

# Reaffirming Our Church Covenant

Sunday School  
January 27, 2019

## **The Covenant of the Church at Salem, Massachusetts, c. 1639**

1. First we avowe the Lord to be our God, and ourselves his people in the truth and simplicitie of our Spirits.
2. Wee give ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the word of his grace, fore the teaching, ruleing and sanctifyeing of us in matters of worship, and conversation, resolveing to cleave to him alone for life and glorie; and oppose all contraire wayes, canons and constitutions of men in his worship.
3. Wee promise to walk with our brethren and sisters in the Congregation with all watchfullness, and tendernis, avoyding all jelousies, suspitions, backbyteings, conjurings, provoakings, secrete riseings of spirit against them, but in all offences to follow the rule of the Lord Jesus, and to beare and forbear, give and forgive as he hath taught us.
4. In publick or private, we will willingly doe nothing to the offence of the Church, but will be willing to take advise for ourselves and ours as ocasion shall be presented.
5. Wee will not in the Congregation be forward eyther to show our owne gifts or parts in speaking or scrupuling or there discover the fayling of our brethren or sisters butt attend an orderly care there unto; knowing how much the Lord may be dishonoured, and his Gospell in the profession of it, sleighted by our distempers, and weakness in publyck.
6. Wee bynd ourselves to studdy the advancement of the Gospell in all truth and peace, both in regard of those that are within, or without, noe waye sleighting our sister Churches, but using their Counsell as need shall be; nor laying a stumbling, before any, noe not the Indians, whose

good we desire to promote, and soe to converse, as wee may avoid the verrye appearance of evill.

7. Wee hearby promise to carrye ourselves in all lawfull obedience, to those that are over us in Church and Common weale, knowing how well pleasing it will be to the Lord, that they should have encouragement in their places, by our not greiveing theyre spirites through our irregulareties.
8. Wee resolve to prove our selves to the Lord in our particular callings, shunning ydlenes as the bane of any state, nor will we deale hardly, or opressingly with Any, wherein we are the Lord's stewards: alsoe
9. Promyseing to our best abilitie to teach our children and servants, the knowledge of God and his will, that they may serve him alsoe and all this, not by any strength of our owne, but by the Lord Christ, whose bloud we desire may sprinckle this our Covenant made in his name.

(from Horton Davies, *The Worship of the American Puritans* [Morgan, PA : Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1999], 25-27).

## **The Covenant of Mount Calvary Baptist Church Greenville, South Carolina**

Having been brought, as we believe, by divine grace to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and, having been baptized, upon the confession of faith, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now most joyfully and solemnly enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, as the Holy Spirit shall enable us, to walk together in brotherly love; to exercise Christian care and watchfulness over one another; to participate in one another's joys; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation; to consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; and to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together.

We further engage to strive for the advancement of Mount Calvary Baptist Church in grace, knowledge, and holiness; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; to sustain its worship, ordinances, and doctrines; and to contribute cheerfully and liberally to the financial support of the ministries of the church, giving special attention to the ministries of world evangelization and care for the needy.

We further engage to maintain family and private devotions; to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; and to avail ourselves of the great privilege of prayer for one another and all men.

And we further engage to walk circumspectly and watchfully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in

our deportment; to refrain from gossip, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage and from every appearance of evil; to maintain a clear line of separation from all religious apostasy and all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations; and, ever remembering our relationship to Jesus Christ our Lord, to seek amidst evil report and good report to live to His glory.

## Confirming our Church Covenant

The use of church covenants developed among English and American churches in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that stressed the need for church membership to be \_\_\_\_\_ and for those seeking admission to be \_\_\_\_\_.

**Paragraph 1 of our covenant restricts membership to those who are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_**

A covenant is a solemn \_\_\_\_\_ between two or more parties.

**Paragraph 2 sets forth \_\_\_\_\_ goals governing our relationships to each other as individuals.**

We must depend upon \_\_\_\_\_ to achieve our covenant goals. The goals stated in paragraph 2 are clearly Biblical. They are:

- *To walk together in brotherly \_\_\_\_\_*  
(I John 2:8-11; 3:14)
- *To exercise Christian care and \_\_\_\_\_ over one another* (Luke 10:33-35; Romans 15:1-2; I Corinthians 12:25; Galatians 6:1-2; Philippians 2:4, Hebrews 10:25, I John 5:16-17)
- *To participate in one another's \_\_\_\_\_*  
(Luke 1:44; 15:6; Acts 11:18)
- *To be slow to take \_\_\_\_\_*  
(Proverbs 15:18; 19:11, Romans 15:1-10)
- *To always be ready for \_\_\_\_\_*  
(Matthew 5:23-25; 18:21-22)
- *To consider one another to unto love and good works* (Hebrews 10:24)
- *To forsake not the \_\_\_\_\_ of ourselves together* (Hebrews 10:25)

**Paragraph 3 sets forth Biblical goals governing our individual relationships to the church as a local body.** Those affirming this covenant promise to:

- *Strive for the \_\_\_\_\_ of MCBC in grace, knowledge, and holiness.*
- *Promote its \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (3 John 2)*
- *Maintain the unity of the \_\_\_\_\_ in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3)*
- *Sustain its worship, ordinances, and \_\_\_\_\_. The main doctrines of our church are outlined in our \_\_\_\_\_.*
- *Contribute cheerfully and liberally to the financial support of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church (giving special attention to the ministries of world evangelization and care of the needy).*

**Paragraph 4 sets forth goals for the outworking of our faith in our personal lives.**

- We promise to maintain \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ devotions.
- We promise to bring up our children in the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord.
- We promise to seek the salvation of \_\_\_\_\_.
- We promise to avail ourselves of the great privilege of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Paragraph 5 deals with specific matters of \_\_\_\_\_ sanctification. It can be summarized by the final phrase, “to live to His glory.”**

## Relevant Questions

Please take a few minutes today to think about the following questions:

1. What is a local church? How would I define a local church?
2. How should people be admitted into membership in a local church?
3. Is there a difference between a church and an audience?
4. Could a church that was congregational in polity function without any definition of membership?
5. Should church membership be limited to regenerate believers?
6. Should the children of regenerate believers, though unregenerate themselves, be allowed into membership?
7. If unregenerate individuals were allowed to join a local church, what would happen to that church if they ever outnumbered the truly born again members?
8. Are there appropriate means whereby unregenerate individuals can be discouraged from church membership?
9. What would happen to MCBC if the majority of those who attended took a casual attitude toward membership?
10. Is it appropriate for a group of believers to establish goals for their church and for the way they intend to live as individual members of that church?