

# TEXOMA COWBOY CHURCH CONSTITUTION

## **PREAMBLE**

Under the guidance and leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ, we the members of the Texoma Cowboy Church adopt the following constitution in order to declare and preserve the principles of our faith, the freedom of our church, and the rights and responsibilities of our individual members.

## **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this church, located at 919 US Highway 281 South, Wichita Falls, Texas is the Texoma Cowboy Church.

## **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

Texoma Cowboy Church exists to glorify God by bringing the presence of Christ to the Western Heritage individual and family while providing a culturally relevant atmosphere for spiritual growth and service and to resource the Cowboy Church planting movement. The church will accomplish this mission by holding to these values:

Simplicity- The church will strive to keep all things it does as simple as possible.

Non-judgmental approach- The church will foster a non-judgmental atmosphere in all it does, accepting people just as they are, just as Christ Himself does.

Cultural relevance/Western Heritage- The church will make sure that all it does, including all of its programming and ministries will be geared toward reaching people in the western culture and those who love it.

Practice of Biblical Christianity- The church will practice biblical Christianity according to Matthew 18: 15-17. This will be practiced by the leadership and the congregation.

Elimination of barriers to the cowboy culture- The church will do all that it can to lower or eliminate the barriers preventing the Gospel of Jesus Christ from reaching the western culture.

Empowerment with Accountability- The church will strive to empower as many people as it can to serve Christ through the church and bring out the giftedness in them while holding them accountable for their actions and commitments.

Power of the Gospel- The church believes in the power of the gospel unto salvation of souls and healing of body, mind and spirit.

## **ARTICLE III. DOCTRINE**

This church affirms the Holy Bible, the inspired word of God, as the authority in all matters of faith and practice.

## SECTION I. STATEMENT OF FAITH

### A. The Holy Scriptures.

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed and therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning, and all issues of interpretation and meaning shall be determined by the pastor. (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21)

### B. The Godhead.

We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; John 14:10, 26; II Cor. 13:14)

### C. The Person and Work of Christ.

1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men, (Isa. 7:14, 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; II Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8)
2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; I Peter 1:3-5, 2:24)
3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25, 9:24; I John 2:1-2)

### D. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person Who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12:12-14; II Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14)
2. We believe that He is the divine Teacher Who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 1:17-18, 5:18; I John 2:20, 27)
3. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry. (Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12)

#### E. The Total Depravity of Man.

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God; but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his spiritually lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23, 5:12, 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3, 4:17-19)

#### F. Salvation.

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7, 2:8-10; I Peter 1:18-19; I John 1:9)

#### G. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.

1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38-39; I Cor. 1:4-8; I Peter 1:4-5)
2. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh and sin. (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

#### H. The Church

1. We believe that the local church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again persons. (I Cor. 12:12-14; II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23, 5:25-27)
2. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (Acts 14:27, 20:17, 28-32; I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11)
3. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control. (Acts 13:1-4, 15:19-31, 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; I Cor. 3:9, 16, 5:4-7, 13; I Peter 5:1-4)
4. We recognize water baptism and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42, 18:18; I Cor. 11:23-26)

#### I. Separation

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. (Rom. 12:1-2, 14:13; I Cor. 6:19-20; II Cor. 6:14-7:1; II Tim. 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11)

#### J. The Second Advent of Christ.

We believe in that *blessed hope*, the personal, imminent return of Christ, Who will rapture His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and

visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the nation of Israel. (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; I Thess. 1:10, 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10, 19:11-16, 20:1-6)

#### K. The Eternal State.

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29, 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13)
2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23, 3:21; I Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6)
3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment. (Matt. 25:41-46, Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; II Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15)

#### L. The Personality of Satan.

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11, 25:41; Rev. 20:10)

#### M. Creation.

We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)

#### N. Civil Government.

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Rom. 13:1-7, Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; I Peter 2:13-14)

## O. Human Sexuality.

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24, 19:5, 13, 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; I Cor. 5:1, 6:9; I Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)
2. We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

## P. Family Relationships

1. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; I Tim. 2:8-15, 3:4-5, 12)
2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18, 22:15, 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33, 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Peter 3:1-7)

## Q. Divorce and Remarriage.

We believe that God disapproves of divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. However, divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3)

## R. Abortion.

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5, 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24, 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5, 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

## S. Love.

We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict

or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10, 17-21, 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; II Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; I John 3:17-18)

#### T. Lawsuits Between Believers.

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (I Cor. 6:1-8, Eph. 4:31-32)

#### U. Missions.

We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; II Cor. 5:20)

#### V. Giving

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him/her, is obligated to financially support his/her local church. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving and that every Christian should give cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of his tithe or offering once the gift has been made. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 5:17-18; I John 3:17)

## SECTION II. AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members.

## ARTICLE IV. POLITY AND RELATIONSHIP

Jesus Christ is the head of the church; the true source of all that the church is and does, and His glory is to be the objective of every act, function, and motive of the body, both individually and corporately. The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose its membership and leadership. Persons meeting the membership requirements shall constitute the membership. All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall exist to further the purpose of the church. They will be accountable to the church. As an

autonomous local church, this church is not subject to the control of any ecclesiastical body. However, it relates to and cooperates with the Wichita, Archer, Clay Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and other entities of like faith in sharing the Gospel with the whole world.

## **ARTICLE V. ORDINANCES**

### **SECTION I. BAPTISM**

A church is understood to be a fellowship of baptized believers brought together to carry out the work of Jesus Christ. A baptized believer is one who has been scripturally baptized and understands baptism to be a symbol of the salvation which has already been accepted in their life by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. The Texoma Cowboy Church practices baptism by immersion.

### **SECTION II. THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The church will observe the Lord's Supper on a regular basis as led by the Pastor. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act whereby the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of Christ and anticipate His second coming.

## **ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of the active resident members present at a church conference called for that purpose. An active resident member is one who lives in or around the Texoma area and has attended the church's regular worship services at least 6 times in the past 90 days. Amendments may be proposed by the pastor, elders or by written petition of 25% of the active resident membership and presented to the elders. Proposed amendments for church consideration shall be announced in a regularly scheduled service at least 2 weeks prior to a church conference.