

# **Constitution and By-Laws New Hope, a Biblical Community**

**Adopted February, 2009**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **PREAMBLE**

The Bible, not this constitution, is our final authority for matters of faith and practice. Furthermore, we affirm that only by the indwelling Holy Spirit, not this constitution, can we fulfill the will of God for New Hope. With this in mind, the purpose of this constitution is merely to provide a framework to facilitate the ministry of this Church; for the Bible teaches us to do all things "in a fitting and orderly way" (I Corinthians 14:40). To this end, we the membership of New Hope, agree to be governed by this document, the by-laws and the accompanying policies.

#### **ARTICLE I: STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We believe that the Bible (the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments) is God's infallible written Word. It stands as the sole basis of our beliefs. We believe that it was uniquely, verbally, and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and that it was written without error (inerrant) in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

We believe there is one true God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of Deity (Luke 3:22; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

We believe that Jesus Christ was, and remains, both fully God and fully man (John 1:14; Col 2:9-10; Acts 1:11). He eternally existed as God (John 14:9; Phil 2:6), then He was born of a virgin (Matt. 1:18-23) and lived a sinless life (Heb. 4:15); He was crucified, died as a penalty for our sins (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18), and was raised from the dead bodily on the third day (Luke 24:36-43; 1 Cor. 15:3-8). Later, He ascended to the Father's right hand where He is the head of the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22) and intercedes for believers (Heb. 7:25). We believe Jesus Christ is personally, bodily, and visibly coming to earth again (Acts 1:11; 1 Thes 4:16).

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit. He indwells and gives spiritual life to each believer (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9), thus enabling them to live a Godly life (Eph. 3:16; Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:16, 22-23). He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He intercedes for believers (Rom. 8:26) and He glorifies Christ (John 16:7-15).

We believe that man was created by God without sin (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7) and that by one man's disobedience to God (Gen. 3:1-24), every person incurred spiritual death (Rom. 5:12), which is separation from God, and physical death as a consequence; and that all people are sinners by nature and practice (Rom. 3:23). As a result, every man is in need of salvation from God (1 John 5:11-12).

We believe that salvation is a work of God's free grace and is not the result of human works, baptism, church membership or man's effort (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7). Only those who put their faith in Christ for the payment of their sins are forgiven and therefore in right relationship with God (Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1-2, 9).

We believe that at physical death, those who are in right relationship with God enter immediately into eternal, conscious fellowship with the Lord (Luke 16:19-31). Because of this, we have the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:5-7). At physical death those who have rejected God's forgiveness in His Son enter immediately into eternal, conscious separation from God and face everlasting judgment and condemnation (Rev. 20:11-15). We also believe in the personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to the earth to carry out the plan of God (Acts 1:11; 1 Thes. 4:16; Rev. 19:11-20:6).

We believe in the one true Church (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-32), composed of all who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13). God commands His people to make disciples of all the nations (Matt. 28:18-20), and also to assemble together regularly for worship, for edification, and for mutual encouragement (Heb. 10:24-25; Col. 3:16).

We believe that it is the responsibility of every Christian to be transformed into the image of Christ (Romans 12:2). We believe that this is accomplished in part by submitting to the lordship of Christ (Eph 1:22; Col. 1:17-18), yielding to the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18; Rom 8:12-13), and studying and obeying the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15; John 14:21).