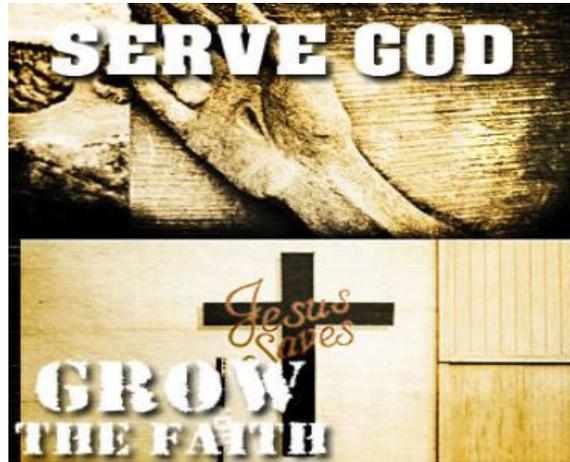


Membership Orientation Handbook



**Greater Union Baptist Church
525 Gray Road
Perry, Georgia 31069**



Rev. Otha L. Everett, Pastor

Membership Orientation Handbook

for a

Baptist Church



*Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible
King James Version*



*Referenced Material:
Joe T. Odle
Ambrose Bennett Membership Manual
for Baptist Churches*

*Greater Union Baptist Church
525 Gray Road
Perry, Georgia 31069
(478) 987-0054*

Email: gubc31069@yahoo.com

Join us on Facebook: GreaterUnion Perry Georgia

Pastor: O. L. Everett

Deacons Ministry
Dea. Winfred Rouse
Dea. Quincy Williams
Dea. Robert Scott
Dea. Stanley King

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Are You Saved?

A lot of people worry about losing their salvation for one reason or another. I really don't think that they should worry about losing their eternal salvation. I think what they should worry about is whether they were ever saved to begin with. Do you ever wonder whether or not you are saved and whether you are going to end up in heaven? Also, do you think that it is easy to lose your salvation once you get it? Do you wonder just how easy it is for someone to come along and take salvation away from you?

When it comes to being saved, on achieving eternal salvation, I really think that God the Father is the one that calls a person to be saved. I don't think we come to the Lord, but instead The Father is the one who calls us and I think that He calls each one of us at various times throughout our lives. May I give just three (3) verses.

Read: Romans 10:9-10

- John 6:44
- Romans 8:30
- II Timothy 1:9

The secret of being the one who is called by God and getting saved and staying saved is a lot like a drowning man. Imagine that you are drowning in the ocean. There is no way you can save yourself. Without assistance, you will surely drown. A boat comes by to rescue you. The person in the boat throws you a life preserver tied to a rope. The person in the boat is the only one able to save you. Yet, you must reach out and accept his help. If you refuse to trust in him, and you do not latch onto the life preserver, then you will surely die.

You see, sin is our fault. We are responsible for our sin. We cannot save ourselves from "drowning" in our sin. God is the only one who is able to rescue us from death. We cannot expect to solve our problems and our failures in our own way when it was our way that brought us the problems and the failures in the first place. But fortunately, God is responsible for our salvation. God threw us the life preserver when Jesus came. We latch onto the life preserver by placing our faith in Jesus. Just as one cannot expect to be rescued from drowning if one chooses to remain in the ocean, so we cannot expect to be rescued from sin if we choose to remain trapped in it.



*Thank You For
Accepting The Gift Of
Salvation*



The Vision

We seek to be an empowered body of Christ with a mandate to evangelize to the lost, building them up through ministry, and equipping them for the work of the kingdom.....

PURPOSE AND MISSION

Our Purpose is best summed up as this: “. . .the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.”(Ephesians 4:12). Our ministry is to equip believers with the mind and heart of Jesus Christ, thereby enabling them to be spiritually fruitful and thus glorify God.(John 15:8)

Our Priority is to hold forth the Word of God as the source of life and all spiritual blessing. God has revealed His mind through the scriptures and His Words have been preserved in all their purity in the King James Bible.

Our Passion is to magnify the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the preaching of the gospel at the church, at home and throughout the world.

The Church Covenant

The Church Covenant is a voluntary agreement by members of a Baptist Church whereby they promise to conduct their lives in such a way as to glorify God and promote the activities of His church. Every member should study it carefully, refer to it often, and seek to live by it. It clearly outlines the obligations of church membership. The form of the covenant in wide use in the Baptist Church is as follows:

MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Our mission is to reach people far from God and teach them to how to live for God. We believe that growing people change, through the indwelling of the spirit, the word of God and a strong prayer life.

We believe that saved people serve people that we can't out give God and that found people find people.

CHURCH COVENANT

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

We engage, therefore by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality, to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our departments; to avoid tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offenses, but always ready for reconciliation and always mindful of the rules of our Savior.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.



The Basis of Covenant

The obligations of church membership outlined in the covenant are scriptural, as may be seen from the following study:

- I. Salvation and Baptism
(John 1:11-12; Matthew 28:19-20)

II. Duties of the Church

1. To walk together in Christian love (John 13:34-35)
2. To strive for the advancement of the church and promote its prosperity and spirituality (Philippians 1:27; II Timothy 2:15)
3. To sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrine (Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 28:19; I Corinthians 11:23-26; Jude 3)
 - a. To give it pre-eminence in my life (Matthew 6:33)
 - b. To contribute cheerfully and regularly (I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 8:6-7)

III. Duties in Personal Christian Living

1. To maintain family and secret devotions (I Thessalonians 5:17-18; Acts 17:11)
2. To religiously educate the children (II Timothy 3:15; Deuteronomy 6:4-7)
3. To seek the salvation of the lost (Acts 1:8; Matthew 4:19; Psalm 126:5-6; Proverbs 11:30)
4. To abstain from the sale or use of liquors (Ephesians 6:18; Habakkuk 2:15)
5. To be zealous in our efforts for Christ (Titus 2:14)

IV. Duties to Fellow Members

1. To watch over one another in love (I Peter 1:22)
2. To pray for one another (James 5:16)
3. To aid in sickness and distress (Galatians 6:2; James 2:14-17)
4. To be slow to take offense, always ready for reconciliation (Ephesians 4:30-32)
5. To carry my membership when I move and be active in the church work wherever I live (Acts 11:19-21; 18:24-28)

Why Be Baptist?

Baptists are Christians who comprise a group of denominations and churches that subscribe to a doctrine that baptism should be performed only for professing believers (believer's baptism, as opposed to infant baptism), and that it must be done by immersion (as opposed to affusion or sprinkling). Other tenets of Baptist churches include soul competency (liberty), salvation through faith alone, scripture alone as the rule of faith and practice, and the autonomy of the local congregation. Baptists recognize two ministerial offices, pastors and deacons. Baptist churches are widely considered to be Protestant churches, though some Baptists disavow this identity.

Our Baptist heritage is valuable to humanity.

Baptists are Great Commission Christians. We take seriously the Lord's command to make disciples throughout the whole world. Genuine conversions spring from a voluntary response of faith in Christ. We lay the groundwork for the gospel and gain a hearing for the "good news" by advocating the separation of church and state and championing religious freedom

for everyone. In an age of religiously motivated wars, terrorism, and genocide, the world, desperately needs Baptists to once again become champions for liberty of conscience and religious freedom.

Our Baptist Heritage is Scriptural

In the New Testament only believers are baptized and incorporated into the church. Christians form a “royal priesthood” (I Peter 2:9). As his priests, we have been given diverse spiritual gifts and all the gifts are necessary and valuable to the church’s ministry (I Corinthians 12:7-27). Likewise, we are equal priests in God’s family. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (Galatians 3:28). New Testament churches were diverse in practice but found ways to cooperate in mission endeavors (Acts 15:1-35).

The New Testament church did not employ the state to spread the gospel. It used the power of persuasion not coercion. The early church knew that genuine convictions spring from a voluntary response of faith in Christ.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

“So, I am now a member of a Baptist Church?”

Millions of people utter these words with an inexpressible joy in their hearts. They have found Christ as Savior, their sins are forgiven, and there is peace in their souls. As Christians, they have obeyed the Lord’s command and united with His church; they have found great happiness in this new relationship.

Many, however, who speak those words, fail to comprehend what being a part of a Baptist Church really entails. It is surprising that so many hold membership without realizing their privileges and opportunities or accepting their obligations. “So what’s in it for me?” You might ask. Well, you know have the greatest task ever assigned to an individual or group. That task is to carry the glorious gospel of Christ the Savior to every nation and tongue. No other commission like that has ever been given or will ever be given. In carrying out this work, the churches have done more for the world than all the governments ever organized, all the other institutions ever established, or all the armies ever assembled.

Membership brings us great opportunity. These include opportunity for fellowship in the finest company that can be found and an opportunity for Christian growth, development, and training through the various ministries and auxiliaries in the church. We have an opportunity for Christian service through the church in the Name of Christ to those at home and around the globe. It places on us an inescapable obligation to make the church its work first in our

lives. It is an obligation to support the work with our presence, our influence, and our means. Churches are never stronger than their membership; and a membership of worldly, careless, negligent, stunted Christians will prevent the church from accomplishing much for the Lord. There is a tremendous need for every member to be consecrated, trained, and enlisted in active service. We must start to realize that membership is a privilege and an opportunity. Too many members have not learned these things.

Their churches mean little to them, and they mean little to their churches. That condition must be changed. Won't you help change it by making your membership really count for Christ?

Joe T. Odle

Church Membership Duties

A central responsibility of a Christian is the commission of Christ Jesus that was given to the church, *"go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."* We are put in trust of the Gospel to teach it with a view to saving men and women from their sins and building them up in the faith. In an effort to fulfill the Great Commission, the church has the awesome responsibility to not only seek, but to prepare individuals for the work that God has prepared for each of us. Every Christian should aspire to gain more knowledge for the work that is before them. II Timothy 2:15 says *"Study to show thyself approved. A workman needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* Knowledge is essential to efficiency in work. It often provides one with new and sharper tools for the work that is prepared for you. It is a time saving device, a safe-guard from unnecessary embarrassment, a promoter of self-confidence in work and service, and a guarantor of authority in areas of evangelism, education, and the equipping of the saints.

The Christian Education Ministry consists of:

1. The Sunday School: Seeding to educate children and adults, through practical lessons on a weekly basis about life through the scriptures.
2. The mid-week Bible Study: Seeking to provide in-depth study of the Bible and how we should react to life's challenges.
3. The Vacation Bible School: A short-term study week, designed to highlight a particular objective.
4. The Baptist Training Union: A training session designed to educate individuals on the Baptist tenets.
5. The Pastor's Class: A training session designed to strengthen new members and refresh others on the Baptist tenets.

Church Membership – Discipline

The Church will discipline its members by the following rules and principles:

In Private Offenses

Private offenses, or such as one member may commit against another member, occasioning a grievance which does not affect any other person, the course prescribed by our Savior in Matthew 18 should be strictly followed.

1. The member who considers himself injured must go to his offender and tell him his grief, and between themselves alone, if possible, adjust and settle the difficulty. *“If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.”* This must be done, not to charge, upbraid, or condemn the offender, but to win him. *If he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother.”* (Matthew 18:15)
2. If this shall fail, then the offended member must take one or two of the brethren with him, seek an interview with the offender, and if possible, by their united wisdom and piety, remove the offense and harmonize the difficulty. *“But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”* (Matthew 18:16)
3. If this step should prove unavailing, the offended member must tell the whole matter to the church and leave it in their hands to be disposed of, as to them may seem wisest and best. *And if he shall neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man, and a publican.”* (Matthew 18:17)

While this divine rule makes it obligatory on the offended member to the offender and seek reconciliation, yet much more is it obligatory on any member who knows that a brother is grieved with him, to seek such an one, and try to remove the difficulty.

“If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy broth hath ought against thee, leave there any gift before the Church altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to they brother, and then come and off thy gift.” (Matthew 5:23)

- a. The matter is not to be made public until these three steps have been fully taken, and have failed; and then to be made public only by telling the church, and no other.

In Public Offenses

Public offenses are supposed to be a reproach or an injury to the church as a body, or to the reputation of religion. They are not against any one person, more than another.

The more common causes of public offense are the following:

False doctrines	Galatians 1:9; II John 10
Disregard for authority	Matthew 18:17; I Thessalonians 5:14

Contention and strife	Romans 16:17
Immoral conduct	I Corinthians 5:11
Disorderly living	II Thessalonians 3:6-9
Covetous spirit	II Thessalonians 3:6-9
Arrogant conduct	Ephesians 5:1; I Corinthians 5:11 III John 9
Going to law	I Corinthians 6:6

The following is generally accepted as the proper course of treatment for public offenses:

1. The first member who has knowledge of the offense, should as in the case of private offenses, seek the offender, ascertain the facts, and attempt to reconcile or remove the difficulty. Not until he/she has done the offense should he make it public, or bring it before the church.
2. But if no one will, or can, pursue this course of personal effort, or if such a course proves unsuccessful, then any member having knowledge of the facts should confer with the pastor and deacons, as the best course to be pursued.
3. The pastor and deacons should, by the best method they are capable of devising, labor to adjust the matter, without bringing it into the church, or otherwise making it public.
4. But if their efforts fail, or if the case be already public, and a reproach and scandal to religion, then they should bring it to the church, and direct the course of discipline as seems wisest.
5. The church, thus, having the case before them, should either appoint a committee to visit the offender, cite him/her before the body to answer the charge. He/she should be allowed to hear the evidence against him/her, know the witnesses and be permitted to answer for himself/herself.
6. If the accused disproves the charges, or if he/she confesses the wrong, makes suitable acknowledgement, and so far as possible reparation, with promise of amendment, in all ordinary cases, this should be deemed satisfactory, and the case be dismissed.

7. But if, after patient, deliberate, and prayerful labor, all efforts fail to reclaim the offender, then, however, painful the necessity, the church must withdraw its fellowship from him/her and dismiss him/her away from them.
8. If the case be one of flagrant immorality, by which the reputation of the body is compromised, and the Christian name scandalized, the hand of fellowship should be withdrawn from the offender notwithstanding any confessions and promises of amendment.

The church's good name and the honor of religion demand this testimony against evil. He/she may be subsequently restored if suitably penitent.

- a. All discipline must be conducted in the spirit of Christian meekness and love, with a desire to remove offenses, and win offenders. It must also be done under a deep sense of responsibility to maintain the honor of Christ's name, the purity of His church, and the integrity of His truth.
- b. If any member shall attempt to bring a private grievance before the church, or otherwise make it public before he has pursued the course prescribed in Matthew 18, he/she becomes himself/herself an offender, and subject to the discipline of the body.

I AM A CHURCH MEMBER

I will seek to be a source of unity in the church. I know there are no perfect pastors, staff, or other church members. But neither am I. I will not be a source of gossip or dissension. One of the greatest contributions I can make is to do all I can in God's power to help keep the church in unity for the sake of the gospel.

I am a church member.

I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires. That is self-serving. I am in this church to serve others and to serve Christ. My Savior went to a cross for me. I can deal with any inconveniences and matters that are just not my preference or style.

I am a church member.

I will pray for my pastor every day. His work is never-ending. His days are filled with constant demands for his time; with the need to prepare sermons; with those who are rejoicing in births; with those who are traveling through the valley of the shadow of death; with critics; with the hurts and hopes of others; and with the need to be a husband and a father. My pastor cannot serve our church in his own power. I will pray for God's strength for him and his family every day.

I am a church member.

I like the metaphor of membership. It's not membership as in a civic organization or a country club. It's the kind of membership given to us in I Corinthians 12: *"Now you are the body of Christ and individual members of it."* (I Corinthians 12:27). Because I am a member of the Body of Christ, I must be a functioning member, whether I am an "eye," an "ear", or a "hand." As a functioning member, I will give. I will serve. I will minister. I will evangelize. I will study. I will seek to be a blessing to others. I will remember that *"if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."* (I Corinthians 12:26).

I am a church member.

I will lead my family to be good members of this church as well. We will pray together for our church. We will worship together in our church. We will serve together in our church. And we will ask Christ to help us fall deeper in love with this church, because He gave His life for her.

I am a church member.

This membership is a gift. When I received the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, I became a part of the Body of Christ. I soon thereafter identified with a local body and was baptized. And now I am humbled and honored to serve and to love others in our church. I pray that I will never take my membership for granted, but see it as a gift and an opportunity to serve others, and to be a part of something so much greater than any one person or member.

I am a church member.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Every child of God should desire to grow spiritually. This is scriptural. II Peter 3:18 says *"Grow in grace."* When we are saved, we do not immediately become full-grown Christians but

are only babes in Christ. As “babes” we are commanded to grow. To remain a babe is a shame and a tragedy. Only by growing spiritually, can we please God and glorify Him in our lives.

How can a Christian grow in grace? A large book or a series of sermons could be written on this subject, so we cannot give a comprehensive discussion here. The following principles can govern us in our Christian growth.

1. Be sure that you are born again. Certainly you cannot grow spiritually if you are not a child of God. The Lord said *“ye must be born again.”* We are born again when we repent of sin and commit ourselves to Christ as our personal Lord and Savior. How sure are you about your salvation?
2. Unite with one of the Lord’s churches and go to work for Him. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. He wants us to love it and give ourselves to it. You cannot expect to grow spiritually if you do not obey the Lord’s first command to you as a Christian – to unite with his church. Matthew 6:33 says *“seek ye first”* the work of the Lord.
3. Cultivate your devotional life through Bible Study and prayer. II Timothy 2:15 says *“study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.”* The Bible is God’s word to us. Read it daily. Read it through. Read it books and by subjects. The more you read it, the more it will mean you. You will then be equipped for service to the Lord.
4. Make much of Christian fellowship. Let your closest friendships be with other Christians. II Corinthians 6:14 says *“be not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness. Fellowship involves visitation with others. Visit their homes and invite them to your home. Such fellowship is rich and blesses and will be a real strength for you in resisting temptation and growing spiritually.*
5. Separate yourself from the world. The world is against God (I John 2:15-17). We are in the world, but we are not of this world. Let us separate ourselves from everything that would hinder our work for Christ. As long as we hold on to worldly things, we cannot grow spiritually.
6. Use and cultivate your talents for the Lord. Every Christian has abilities. I Corinthians 12:28 says that God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets,

thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helpers, administration and the speaking of tongues. Every Christian has abilities which can be used for God. Use your ability to speak, to sing, to handle business, to bring joy to needy hearts, to teach, to organize, or whatever your talent may be. The church needs that which each member can do.

7. Be honest toward God in the use of your money. Every Christian's income belongs to God. At least a tenth of it should be brought to God's house regularly. If you are dishonest toward God in matters relating to money, your spiritual growth will be stunted. Malachi 3:8 asks the question "*will a man rob God?*" Yet God says you rob Him when you don't give your tithes and offering. God then informs us that if we bring our tithes to His storehouse He will open up the windows of Heaven and pour you out blessings that you won't have room enough to receive it.
8. Exercise self-control. Satan is ever seeking to hinder our Christian lives and the Lord's work by bringing jealousy, ill temper and selfishness into our hearts. Church work has often been hindered by some Christians who sought to be bossy or were uncooperative. Such a spirit is not of God, but of the devil. If it appears in your life, destroy it by Bible Study and prayer.
9. Seek the counsel and help your pastor. He is the one that God has called to care for your spiritual welfare while in the world. God has set him in the church to aid you, to teach you, and to lead you. When you are tempted, he will fight with you in your battle with Satan. He is not a mind reader, nor is he able to help you if you never ask. When you need spiritual guidance, you will find no better earthly friend than your pastor. As you walk with him, you will be walking closer to God; seek his fellowship.
10. Live for Christ one day at a time. Each morning you awake to find that God has given you a new day to use for Him. The Bible says that this is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it ~ in your business, at your job, in your home, in your social relationships, and wherever you are. Live for Him in the quiet moments, those times when you are alone. This does not mean that you will neglect the responsibilities of your business or home, but it does mean that you will live so that the Spirit of Christ is manifested in your life. Live for Christ twenty-four (24) hours a day. If you fail, as you sometimes will, confess your sin in repentance and ask God to help you overcome it. Get up, get right and go on. As you live for Christ one day at a time, you will soon be living weeks and months and years for Him. This is the way of victorious living.

11. Win others to Christ. There is a great work that is only reserved for those who have been redeemed ~ soul winning. Every Christian can and should bring others to the Savior. Why? Because it saves family, friends, co-workers from hell, brings joy on earth and in heaven, and is the greatest means of Christian growth. Dedicate yourself today and ask God to guide you. This work will give you the greatest joy you have known as a Christian (Psalm 126:5-6)



BAPTIST DOCTRINE

A church is known not only by its history but also by its doctrine. We believe that Baptist origins can be traced back to Christ. We thus should be able to identify the Lord's churches by their doctrines. The Lord's churches today will be teaching what His churches taught in the first century.

Their position on such matters as the inspiration of the scriptures, the Trinity, the ruin wrought by sin, the coming of Jesus Christ the Son of God as Savior, and the future places of heaven and hell are generally known. Some principles that we hold true to as members of the Baptist church are:

1. Christ is Lord
2. The New Testament is our rule of faith and practice
3. The soul is competent in religion
4. The Church is based on the personal experience of grace and a regenerated membership
5. A church is a spiritual democracy, with each member having one vote.

The Articles of Faith

What do the Baptists believe about

1. The authority of Scripture: The Word of God that governs our faith
 - a. II Timothy 3:16-17
 - b. John 12:47-48
2. The Sovereignty of God: In one true and living God
 - a. John 4:24
 - b. Revelation 4:11
3. The deity of Jesus Christ: Jesus is the Messiah – born, died and resurrected
 - a. John 3:16
 - b. Philippians 2:6-11
4. The personality of the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is a person that resides in us
 - a. John 14:15-19
 - b. John 15:26
5. Man: Man came into this world by direct creation of God
 - a. Romans 5:19
 - b. Ephesians 2:1-6
6. Salvation: The way has been provided whereby men can be reconciled.
7. Evangelizing the world: Give the whole Gospel to the world.
 - a. Luke 25:46-48
 - b. Mark 16:15-16
8. The democracy and independence of the Church: Organized body, equal in rank and privilege, under the headship of Christ.
 - a. Matthew 23:8-11
9. The integrity of the ordinances: Two ordinances – Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
 - a. Romans 6:3-5
 - b. I Corinthians 11:17-30
10. The progress of the Saints: Christian conversion, repentance, faith, regeneration and justification
 - a. I John 2:19
 - b. Philippians 1:6
11. The liberty of conscience: Christians have free will and choice
 - a. Romans 14:12

12. The Lord's Day: Christian institutions set aside for spiritual growth
 - a. Exodus 20:8
 - b. Hebrews 10:24-25

13. The destiny of man: Final resurrection and judgment day
 - a. Malachi 3:18
 - b. Proverbs 14:32

14. The supremacy of loyalty: Stand for truth that cannot be compromised
 - a. Matthew 15:9-14
 - b. I John 2:20-21, 27

Scripture References on Various Subjects

- Bible Study: II Timothy 2:14; 3:15-17; II Peter 1:21;
I Peter 3:15
- Prayer: I Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 11:1-13;
Matthew 18:19-20
- Soul Wining: Proverbs 11:30; Ezekiel 3:17-19;
Daniel 12:3; Matthew 4:19
- Stewardship: I Corinthians 4:2, 7; Psalm 24:1;
Deuteronomy 8:18; Haggai 2:8
- Giving: Deuteronomy 8:18; 16:16-17;
Leviticus 27:30; Proverbs 3:9-10
- Missions: Matthew 9:37-38; Matthew 28:19-20;
Acts 1:8-9; John 20:21; John 14:6
- Christian Living: I Corinthians 8:9-13; Galatians 2:20;
5:22-26
- Precious Promises: Isaiah 40:31; Isaiah 41:10;
Psalm 27:14; Psalm 34:7-10
- Death: Psalm 23:19; Psalm 116:15; John 14:1;
I Corinthians 15

Second Coming: Matthew 24-25; Luke 21;
I Corinthians 15:1; Thessalonians 4:13

Jesus Christ, the living word, is God's full revelation of Himself; the Bible is our only record of His incarnation and atonement. As a summary on Baptist doctrine, we thus can say that Baptists accept the Bible as the whole Word of God and the whole Bible as the Word of God. Praying for God's leadership and giving our best effort toward understanding, we seek to teach everything that the Bible teaches. Our doctrines are based on the Scriptures, not on man-made traditions.

GOD'S PLAN OF CHURCH FINANCE

God works by plans. He has a plan for everything. He had a plan when He made the universe. He had a plan when He created man, and He had a plan for the human family on earth. He had a plan of salvation and a plan for the work of His church. He had a plan also for the financing of the great program that He gave His church to do.

God did not plan for His people to use worldly schemes to raise money for the spread of His message. God nowhere says that His churches are to have sales, raffles, or bazaars to raise money for their work. He did not intend for them to become beggars, going out into the world asking for means to carry on. Such schemes and plans are a shame and disgrace to the church and certainly can never be pleasing to the Lord.

God gives only one plan of church finance in the Bible, and that is tithes and offering from His people. The tithe is the tenth, meaning that God's people are to bring a tenth of their income to the Lord and His work. Offerings are the amounts that are given above the tenth. This is the plan that God teaches all through His Word, and it is the one scriptural plan of church finance.

The key verse of New Testament church finance is found in I Corinthians 9:13-14 which reads: *"do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live the gospel."* Verse 13 refers to Numbers 18:21-28, which tells how the

temple worship and the priests and Levites were supported by the tithes and offerings of the people. All of the people were commanded to bring their tithes and offerings, which were used to support the Lord's work.

Paul's next words are "even so." These have the meaning, "In the same Paul was saying that church work is to be supported in the way the temple worship was supported, that is by the tithes and offerings of the people. Even as all the people in that day were to bring their tithes and offerings unto the Lord, so are we to do today.

Other passages which teach that this is God's plan for us are:

I. Tithing Before the Law of Moses

"And he gave him tithes of all" (Genesis 14:20). In this passage, we have the record of Abraham's paying a tithe to Melchizedek, the priest of God. Some have said that tithing was merely a part of the Mosaic Law. Here we see tithing being practiced four hundred years before the law. Where did Abraham learn to tithe? God taught him! Either the Lord taught him directly or taught some of those who lived before him. "*Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*" (Genesis 28:22). Here we have Jacob's promise to the Lord that he would tithe. This was long before the Law of Moses.

II. Tithing Under the Law

1. Tithing was incorporated into the law. "*The tithe. . . is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord*" (Leviticus 27:30). If the tithe belonged to God then, it belongs to Him now. If it was holy to Him then, it is holy to Him now. Numbers 18:24-28 teaches that the tithe was to be the means of supporting the priests and the worship. The priests were also required to tithe.

2. Tithing was practiced under the law (II Chronicles 31:5-6, 12; Nehemiah 10:37-38). Those who failed to tithe were condemned by the Lord as being guilty of sin. Nontithers were called God-robbers (Malachi 3:8-9). Malachi challenged the people of Israel to try tithing and see the Lord's blessings for it.

III. Tithing in the New Testament

1. Christ taught tithing. In Malachi 3:1-4, we have a prophecy that the Lord will come and teach people how to live righteously and acceptably. There follows the charge that Israel has robbed God in failing to give the tithe. In Jesus Christ, Malachi's prophecy is fulfilled. Jesus taught in Matthew 23:23 that acceptable living included the tithe and also the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. In other words, the tithe alone is not enough. We must live right, too. Yet the Lord said that we ought to tithe. Who are we to say that we should not?

These passages show plainly that God's plan of church finance is for His people to bring His tithes to His house for His work. Everyone who has an income is expected to tithe. *"Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered."* The only proportion taught in the Bible is the tithe. Hebrews 7:8 says *"And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth."* Men that die refers to the Levitical or Mosaic priests. "He" refers to Christ as the fulfillment of the Melchizedek priesthood. As the people paid tithes to the Levitical priests, so now why pay tithes to Christ as the greater Priest. Tithes and offerings are paid to Him through His church.

IV Summary

Here then is God's plan for financing Baptist churches. We are not interested in man-made plans. We believe in God's plans in everything, and we believe that every member of a Baptist church should be a tither, bringing to the Lord a tenth of His income. If we love Him, we will keep His commandments.

The plan of finance would meet all of the financial needs of the churches. If every Southern Baptist were to tithe, our income would total billions of dollars a year. That would make possible great advances in church buildings, in new churches, in missions, in Christian education, and in every area of our work. The personal blessings to the members for their faithfulness as stewards of the Lord would be immeasurable.



**Honor the
Lord by
giving him
the first
part of
all your
income.**
Proverbs 3:9¹¹

BAPTIST CHURCHES AT WORK

A Baptist church is simple in its organization. It is a self-governing body whose members have equal rights, privileges, and duties. It is probably the purest democracy the world has ever known.

I. Officers:

1. The pastor is the chief officer. He is a man called by God to preach the gospel, ordained to the work of the ministry, and called by a church to serve as its leader.

He must be a man of the highest type Christian character. (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). He is the leader of the church and is to have oversight of the work (I Peter 5:1-2; I Timothy 6:12, 13, 17; Hebrews 13:7, 17). He must study, preach, teach, lead, exhort and reprove (II Timothy 2:15; 4:1-5) and must one day give answer to God for the way he has done his work (Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:4). He is to lead the church in accordance with the teaching of God's word. If he is truly a man of God, he will ever be doing his best for the Lord, for the church, and for its ever member.

2. The office of a deacon is usually traced to the first church at Jerusalem. Seven men were chosen by the church to assist the apostles. The deacons truly were servants of the church, and they are to be that today. They were men of proved character and spiritual interest (Acts 6:3-7; I Timothy 3:8-13).

Other officers include the church clerk, who keeps the church records; the treasurer, who handles the church funds, trustees, who hold title to the property in accordance with the requirements of the law, the choir director, the organist, the pianist, and church elected works in the educational organizations. In some churches, there are also paid staff members, such as the minister of education, minister of music, or assistant pastor. All are elected by the church and are accountable to the church.

II. Services and Organizations

Baptist churches usually have many activities, including worship services, Sunday School, Training Union, prayer meetings, and missionary meetings. The ministry of the organizations of the church is as follows:

The Sunday School is the Bible teaching organization. Its textbook is the Bible, and lesson helps are usually provided. It seeks to enlist both the saved and the lost in the study of God's Word. Its teaching sessions usually are held on Sunday mornings.

The Training Union is a training organization. The work consists of regular meetings on Sunday evening with programs on doctrine, ethics, Christian history, church policy, and so forth. It also provides a daily Bible reading program, a ministry to social needs, and other activities that help train the member of active service.

Each member, without exception, is expected to fill his/her place in the church attendance on its appointments, as providence may allow, and also to contribute of his/her means for the financial support of the church, according to his/her ability. If, in either of these respects, he fails or refuses, he/she becomes a covenant breaker.

Every member should attend the following meetings:

1. Sunday School – Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. II Timothy 2:15

2. Sunday Morning Worship – Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:25
3. Mid-Week Prayer and Bible Study – Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, signing, and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:19-20
4. The Commemoration of the Lord Supper – The bread is broken as a symbol of Jesus' crucified body, and the grape juice symbolizes His blood. According to I Corinthians 11:26 *"for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."*

The deacons have a major contribution to make in strengthening the spiritual maturity of the church. There were seven deacons in the first church, but this number seems to have no special significance. The number should be according to the needs of the church. In most churches, the pastor and deacons meet together regularly to plan and pray concerning the work of the church.

Almost all churches have a choir program. Many have graded choirs, providing music training for various age groups.

Every member of every Baptist church should be regular in attendance at the worship and prayer services. To the fullest extent possible, he should participate in the work of the organizations designed for him. Such attendance and participation will promote Christian growth, give training in Christian work, and open doors of opportunity for service.

III. Baptist Churches Working Together

Each Baptist church is independent and under no head except Christ. No denomination organization has any control over any church. National Baptist churches, however, believe in, and practice the scriptural doctrine of cooperation. Baptist work is done on this basis. Churches work together in the following manner:

District associations are composed of Baptist representing the cooperating churches in a county or similar area. They hold annual meetings at which reports from the churches are given and plans for the work are made. Many of them also hold other

meetings for promotion of the various departments of work in the churches. Many employ superintendents of missions to direct mission work within their bounds. State conventions are composed of messengers from the cooperating churches within one or more states. They, too, hold annual meetings. They support a program of mission and promotional work and usually maintain colleges, hospitals, and children's homes.

The National Baptist Convention is composed of messengers from the cooperating Baptist churches in the United States. It has an annual convention. It has a Foreign Mission Board, a Home Mission Board, a Sunday School Board, an Annuity Board (to provide protection for ministers and their families), and various other agencies and commissions. It also provides seminaries and has a hospital program. The National Baptist Convention supports thousands of missionaries both in America and around the world.

The main support for the mission and benevolent work of the Convention is through the Cooperative Program. This is a budget plan for dividing mission funds received from the churches, among the various agencies and institutions. Support also comes from special offerings. Other conventions similar to the National Baptist Conventions are found in the United States and in other countries.

The Baptist World Alliance is the world organization of Baptists. It does not maintain institutions and agencies but leaves that to the various conventions. It seeks to promote the fellowship of Baptist groups around the world. It holds congress once every five years.

The Woman's Missionary Union and the Brotherhood are the missionary organizations. The former is composed of the Woman's Missionary Society, the Young Women's Auxiliary, the Girls' Auxiliary, and the Sunbeam Bands. The Brotherhood is for men and sponsors the Ambassador, Pioneer, and Crusader program for boys. All of these organizations lead in the study and promotion of missions and stewardship.



HISTORY OF GREATER UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

Back in 1905, a small group of Christian believers got together and organized the Union Baptist Church in Perry, Georgia. Those involved included Phil Brown, Jack Woods, John Smith, Toby Fann, Charles Whitehurst, Bessie Nelson, Minnie Allen, Stella Cooper, Minerva Miller, Ford Williams, Bertha Carter, Virginia Arnold, Ellen Brown, Charlotte Dennard, and their pastor, Rev. R. N. Howard.

Rev. Howard served the church for about 4 years, after which Rev. S. P. Miller was called. Pastor Miller served for 2 years. Rev. T. H. Henderson was the next choice made by the church. Rev. Henderson served 6 years. Rev. B. R. Davis was the next elected pastor of Union Baptist Church. He stayed for 3 years. Because of Rev. Davis health, the church had to make another choice and chose Rev. W. J. Reynolds who served for 4 years.

Union Baptist Family had to make a choice for another pastor and chose Rev. A. H. Daniels. He was forced to resign because he had too many churches. Rev. F. B. Burney was the next choice. Pastor Burney served for 4 years. Rev. E. L. Dozier was he next pastor and he too served about 4 years.

Next, the church made the choice of Rev. G. T. Terry. Pastor Terry served the church for 32 years until his death. Rev. Terry played a great part in making the church what it is today.

The original church which was wooden, built by Jim Dennard and financed by Powell Cooper, was destroyed by fire. Another building was constructed at the same location; it too was financed by Powell Cooper. The contractor was Steven Roberts. During the construction period, services were held at Perry Chapel A.M.E. Church. The new church building remained the same until October 1949, when it was wired with electricity, repaired and bricked.

After the death of Rev. Terry, the church had to make another selection for a pastor. The church then called Rev. Walter L. Glover, Jr. to serve as undershepherd. Rev. Glover was instrumental in having the word "GREATER" annexed to the church's name; thus making it GREATER UNION BAPTIST CHURCH. Pastor Glover served at Greater Union for 5 years.

Once again, it was pastor seeking time. This time the church made the choice of Rev. Donald Snead. He served for 4 years. In 1981, the church made the choice of Rev. James F. Sherman to serve as the next pastor. Rev. Sherman served for 16 years. Rev. Elvoid B. Haywood was chosen as Interim Pastor and later selected to serve as Pastor of Greater Union. He served for 1 year.

With the task of choosing another pastor, the church family then chose Rev. Keith Anderson. Rev. Anderson served as pastor for 10 years.

From December 2007 – September 2008, different ministers/pastors came and delivered the message to the church family.

On September 13, 2008, the church family harmoniously elected Rev. Otha L. Everett as the next Visionary of Greater Union Baptist Church



CHURCH MINISTRIES

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Youth Ministry | 9. Sunday School |
| 2. Christian Education | 10. Media Ministry |
| 3. Deacons Ministry | 11. Transportation |
| 4. Deaconess/Mothers | 12. Ushers Ministry |
| 5. Dietary (Kitchen) | 13. W.O.W. (Women) |
| 6. Worship Enhancement | 14. F.B.I. (Men) |
| 7. Sunday School | 15. Pastor's Aide |
| 8. Transportation | 16. Music/Choir |

IMPORTANT CHURCH ACTIONS & BYLAWS

1. Inactive members cannot vote on church business. Those who are not present after a period of 90 days are considered inactive and must be reinstated.
2. Any church business/concerns should be presented to the pastor or deacons (General Board) prior to the business meeting/conference.
3. The General Board is allowed to make any necessary repairs/purchases of \$300 and below without conduction a business meeting.
4. The paid positions include:
 - a. The Pastor
 - b. The musicians
 - c. The church custodian

YEARLY CALENDER OF EVENTS

<i>MONTH</i>	<i>EVENT</i>
January	
February	Black History Observance
March	
April	Church Anniversary Revival (Monday after 2 nd Sunday)

	Church Anniversary - 3 rd Sunday
May	
June	Vacation Bible School
July	Homecoming Revival (Monday after 2 nd Sunday) Homecoming - 3 rd Sunday
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	