**BELIEFS AND PRACTICES**

**Doctrinal Statement**

**Of the**

**Northeast Fellowship**

***A Network of Independent 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 Ruler 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 Spirit, 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; I John 5:7; Rev. 4:11).

**III. Of the Person of Jesus Christ**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary. He is divine like no other man can be, being in nature both Son of God and God, the Son. He lived an absolutely sinless life, and His death on the cross as the Lamb of God was a voluntary, substitutionary sacrifice to pay the full penalty for our sins and thus provide for the redemption of fallen and sinful men. He arose bodily from the dead, and ascended into Heaven where He now sits exalted at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest, ever interceding for us (Gen 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 2:5-8; Hebrews 7:25;
1 Pet. 2:21-24).

**IV. 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 He is the agent in the New Birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer. We further believe that the sign/revelatory gifts of the Holy Spirit have fulfilled their purpose and are not applicable to the work of the Holy Spirit today (Gen. 1:1-3; Matt. 28.19; Mark 1:8; Luke1:35; Luke 24:49;

John 1:33; John 3:5-6; John 14:16-17, 26; John 16:8-11;

Acts 5:30-32; Acts 11:16; Rom. 8:14, 16, 26, 27; 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28-30; 1 Cor. 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 14:1-40; 2 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:13-14; Heb. 2:2; Heb. 9:14).

**V. 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).

**VI. 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; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16, 17).

**VII. 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. 1:18, 32; Rom. 3:10-19; Rom. 5:12,19).

**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 Savior (Isa. 53:4-7; Matt. 18:11; John 3:16; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24, 25; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21;

Eph. 2:8; Phil. 2:7; Heb 2:14; 1 John 4:10).

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

**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 or righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer’s blood, His righteousness is imputed to us (Isa. 53:11; Zech. 13:1;

Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:1, 9; Rom. 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 congregationally 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; Acts 15:13-18; Acts 20:17-28; 1 Cor. 11:2;
Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 4:11; Eph 5:23-24; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3.17).

**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 Savior, 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 comes, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination (Matt. 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3-5;

1 Cor. 11:23-28; Col. 1:12).

**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 (John 10:28-29; Rom. 8:35-39; Phil. 1:6; Jude 1).

**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 (Gen. 18:23; Prov. 14:32; Mal. 3:18; Matt. 25:34-41;
Luke 16:19-31; John 8:21; Rom. 6:17, 18, 23; Rom. 7:6;
1 John 5:19).

**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 (Ex.18:21-22; 2 Sam. 23:3;

Dan. 3:17-18; Matt. 22:21; Acts 4:19-20; Acts 5:20; Acts 23:5; Rom. 13:17).

**XVII. Of Future Events**

 We believe that Jesus Christ will come again in a literal, visible manner consistent with His first appearing and with the promises of Scripture; that this glorious appearing of our God and Savior is imminent; that this quick and sudden removal of all Spirit-baptized believers will precede the Tribulation period; that all raptured believes will give an account at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

 We believe in the distinction between the nation of Israel and the Church; that biblical covenants made uniquely with Israel will be consummated by God in the future; and following the Tribulation; Christ the King, will begin His literal 1000 year reign on the earth; that this Davidic throne will be established forever and will continue throughout the eternal state.

 We believe that the millennial period will end with the bodily resurrection, and certain divine judgement of all the unsaved; and in the literal, eternal existence of both Heaven and Hell. All of these last events will occur according to the sovereign will and plan of God in order to fulfill His doxological purpose.

(2 Samuel 7:8-16; Isaiah 9:6,7; 11:1-16; Matthew 24:21, 29-31; 25:21; Luke 1:32; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Romans 14:10-12;
I Corinthians 3:11-15; 15:51-52; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Phil. 3:20-21;
I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8;
Revelation 20:4-6, 12-15; 21:1-22:7)

**XVIII. Of Separation**

We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness and ecclesiastical apostasy (Romans 16.17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1;
1 Thessalonians 1:9,10; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 1 John 2:15-18;
2 John 9-11; Jude 3-4).

**XIX. Of Marriage and Sexual Morality**

 We believe that the institution of marriage was designed by God to unite one man and one woman in lifelong commitment.  We also believe that sexual intimacy is a gift from God that is to be expressed only between a man and a woman within the bonds of such a marriage (Genesis 2:23, 24; Matthew 19:4-6;
Hebrews 13:4). Therefore, we believe that any other form of sexual expression is both immoral and a perversion of Gods gift. Other forms include, but are not limited to: fornication, adultery, homosexuality, pornography, bestiality, incest, and pedophilia (Genesis 19:5,13; 26:8,9; Leviticus 18; Proverbs 6:32;
Matthew 5:27, 28; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 5:1;
1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).

God takes sexual sin seriously, yet he lovingly offers complete forgiveness and restoration to those who disobey the Bible’s teaching.  We also take seriously the responsibility that we have as believers to model the example of our Heavenly Father in loving all people – including those ensnared by sexual sin - as we seek their restoration  (Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:24-26;
1 John 1:9; Jude 23).

Furthermore, we believe we are called to defend and protect God’s marriage design and his moral standards in our lives and culture through Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1, 2; Ephesians 5:8-14).

**CONSTITUTION OF THE FELLOWSHIP**

**ARTICLE I**

**Name**

**Northeast Fellowship**

***A Network of Independent Baptist Churches***

**ARTICLE II**

**Purpose**

To bring Glory to God through the networking of independent Baptist churches for the advancement of the gospel; the strengthening of the churches and their leaders; the defense and promotion of sound biblical teaching; and the fostering of true fellowship and support among like minded ministries.

**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 Network Leadership Team. A special business meeting of the Association may be called by the Network Leadership Team 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:** All business sessions of the Fellowship and the Network Leadership Team shall be conducted according to Robert’s Rules of Order.

**ARTICLE IV**

**Fellowship**

**Section 1 – Admissions**

Any Baptist Church in the northeast region 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 Network Leadership Team, be submitted to the Fellowship for a vote of admission.

**Section 2 – Dismissals**

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 to the Network Leadership Team, and upon its recommendation, be removed from the rolls by majority vote of the Fellowship.

**ARTICLE V**

**Officers and Personnel**

**Section 1 – Network Leadership Team and Elections**

The Officers of the NF shall consist of a Network Leadership Team of up to 12 men who are members of the Fellowship churches. Nine of these men are elected by the fellowshipping churches and up to three (3) are appointed by the elected Leadership Team members. One third of the Leadership Team shall be elected for three (3) years annually. After serving two (2) consecutive terms on the NLT, a member shall be ineligible for re-election until one year has lapsed. A member may be appointed by the NLT to serve an additional year provided that there are not enough willing nominees to fill the vacancies.

The Network Leadership Team shall be elected in the following manner. Each of the fellowshipping churches shall have the option to nominate up to five (5) men to serve on the Network Leadership Team. These nominations shall be sent to the Fellowship office at least two weeks prior to the NF Annual Meeting. The qualified nominations with the most votes shall be presented to the voting messengers as nominees. The election shall take place at the Annual Meeting wherethe voting messengers shall vote by ballot for the appropriate number of nominees to fill the vacancies for the Network Leadership Team. Vacancies that occur during mid**-**year may be filled by the NLT, by appointment, until the next Annual Meeting.

**Section 2 – Regional *Representation***

In order to seek to facilitate representation for all regions of the Fellowship, the NLT may appoint up to three (3) additional regional representatives to serve for three (3) years on the NLT. These regional representatives shall be considered full voting members of the Network Leadership Team with the same responsibilities and term limitations.

**Section 3 – NF Officers and Committees**

The NLT shall annually appoint a Chairman who shall preside over NLT meetings and the Annual Business Meeting. It shall also appoint a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer and any other officers and committees that shall be deemed necessary.

**Section 4 – Network Leadership Team Responsibilities**

It shall be the duty of the NLT to make recommendations to the Fellowship for the furtherance of its work, and to implement all actions and policies of the NF. The NLT shall be authorized to secure the services of any office personnel required to carry on the work of the NF, except for the Network Executive Director. All salaries shall be determined by the NLT. Its authority is that which is committed to it by the NF. Any of the actions of the NLT or of any salaried personnel may be called up for review by the Fellowship at any annual meeting.

**Section 5 – Network Executive Director Role and Responsibilities**

The Network Executive Director shall be recommended by the NLT and approved by 2/3 majority vote of the messengers present at any duly called meeting of the Fellowship. He is accountable to the NLT and reports to the churches at the Annual Meeting. His chief duties include: executive oversight of Fellowship activities and ministries, caring for pastors, consulting churches toward health and growth, vision casting and leadership in conjunction with the NLT, and the guarding of the doctrinal, missional and financial integrity of the Fellowship.

**ARTICLE VI**

**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.