ARTICLE 2 – STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

SECTION 2.01—STATEMENT OF FAITH

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of this church and its members.

(A) **The Holy Scriptures.** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old (Masoretic Text of the Hebrew) and New Testament (Textus Receptus of the Greek) to be the verbally and plenarily inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed and, therefore, are the only authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical, historical, dispensational meaning, and all issues of interpretation and meaning shall be determined by the pastor. The King James Version of the Bible shall be the official and only translation used by the church. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)

(B) **Dispensationalism.** We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations—the law, the church, and the kingdom—are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. (Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25, 27; Rev. 20:2-6)

(C) **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; 2 Cor. 13:14)

(D) **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; 2 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; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

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. 9:24; 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2)

(E) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the person Who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, indwelling and sealing all believers unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 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; 1 John 2:20, 27)

3. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists and pastor-teachers to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry. (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12)

4. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit. The ultimate deliverance of the physical body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (1 Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22)

(F) The Sin Nature of Man. We believe that man was created sinless and innocent in the image and likeness of God but that in Adam's willful sin the human race fell and inherited a sinful nature which manifests itself in sinful choices. By nature and choice man also has incurred both spiritual and physical death, and become alienated from God. This alienation will culminate in eternal second death, apart from salvation. Man is without good and utterly unable to remedy his lost condition before God by any meritorious works. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19)

(G) **Salvation.** We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to every man by grace and received by personal, volitional faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, apart from works, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that all sins, except blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, are forgivable. We reject the man-made systems of Calvinism and Arminianism as expressions of our beliefs concerning the nature of man and the means of his salvation. (Matt. 12:31-32; John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 1:9)

1. Regeneration – We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new 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 and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and newness of life. (John 3:8, 33; Rom. 6:23; II Cor. 5:19; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13; II Pet. 1:4)

2. Justification – We believe that justification is the judicial act of God whereby He declares us to be righteous by faith in Christ Jesus, that justification includes the pardon of sin and the imputation of God's righteousness, and that it is bestowed solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood sacrifice, not by any work which we have done. (Acts 13:3, 9; Rom. 6:23; II Cor. 5:18-25; Eph. 1:7)

3. Sanctification – We believe that sanctification is an act and a process whereby God sets apart believers unto holiness. He then conforms them to the image of Christ and completes the process of sanctification at the return of Christ for His saints. (Rom 8:29; II Cor. 3:18; Eph. 1:3-4; 4:11- 13; Philippians 1:6; I John 3:2)

4. Glorification – We believe that all believers will be changed in the twinkling of an eye and will become like Christ at His appearing, that their mortal bodies will become immortal, and that their corruptible bodies will become incorruptible. (I Cor. 15:51-54; I John 3:2)

(H) **The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.**

1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1; 38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 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. (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

(I) The Church

1. We believe that the local church, which is the body and part of the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again persons Scripturally baptized by immersion. (1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27; Revelation 21)

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; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11)

3. We believe in the autonomy (i.e., its ability and mandate for self-government) of the local church, free of any external authority or control. As such, Maranatha Baptist Church is the sole judge of the measure and methods of its cooperation with other Scriptural, NT churches. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; 1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)

4. We believe there are only two Scriptural ordinances for the NT local church: Water Immersion and the Lord's Table. They are purely symbolical, not sacramental.

a. We believe that Biblical Baptism is the single immersion of the believer in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; that it pictorially sets forth the essential facts of redemption: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe that it gives testimony to the change that has occurred in the believer's life: death to sin and resurrection to walk in the newness of life. Baptism, which follows salvation, is an act of obedience and is prerequisite for church membership. There is no saving power in baptism. (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:4-6)

b. We believe that the Lord's Table is a memorial which shows His death until He comes again, that the bread and the cup are only symbols of His broken body and shed blood, and that our observance of it is pictorial of the believer's fellowship with Christ and His body, the local church, after a time of searching and self-judgment. (Matt 26:26-30; I Cor. 10:16-21; 11:17-34)

5. We believe unapologetically that Maranatha Baptist Church shall ever be a Baptist church in name. We reject the trend that bows to cultural, social

pressure and removes the name Baptist from church documents, literature, publications, and signs.

(J) **Separation.** We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations, and to refrain from all immodest and immoderate appearances, piercings, and bodily markings. (Lev. 19:28; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11)

(K) **The Rapture and Second Advent of Christ.** We believe in that *blessed hope*, the personal, imminent return of Christ, Who will rapture believers 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; 1 Thess. 1:10, 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

(L) **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; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6)

3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment in hell 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; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15)

(M) **The Personality of Satan.** We believe that Satan is a person and the agent of deception which entices mankind to choose to sin, that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man, and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. He is assisted in his rebellious efforts by fallen angels, also recognized as demons. Although a lost man can be demonically possessed, we reject any teaching which purports that any part of a born-again individual can be indwelt by

a demonic being, that is demonization of the believer. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10)

(N) **Creation.** We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)

(O) **Civil Government.** We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the local church, and 3) civil government. 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 principles to obey. When obeyed, each institution's responsibility will be fulfilled without contradiction or infringement on the others. Therefore the unity of obedience to God's institutions of authority results in all men being able to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Every Christian should be an active, conscientious, and obedient citizen. All officials of civil government should be prayed for, honored, and obeyed. However, should civil government ever require compliance of Christian citizens in areas which are directly opposed to the revealed will of God in the Bible, the Christian ought to obey God rather than men. (Acts 4:19-20; 5:27-29; Rom. 13: 1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14)

(P) **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; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 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; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

(Q) **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 local church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure

and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 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 an 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; Mk. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7)

(R) **Divorce and Remarriage.** We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication. Fornication, as noted in Matthew 5:31-32 and 19:9, is a reference back to the forbidden relationships of Leviticus 18:6-30 (i.e., relationships which God never sanctioned as marriage in the first place). When divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons realize the adultery of their situation and repent of it, they are forgiven by God. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)

(S) **Abortion.** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

(T) **Euthanasia.** We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment. (Ex. 20:13, 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28)

(U) **Love.** We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both 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; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18)

(V) **Lawsuits Between Believers.** We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the local 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. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)

(W) **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; 2 Cor. 5:20)

(X) **Giving.** We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe (10% of gross income) as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and 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; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17) Furthermore, we believe the financial needs of this church shall be met by the voluntary tithes, offerings, and contributions of its members and friends. No entertainment, suppers, bazaars, rummage sales, etc., shall be given by the church or its auxiliary organizations for fund raising purposes. With the approval of the pastor and deacons, special offerings may be taken apart from those received in regular services.

SECTION 2.02—AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH