# **Article IV – Government**

## **Section 1 – Authority**

This church acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head (Col. 1:18). The Scriptures are the objective revelation of God by which He expresses His will to the church (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). This church shall be neither accountable to nor under the jurisdiction or supervision of any other ecclesiastical body.

The government of this church shall be vested in the governing board of elders (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-22; Tit. 1:5-9; Heb. 13:17). Though the elder board shall be ~~in~~ the final human authority in the church, it shall have the power to delegate to individuals, committees, and organizations the right to transact any of its business or to exercise any of its powers, but the exercise of such authority shall be subject to the supervision and control of the board.

## **Section 2 – The Governing Board of Elders**

The governing board of elders shall be the official board of the church. It shall be composed of all the elders of the church whose term is active and shall also include the senior pastor. All succeeding references to "the board" or to "the elders" in this document refer to the governing board of elders. It shall lead, govern, and oversee the church. The elders shall strive to remain sensitive to the feelings of individual members of the church by many means in order to provide representative rather than dictatorial leadership (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

The board shall meet at least once a month and a quorum of at least three-fourths of the elders shall be required to transact business. At the first meeting of the new church year (January through December) the board shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary to serve for a period of one year. The vote of at least three-fourths of all the elders shall determine major actions and policies.

The board shall be responsible to do the following:

- 1) Lead the church to determine and execute its objectives. (1 Tim. 3:5)
- 2) Govern the affairs of the church. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-4)
- 3) Oversee all church organizations and their programs. (Tit. 1:7-9)
- 4) Provide for the spiritual needs of the church. (Acts 20:28)

- 5) Feed the church from the written Word of God. (Acts 20:32)
- 6) Protect the church from its spiritual enemies. (Acts 20:28-31)
- 7) Exercise discipline of individuals in the church as needed (see Article IV, Section 8).
- 8) Pray for and with the people.
- 9) Visit people needing counsel and comfort in times of need.

### **Section 3 – Major Committees**

#### a. The Deacon Committee

The deacon committee shall be composed of all the deacons of this church whose term is active. It shall serve under and be responsible to the elder board.

This committee shall meet as needed and a quorum of at least three-fourths of the deacons shall be required to transact business. At the first meeting of the new church year the committee shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary to serve for a period of one year. The vote of at least three-fourths of all the deacons shall be required to pass motions.

The deacon committee shall be responsible to do the following:

- 1) Provide for the physical needs of the church. (Acts 6:1-6)
- 2) Maintain the properties and equipment of the church.
- 3) Organize and administer the finances of the church.
- 4) Minister to the physical and material needs of the church.

#### b. The Trustee Committee

The trustee committee shall be composed of all the elders and deacons of the church whose term is active. It shall serve under and be responsible to the elder board. It shall function on the same level of authority as the deacon committee.

The trustee committee shall meet as needed and at least once each year (as required by Texas law). A quorum of at least three-fourths of the trustees shall be required to transact business. At the first meeting of the new church year the committee shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary to serve for a period of one year. The vote of at least three-fourths of all the trustees shall be required to pass motions.

The trustee committee shall be responsible to do the following:

- 1) Provide for the needs of the church which have legal or governmental ramifications.
- 2) Act for the church in the purchase or sale of real properties.
- 3) Lead the church in providing additional buildings and facilities in which to meet.
- 4) Secure legal counsel for the church as needed.

### **Section 4 – Elders and Deacons**

#### a. Qualifications

Elders must meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; and Acts 20:28-35 as interpreted by a majority of the elders.

Deacons must meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 as interpreted by a majority of the elders.

Elders and deacons must be able and willing to serve as well as being personally qualified for their respective offices.

b. Number

There shall be as many elders and deacons as there are men who are qualified, willing, able and needed to function in this capacity in the judgment of the elder board.

c. Appointment

A nominating committee shall be appointed by the elder board to serve for a period of four months (normally September through December). This committee shall be composed as much as possible of an equal number of elders, deacons, and other members in the church, but will not contain less than six individuals. After a thorough study of the men in the church, this committee shall recommend to the board men who, in its judgment, are qualified, willing, and able to function as elders or deacons as the needs of the church may require. The board shall vote on each man nominated. A three-fourths majority vote of all the elders shall be required for each nominee to remain on the ballot. The ballot shall then go to the church. A three-fourths majority vote of confidence by the members of the congregation who are voting shall be required for each nominee to be appointed as an elder or deacon. The congregational vote shall be taken by secret written ballot which has been sent to each member in the church at least two weeks in advance. The whole process shall normally be completed before December 31 of each year.

d. Induction

An induction service shall be planned by the board at which time each newly appointed elder and deacon shall be presented to the congregation and ordained to his respective ministry in the church. This service shall normally take place in January as needed.

e. Term of Service

Elders and deacons shall serve a term of three years with approximately one-third of each group's term of service expiring each year. An elder or deacon may succeed himself in office and begin serving an additional three-year term immediately after his present term of service expires provided, 1) he is nominated by the nominating committee, 2) he is approved by a three-fourths majority vote of the board, and 3) he has received a three-fourths majority vote of confidence by the congregation. (See Article IV, Section 4, c.)

f. Removal from Office

An elder or deacon may resign if he feels so led by God before his term of service has expired.

The elder board shall evaluate each elder and each deacon at least once each year. If an elder or deacon ceases to be qualified or ceases to function acceptably as an elder or deacon, he may be removed from office by a three-fourths majority vote of the board before his term of service expires.

## **Section 5 – Other Officers**

a. Treasurer

The treasurer shall be a deacon. He shall be appointed to the office of treasurer by the board and shall be responsible to the deacon committee. He shall have custody of the funds contributed to the church for any purpose and shall pay out the same as directed. He shall also make periodic financial reports.

b. Committee Chairmen and Directors

Committee chairmen and directors of church programs shall be selected by the elder board, the deacon committee, or the trustee committee, depending on their responsibilities, and shall be approved by the board. Each one shall be given a ministry description that will outline his or her title, function, responsibilities, term of service, and compensation at the time he or she is enlisted to serve.

c. Pastors and other Full and Part-time Employees

A search committee shall be convened for the purpose of selecting new pastors. The governing board of elders will closely evaluate the pastoral candidates recommended by the search committee. The candidate that results from this process must be approved unanimously by the board. A three-fourths majority vote of confidence by the members of the congregation who are voting shall be required for the candidate to be appointed as a pastor. The congregational vote shall be taken by secret written ballot which has been sent to each member in the church at least two weeks in advance.

Other employees shall be selected or approved by the board in consultation with the appropriate major committees.

The senior pastor shall be a member of the governing board of elders. Other staff members may or may not be elders or deacons depending on their personal qualifications and the ministry which they are hired to carry out.

## **Section 6 – Policy Statements**

More particular methods, procedures, and responsibilities shall be spelled out in written policy statements produced by the elder board and the major committees, and approved by the board. Policy statements may be revised by a three-fourths majority vote of the committee involved and the board.

## **Section 7 – Membership**

There shall be ~~no~~ a formal membership roll. Any professing Christian who has met the requirements of the membership policy adopted by the governing board of elders will be a member of this church (I Cor. 12:13-27).

## **Section 8 –Church Discipline**

Church discipline ultimately shall be the responsibility of the elder board which may publicly announce the heretical doctrine or disorderly conduct of any member if his or her life mars the testimony of the church. In extreme cases the offending person may be denied the fellowship of the church. In every case of church discipline the desired result shall be the restoration to fellowship of the offending party (Matt. 18:15-18; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; Gal. 6:1; 2 Thes. 3:6, 14-17; Tit. 3:10-11; 2 John 2:10-11).

## **Article V – Ordination**

Since it is the hope of this church that Spirit-filled men among us shall be led by God to specific ministries of leadership in the church of Jesus Christ, such men may be given a commendation to minister in a particular way and place by the elders convened for this purpose. The elders shall have the option of inviting one or more guests to join them in examining the candidate if they see fit. The candidate shall be examined concerning his understanding of and agreement with the doctrinal statement of this church, his Scriptural qualifications, his past experience and previous ministry, his leading to minister, and any other areas which the elders may specify. Upon a favorable decision of the elders, the candidate shall be approved for ordination. The time and form of the ordination ceremony shall be determined by the elder board (Acts 6:5-6; 13:3; I Tim. 4:14).

## Article VI – Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a three-fourths majority vote of the elder board and a three-fourths majority vote of confidence by the members of the congregation who are voting. The congregational vote shall be taken by secret ballot which has been sent to each member in the church at least two weeks in advance.

### Amendments

#### Amendment 1

The words underlined below were added to the constitution August 5, 1979.

Article IV, Section 4, Paragraph c: “A nominating committee shall be appointed by the elder board to serve for a period of four months (normally September through December). This committee shall be composed as much as possible of an equal number of elders, deacons, and other men in the church, but will not contain less than six individuals...The whole process shall normally be completed before December 31 each year.”

Article IV, Section 4, Paragraph d: “This service shall normally take place in January as needed.”

The following 3 amendments, along with spelling and grammatical changes, were added to the constitution on October 9, 2005:

#### Amendment 2

The following sections of the constitution were amended as shown below in order to update the nominating and voting practices of the church:

##### Article IV, Section 4, paragraph c:

...This committee shall be composed as much as possible of an equal number of elders, deacons, and other ~~men~~ **members** in the church, but will not contain less than six individuals.... A three-fourths majority vote of confidence by ~~those~~ **the** members of the congregation who are ~~present and~~ voting shall be required for each nominee to be appointed as an elder or deacon. The congregational vote shall be taken by secret written ballot ~~as a meeting convened for this purpose and for which notice has been sent by mail to each family~~ **member** in the church at least two weeks ~~before the meeting~~ **in advance**. ...

##### Article VI:

This constitution may be amended by a three-fourths majority vote of the elder board and a three-fourths majority vote of **confidence by the** ~~those~~ members of the congregation who are ~~present and~~ voting. The congregational vote shall be taken by secret ballot ~~at a meeting convened for the purpose and for which notice has been sent to each family~~ **member** in the church at least two weeks ~~before the meeting~~ **in advance**.

#### Amendment 3

The following section of the constitution was amended as shown below in order to implement a formal membership requirement and to move the specifics of how the church directory is maintained from the constitution to the church policy manual:

#### Article IV, Section 7:

There shall be ~~no~~ a formal membership roll. Any professing Christian who has met the requirements of the membership policy adopted by the governing board of elders will be may consider himself or herself a member of this church if he considers it his church home (I Cor. 12:13-27). A church directory shall be maintained by the deacon committee which contains the names and addresses of families which are currently attending the services of the church regularly.

#### Amendment 4

The following sections of the constitution were amended as shown below in order to clarify the role of the senior pastor, to cover the process by which all new pastors are found and installed, and to move the specifics of church employee contracts from the constitution to the church policy manual:

#### Article IV, Section 2: ~~The Elder Board~~ The Governing Board of Elders

~~The elder board~~ governing board of elders shall be the official board of the church, ~~and~~ It shall be composed of all the elders of the church whose term is active and shall also include the senior pastor. All succeeding references to "the board" or to "the elders" in this document refer to the governing board of elders. ...

#### Article IV, Section 5, paragraph c:

##### Pastors and other Full and Part-time Employees

A search committee shall be convened for the purpose of selecting new pastors. The governing board of elders will closely evaluate the pastoral candidates recommended by the search committee. The candidate that results from this process must be approved unanimously by the board. A three-fourths majority vote of confidence by the members of the congregation who are voting shall be required for the candidate to be appointed as a pastor. The congregational vote shall be taken by secret written ballot which has been sent to each member in the church at least two weeks in advance.

Other employees Employees shall be selected or approved by the board in consultation with the appropriate major committees.

The senior pastor shall be a member of the governing board of elders. Other staff Staff members may or may not be elders or deacons depending on their personal qualifications and the ministry which they are hired to carry out. ~~Staff members shall be employed on a one year renewable contract basis.~~

# SUMMARY STATEMENT OF FAITH REGARDING SINGLENES, MARRIAGE, AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

Plano Bible Chapel is committed to the home and family established by God and communicated through His Word for mankind to flourish and for God to be glorified. We believe God has ordained and created marriage to exist between one man and one woman with absolute marital fidelity. We believe the Bible established specific home and family values, which include distinct roles of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children. We believe that both man and woman are created equally in the image of God as distinctly male or female. We believe the Bible commands us to lovingly uphold the dignity of each individual, whether single or married, as we embrace the unchanging and timeless truth of Scripture.

Based on the Bible and affirmed through the historical witness and constant moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe the following:

**Singleness:** Celibacy and faithful singleness are to be celebrated and affirmed within the body of Christ. (Genesis 1:27-28, 2:18-24; Matthew 19:4-6, 12; Mark 10:5-8; 1 Corinthians 7:1-8, 12:12-13; Romans 12:10; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; Hebrews 13:4).

**Marriage:** God defines marriage as the permanent, exclusive, faithful, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” covenantal union of one biological man and one biological woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in the continuation of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child from generation to generation. (Genesis 1:27-28, 2:18-24; Matthew 19:4-9; Mark 10:5-9; Ephesians 5:21-33).

**Sexual Identity:** God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different with equal personal dignity. (Genesis 1:26-28; Romans 1:26-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

**Sexual Immorality:** God created sex, exclusively within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman, for the good of humanity and, ultimately, for His glory. (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7-23, 20:10-21; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27-28, 15:19; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-13; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17-19; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4)

**Sexual Redemption:** God provides forgiveness for sin that comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ who died on the cross as payment for those who believe. (See Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 3:23; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 2:1-10; Hebrews 2:17-18, 4:14-16).

**Biblical Authority:** We believe that the Bible constitutes the only infallible, timeless rule of faith and practice, rather than what is currently popular or culturally progressive (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21). We believe that the clear teaching of the Bible about marriage and sexuality is sufficient for everything related to godly living for our good that glorifies God. (Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; Ephesians 3:31).

Plano Bible Chapel, as fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, commit ourselves to the following:

1. We commit ourselves to coming alongside, to doing our best to understand and support anyone who experiences immorality.
2. We commit ourselves to pray for anyone experiencing any form of sexual immorality, to minister to them, and to help them be free of anything that would keep them from growing into full Christ-like character and behavior. None of us can choose the temptations that are struggles for each of us, but we do have a choice whether we give into sin or resist and run from it.
3. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of biblical holiness. The goal for those who struggle with immorality is not external morality. *The goal is holiness.* We believe that as followers of Jesus Christ grow in grace, we can live a life pleasing to the Lord and to be a blessing to others.
4. We commit ourselves to honoring the Lord Jesus Christ as His church, set apart from pop culture and different from political correctness, for His glory.
5. We commit ourselves to loving others as Christ has loved us and helping all people experience His love.

**Conclusion:** We believe God designed human identity to be found and fulfilled in a fixed point outside ourselves — *in Him*. He calls us toward His plan for our benefit and protection, toward what’s truly best for our hearts, minds, and bodies. When we understand who we are as God’s children and image-bearers, created to glorify Him by becoming more like His Son, Jesus, we experience our deepest fulfillment. God always acts not only for His glory, but for our best interests. So we can fully trust that whatever He forbids in His Holy Word, the Bible, would have hurt us and whatever He commands will only help us. In fulfilling God’s purposes for life, whether single or married, we find our purpose and experience His pleasure.

# THE MINISTRY AND ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

The role of women in the church is a hotly debated issue in our culture. The following statements are designed to acquaint any interested individuals with how the Elders of this church interpret the various Scriptures that relate to the ministry of women. We have attempted to approach this subject positively and to put the emphasis on what the New Testament permits rather than on what it prohibits.

We recognize that faithful believers in Christ disagree on the interpretation of some verses that bear on this subject as well as on the application of these texts in our present culture and circumstances. We do not disdain or criticize those who disagree with our conclusions. But, we do believe that the following statements reflect accurately the intent of the Holy Spirit with respect to the ministry of women today.

We believe that women may be given the same spiritual gifts as men; the gifts of pastoring, teaching, and evangelism as well as the other gifts present in the church today are not restricted or limited to men. However, we recognize that the New Testament makes a distinction between spiritual gifts and offices in the church. For example, a woman may have the gift of pastoring, but she would not be eligible to hold the office of elder in a church because she could not meet other qualifications for that office as set forth in the New Testament (cf 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). She could, nevertheless, exercise her gift of pastoring without holding the office of elder, as could a man so gifted.

We believe that the New Testament permits women to teach children and other women the Bible and biblical doctrine in church services or church related meetings such as in Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Bible classes in homes or in the chapel, etc.. But, we believe the New Testament does not permit women to teach men the Bible and biblical doctrine in church services or church related meetings (1 Timothy 2:11-14). When men are involved in these meetings a man should do the teaching.

We believe the New Testament permits women to teach men the Bible and biblical doctrine in some other situations not directly related to the local church such as in a college class, in personal evangelism, in a writing ministry, on the mission field where no male believers or missionaries serve, etc.. (cf. Acts 18:24-26).

We believe that the New Testament permits women to minister in church services and church related meetings when men are present if the primary purpose of their ministry is not to teach the Bible or biblical doctrine even though their ministry may involve teaching the Bible or doctrine indirectly, for example, by singing, giving a testimony, requesting prayer, etc.. In such cases the woman's ministry is to be under the authority of the male responsible for the leadership of such a service or meeting (1 Timothy 2:2).

We believe that a woman need not cover her head with a hat, veil, shawl, or other head covering when she attends or ministers in a church service or church related meeting. She may do so if she chooses to do so, however. We believe that such a head covering was required in the Corinthian church because it was necessitated by the culture of the first century church (1 Corinthians 11:4-15). However, a head covering, or lack of one, does not mean the same thing in our culture as it did then.

We understand that any view of the role of women is a biblical belief based on what can be demonstrated in Scripture, but that it is non-essential providing room for differing theological positions. As such, true believers in Christ may disagree on this, and similar biblical beliefs, so the priority for the church is unity. The Governing Board of Elders at Plano Bible Chapel express their appreciation to the church body for *"diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds us"* (Ephesians 4:3).

# CONVICTIONS AND PREFERENCES

At Plano Bible Chapel we strive to find a balance between the biblical convictions that are essential to Christian faith, the biblical beliefs that we hold as a church but other godly people may view differently, and the personal convictions that we have individually for Christian living. This desire for balance requires that we recognize the differences between biblical convictions and personal boundaries. When we understand as a church family the importance of a particular belief, thought, or preference, we'll be able to agree on the essentials of the Christian life and better prepared to disagree on less important ones. In other words, when we recognize the differences between convictions and preferences, we'll be able to celebrate our life in Christ and cooperate as the body of Christ in a way that leads to unity.

## **Where we are as Christians: *We know the Truth—God and His Word!***

God, the Supreme Being, exists. He is Truth and the standard for absolute truth. God has revealed Himself and His Will for us in a book that is absolutely true, the Bible. We can know truth by knowing God and knowing Him personally through His Word.

## **Where we are as a culture: *Absolutely no absolutes!***

Our culture says, "There is no such thing as objective, absolute truth. Something can be true for me, and its opposite true for you, and that's OK! We create our own truth." Insisting that anything is absolutely true is considered intolerant and ignorant (except of course, the belief that there are absolutely no absolutes!).

## **Where we are as Christians in our culture: *When worlds collide!***

We must know the difference, not only between what is true and false, but also between what is objective and what is subjective and what is essential and what is non-essential. That's not always easy because not only do unbelievers disagree with us – Christians often disagree in areas of personal convictions and biblical beliefs.

## **What are Biblical Convictions and Personal Preferences?**

A conviction is a strong persuasion or belief about the truth. *Biblical convictions* are the doctrines held to be right or true by the church throughout the centuries. *Personal convictions* are based upon scriptural truth and applied to an individual believer's life. Personal convictions provide boundaries for an individual to live a godly life. *Biblical beliefs* are things that can be demonstrated in Scripture, but are non-essential so there is room for differing theological positions. *Personal preferences* are things that relate to our convenience and comfort.

## **The Spectrum of Truth**

- 1. Biblical Convictions (Essential/ Objective)** Without these biblical truths, Christianity and the ability to glorify God no longer exists.
- 2. Personal Convictions (Situational/Subjective)** How does God want me to live in the gray areas of life that are not specifically spelled out in Scripture?
- 3. Biblical Beliefs (Non-essential/Objective)** True believers in Christ may disagree on these theological beliefs or systems of belief.
- 4. Personal preferences (Autonomous/Subjective)** What do I like, and want, and choose?



# MEMBERSHIP POLICY

## 1. Types of Membership

- **Members:** Members are adults (at least 18 years old) who desire to make PBC their local church home. Children of members will be considered part of the PBC church family as regular attenders (see Section 2). Only members of Plano Bible Chapel may vote in official church matters. Only members will be eligible to serve as elders and deacons. Participation in PBC other ministries and leadership positions, as determined by the elders, may be limited only to members.
- **Regular Attenders:** A regular attender is any person who desires to regularly attend PBC and participate in its services and activities. Regular attenders and their children are considered part of our PBC family. Attenders are eligible to become members when they meet the membership requirements (see Section 2). Children of members are considered regular attenders until they turn 18, at which time they will be encouraged to become members.

## 2. Membership Requirements

- Members of Plano Bible Chapel commit themselves to our church in three areas:
  1. Affirm their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and their assurance of salvation
  2. Support the doctrinal positions and ministry purposes of the church
  3. Strive to mature in their relationship with God by actively participating in our church life and by spiritual growth, fellowship, prayer, service, support, and unity.

## 3. Reception of Members

Membership at PBC will consist of three basic steps:

1. Attending a New Member Class
2. Signing the Membership Commitment form (see Appendix)
3. Meeting personally with a pastor and an elder at PBC

Prospective members may present themselves for church membership upon profession of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. After completing a required membership class and signing a membership commitment form, they will meet with a pastor and an elder to affirm their faith in Christ, their support with the church's doctrinal statement and purpose, and their desire (with God's help) to mature in their relationship with God. Any applicant not having received believer's baptism will be encouraged to receive the ordinance of water baptism by immersion. Upon the recommendation of the interviewing pastor and/or Board member(s), members will be officially recognized during a meeting of the Governing Board of elders.

## 4. Termination of Membership

- At the discretion of the Governing Board of Elders, members who move from the Dallas area may be removed from church membership.
- A member will be removed from membership who (1) requests to be removed, or (2) departs from his previously expressed support of the doctrinal statement of the church, or (3) evidences a lack of purpose in living a holy life, or (4) clearly manifests disinterest and inactivity in the life of the church. Before the final decision is made the recourse of Matthew 18:15-17 will have been exhausted (if applicable), and such a member will have been given the opportunity for a hearing before the Governing Board of elders if desired.
- A member that has been absent from the church for a period of six months may be officially removed from church membership by the elders after appropriate steps have been taken to communicate with them.
- Acting on behalf of the Governing Board of elders, the elder secretary will see that all the applicable steps described have been taken and that the elders' decision has been officially communicated.

# Plano Bible Chapel

## Membership Commitment

### Faith

I have trusted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and have assurance of my salvation.

### Doctrine

As a member of Plano Bible Chapel, I support the doctrinal positions and the purposes for ministry stated in the church constitution.

### Responsibility

With the Lord's help and with the help of this church and its leaders, I am striving to mature in my relationship with God (Phil. 3:10-14) through:

- **Spiritual Growth** — to live a godly life by actively reading, studying, and applying God's Word (Gal. 5:16, 22-25; Col. 2:6,7; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- **Fellowship** — to give of myself to my fellow members and to regularly attend the services of my church (Gal. 5:13; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; Heb. 10:24-25).
- **Prayer** — to pray for my church leaders, fellow members, our missionary outreach, and the ministries of PBC (Eph. 6:18-20; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; 1 Tim. 2:8).
- **Service** — to use my God-given abilities and spiritual gifts to serve Jesus Christ and His Body through the church and to share the gospel with those in the world around me (1 Cor. 12:12; 1 Pt. 4:10; Matt. 28:18-20).
- **Support** — to give of my resources faithfully and generously in support of my church and its ministries (Matt. 25:19-21; Luke 21:1-4; Rom. 12:13).
- **Unity** — to submit to the church leadership and to use my influence to promote a constructive attitude among my fellow members, realizing my responsibility to work for unity within the Body of Christ (Eph. 5:18-21; Phil. 2:1-3; Heb. 13:17).

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Please print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

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