

# **Faith and Practices of the**



**PFWB CHURCH**

**PENTECOSTAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH**

**2005 Edition**

**Faith and Practices  
Of the  
Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc.**

2005 Edition

Editorial Committee  
Rev. Preston Heath, Chairman  
Rev. Jim Wall  
Mr. Stephen Garriss  
Mr. Dewayne Weeks

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Post Office Box 1568  
Dunn, North Carolina 28335  
(910) 892-4161  
(888) 668-9362

## PREFACE

Dear Reader,

The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. is a growing and expanding people with a rich heritage of God's blessings. Our strength is in the profound impact that the Gospel message has on our lives and the testimony we live before others. It is our sole purpose to bring glory to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as the head of the church.

The official position of our church's doctrine and practice is presented in this book of Faith and Practices. The government, procedures and expectations approved and established by the church are printed to assist all men in their service to God. We take pride in that our doctrines are scripturally sound and that through our history we have emerged with practices and procedures that make it easy for men to serve God through the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. Decisions and directions found herein are the result of the combined thinking and action of the people. The laymen and minister, alike, are represented in every official action of the church. We move together in unity to accomplish all that God has called us to do. This book contains the voice of our people as they interpret God's Will for His church.

The major doctrines of the church are Armenian and Wesleyan in faith with a strong emphasis on holy living and the baptism of the Holy Ghost for every believer. The church is committed to proclaim and practice a holy life-style and the manifestation of the Holy Ghost. It is the conviction of this church that our testimony is most effective when each member is sanctified and empowered by the Holy Ghost. We endeavor to let our light shine through our living that others may see and come to know Jesus as their personal Savior.

I want to especially express appreciation to the Editorial Committee who worked many hours on the review and revision of the policies of this edition. Also, I thank Dr. Herbert Carter, Dr. Don Sauls, Reverend Elvin Butts, and Reverend Dock Hobbs for their assistance in reviewing and correcting scripture references in our doctrine. As you will see, much work has gone into this edition to provide the best for our people.

The 2005 Book of Faith and Practices is provided to all, and is believed to be a useful tool in providing harmony and understanding as we labor together for the Lord through the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc.

Sincerely,

Preston Heath  
General Superintendent

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**MISSION STATEMENT FOR  
THE PENTECOSTAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.**

The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church is a Christian fellowship committed to building biblically functioning communities through worship, instruction, fellowship and expression.

Adopted by the General Board of Directors on January 19, 1996

**MISSION STATEMENT FOR  
THE PENTECOSTAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CONFERENCE HEADQUARTERS**

The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. exists to serve the Fellowship in fulfilling its mission in a spirit of cooperation. This mission is to be accomplished through the following specific objectives:

1. To provide an organization by which churches and ministers may be duly affiliated and certified, and to provide ministry and services to those ministers, churches, and other entities of the Fellowship;
2. To promote world evangelization through involvement in both home and foreign missions;
3. To provide for the educational needs of our fellowship in a manner that strongly emphasizes our Pentecostal Free Will Baptist fundamental truths;
4. To provide Pentecostal curricular materials, literature, periodicals and publications that may be of service to our Fellowship and the Kingdom of God, using all available mediums;
5. To provide for cooperation and fellowship with other organizations outside our Fellowship who are furthering the Kingdom of God;
6. To provide a model of servant leadership that exceeds the expectations of our Fellowship and fellow team members.

Adopted by the General Board of Directors on January 19, 1996

**BYLAWS OF  
THE PENTECOSTAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.**

**Preamble to Bylaws**

All of life must have law, and all organization must have government. He, who is Head over all things unto the church, gave form and order to His body of followers and representatives. A church, to conform to principles of government in accord with the Holy Scriptures and divine providence, must see that all things are done scripturally, decently, and in order.

The name of this body of Christians shall be known as the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. The government of this church is representative.

**ARTICLE I: OFFICES**

The principal office of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. shall be in the state of North Carolina. It shall be known as the International Headquarters and shall be located near the city of Dunn in Harnett County. The corporation may have other offices, either within or outside the state of North Carolina. All such offices shall be approved by the General Board of Directors as it determines the need.

The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. shall have and continuously maintain in the State of North Carolina, a registered office and a registered agent whose office is identical with such registered office. The registered office may be, but need not be, identical with the principal office in the state of North Carolina. The address of the registered office may be changed from time to time by the General Board of Directors in the manner provided by law.

**ARTICLE II: MEMBERS**

Membership shall consist of all local churches and all Ordained and Conference Licensed ministers who have accepted the policy and doctrine of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. All officers of this corporation shall be ex-officio members of the corporation.

**Section I: Admission of Members**

**A. Churches**

The General Superintendent's (President's) Advisory Council currently in office in the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., shall be the Church Admissions Committee.

**1. Existing Churches or Missions**

Churches desiring admission into membership shall make application on a form provided by the General Superintendent (President). The application shall include a statement certifying that the

applicant group accepts the doctrine, faith, and practice of this denomination. It should include a statement indicating their willingness to comply with and be bound by these bylaws, amendments, policies, and rules and regulations adopted by this denomination in accordance with these bylaws.

## **2. Associate Membership**

When an established church is not fully decided about becoming a member of the denomination, it may become an associate member for a period of one year. During that year it shall have all the rights and privileges of membership except that of voting and holding office. If at the end of one year, they feel that they need more time, then they may request to have their associate membership extended for a second year.

## **3. Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Missions Becoming Churches**

New missions that are started by the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., do not need to apply formally for membership. They are a part of the denomination by virtue of their association with the Home Missions Department.

## **B. Ministers**

### **1. The Ministerial Council**

The Ministerial Council is made up of the District Ministerial Representatives, two Regional Directors, and the General Superintendent (President). Any minister desiring ministerial membership with the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., must request it through application to the Ministerial Council. Ordination is a three-stage process beginning with Local License issued by the local church. It is followed by Conference License. The highest recognition is Ordination. No minister of this denomination is permitted to carry dual ministerial credentials with any other denomination, association, or fellowship. This shall not be interpreted to include organizations such as Full Gospel Business Men, National Association of Evangelicals, etc. Additional details regarding the minister are outlined in a book known as the Ministerial Handbook and may be obtained through Blessings Bookstore or through the Conference Resource Center.

The Ministerial Council shall have the authority to delegate certain duties normally assigned to them as the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. grows and it becomes more difficult for the people to travel to Dunn for the training and examination process.

Upon request, the Ministerial Council shall cooperate with a candidate who wishes to have a public ceremony of licensing or ordination in his local church. The responsibility for the planning and officiating will be done by the General Superintendent (President) or his designate. The responsibility for the promotion of this service will be that of the candidate and his pastor. This shall be done with open communication with the regional directors and with an invitation to all district and general leadership. No such service shall be conducted until after notification has

been received from the chairman of the Ministerial Council that the candidate has fulfilled all requirements for the recognition being given and is eligible for such a service to be held. However, there will continue to be public service of recognition and celebration with the annual campmeeting.

## **2. Ministers Transferring from Other Denominations**

Any minister desiring to transfer credentials into this church should make an appointment to discuss the matter with the General Superintendent (President). Detailed information will be furnished at that meeting of the necessary steps to be followed. Details related to these matters are explained in the Ministerial Handbook.

### **Section II: Voting Rights of Members**

Churches that have full membership in the corporation shall be entitled to one voting delegate for each 50 active members or any fractional part thereof with no church having less than two. All other members of the corporation shall be entitled to one vote each upon each matter submitted to a vote of the members. All votes shall be cast by duly elected and accredited delegates present in the conference at the time the vote is taken.

Any approved Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Mission within the boundaries of the United States that has been in existence for three months and has ten or more active adult members shall be entitled to elect one of its adult members to represent it as a delegate in conference affairs.

When such a mission becomes a church, it shall then have all the voting rights given to other Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Churches as outlined above.

Churches that are in association with the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., but are not full members, are welcome at all of its meetings. However, they do not have the privilege of voice and vote in the corporation's business affairs since they are not full members and do not have financial responsibility to the same.

All officials and Conference Licensed or Ordained ministers of this denomination shall have voting rights in the denomination affairs provided that their membership is in good standing at the time the meeting is held. Local Licensed and Missions Worker Licensed ministers do not have voice and vote in the General Conference or the privilege of holding office.

### **Section III: General Rules Governing Members**

Members shall at all times recognize that it is a privilege to be a part of this body of believers. They are a part of a voluntary cooperative fellowship. Other members of the denomination have collectively made a large contribution to the church world generally and perhaps to the local church in which one is associated. Therefore, as a member, it is incumbent upon all members to be cooperative with others, especially in leadership.

Members should strive to attend the district and general functions of the church. They should give support morally, physically, spiritually, and financially to its programs. When one cannot be supportive, he should contact the persons in administration and explain why.

Churches are to contribute to the general budget of the denomination a tithe of their income. This is to be computed after all special funds have been subtracted, such as building fund, benevolence, offerings for special denominational programs such as the youth, missions, or college. The tithe is determined from the general undesignated income of the church. The Advisory Council shall review annually the participation level of each local church. In cases where there has been outstanding achievement, they are to be commended; where there is a lack of cooperation, they are to be appropriately admonished.

Ministers are to contribute to the general budget of the denomination not less than 75% of their tithe. The remaining 25% can be given either to the church in which they hold membership, the church in which they are pastoring, or to the specialized ministries of the denomination. The Ministerial Council shall review annually the participation level of each minister. Those ministers that have consistently met the standard of the denomination as outlined in the Ministerial Handbook shall have their certification renewed for the following one year period.

If a minister flagrantly or carelessly fails to meet the standard, he shall not have his credentials renewed until the matter has been satisfactorily resolved. If after due consideration, the minister refuses to follow the admonition of the Ministerial Council, he shall be dismissed. In such case he may appeal the decision in the manner outlined elsewhere in this publication. A minister's credentials are not valid unless they have been issued a current certificate of renewal, normally a pocket card. A minister in such a situation may be reinstated by meeting with the Ministerial Council and pledging his loyalty to the program and policies of his denomination.

### **Section IV: When One Desires to Terminate Membership**

#### **A. Churches**

Any church desiring to withdraw from denominational membership shall give each member of the local church a minimum of a ten day notice to meet in a local church business conference. The General Superintendent (President) of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., or his designated representative shall meet with the members.

He shall be given opportunity to discuss the reason the church desires to terminate and to explore possible solutions. If the General Superintendent (President) feels that it would be helpful, he may have a second meeting in order to resolve the difficulty. After due deliberation, the matter will be presented by the General Superintendent (President) to the church for a secret ballot vote. In that vote, if the majority votes to terminate their membership, the church shall appoint three representatives to meet with the General Board of Directors of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. Such a meeting shall be held not less than sixty days from the date of the local church meeting. After due deliberation, the General Board of Directors and the representatives of the local church shall enter into an agreement respecting termination of the membership. The church desiring to withdraw shall not be relieved of their obligation to pay any assessments or apportionments therefore accrued and unpaid. These shall be non-accumulative.

### **B. Ministers**

Any minister in good standing may resign by filing a written resignation together with his credentials with the General Superintendent (President). When the minister is up-to-date with his financial obligation, and he is not under investigation or charges for wrong doing, a letter of acceptance of resignation will be provided. When the minister voluntarily surrenders his credentials in order to leave the denomination while under investigation or charge, his resignation shall be taken as presumptive proof of guilt and the minister will be dismissed without a letter of acceptance of his resignation. When a minister submits his resignation and is not up-to-date with his financial obligation to the denomination, it will be viewed as a dismissal and not a resignation.

### **C. Officers**

Any officer who is not a minister of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. will cease to be a member of this corporation when his term of office is terminated for any reason.

## **Section V: Expulsion and Excommunication of Members**

The General Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the votes cast may suspend or expel a member. Such voting is to take place after there has been an appropriate hearing. Voting in such case shall be limited to those members present and those members that have submitted an absentee ballot. The absentee ballot must be in writing, signed, dated, and placed by the member in a sealed envelope. The sealed envelope must be delivered to the chairman prior to the voting.

**Grounds for such dismissal include but are not limited to:**

- **Failure to accept the doctrine, Faith and Practices of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc.**
- **Refusal to comply with Articles of Consolidation, bylaws, policies, and rules and regulations adopted by the corporation in accordance with these bylaws.**

**•Ministers who fail to comply with the vows and obligations of being a Minister, along with the alterations of General Conferences that have been held since their licensing or ordination.**

**•The minister that is guilty of moral transgressions or heresy or who exerts his influence against the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc.**

**•Ministers should not be guilty of the use of tobacco in any form or alcohol or mind altering drugs except as prescribed by a duly licensed physician.**

Any church that is excommunicated from the denomination may appeal the decision of the General Board of Directors to the General Conference at any regular or special conference. Notice of intention to appeal must be made in writing to the General Superintendent (President) within thirty days of the decision of the General Board of Directors.

The minister will have his case first heard and decided by the Ministerial Council. He may appeal the council's decision to the General Board of Directors. The decision of the General Board of Directors shall be final in the case of a minister. The minister may not appeal his case to the General Conference.

When a minister's case has been decided as guilty or when the minister has admitted his guilt, it shall be the responsibility of the Ministerial Council in cooperation with the General Superintendent (President) to establish a program of healing and restoration. The objective in disciplinary procedures is restoration. The program of restoration will vary from one case to the next dependent upon the circumstances and judgment of the Ministerial Council. The minister must complete the restoration process satisfactory to the council in order to be restored.

No minister of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. shall be pastor or in any public forum minister in any church that has been expelled. No church will be allowed to use for pastor any minister who is not a member of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. or the services of any preacher who has been expelled. Any exception to this policy must have the prior approval of the General Superintendent (President) and/or the Advisory Council.

### **ARTICLE III: MEETING OF THE MEMBERS**

The General Conference shall be the governing and policy making body of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. It shall exercise administrative and operational control of all its functions through its various officers and departments. It shall set the budget and authorize any additional expenditure of corporate funds except as may be provided for in the authority given to the General Board of Directors.

The General Conference shall be composed of all general officers, all members of the General Board of Directors, all Ordained and Conference Licensed Ministers, and delegates from each local church and approved mission.

The General Conference shall meet bi-annually for the purpose of electing its officers and transacting other affairs of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. The agenda of these affairs shall be determined by the General Board of Directors. It shall be prepared and delivered to each local church and to each Ordained and Conference Licensed minister not less than 15 days prior to its bi-annual meeting. Any authorized member, as outlined above, may introduce legislation or business for inclusion in the agenda by presenting it to the General Board of Directors through its chairman not less than 30 days prior to the meeting of the General Board of Directors. All churches and delegates shall have the right to introduce business from the floor as provided for in the paragraph under Section -A- listed below.

All General Conferences will follow in all matters of parliamentary law, the Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. This rule shall be followed by the local church, the district, the General Conference, and each of the several departments and auxiliaries. Exception to this policy shall be these bylaws and the decorum report that may be adopted at the General Conference. In the case of a local church, the exception shall be their bylaws, official minutes and/or the recent historic practice.

#### **A. Regular Meetings**

The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., shall meet to do business not less than once each two years. The meeting shall be held at the Conference Tabernacle, in Dunn, North Carolina. The established time of the meeting shall be the Wednesday morning following the fourth Sunday in July, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting shall be held in the even years. (Example, 1990, 1992)

At any regular meeting of the corporation, any authorized person desiring to get items of business before the body not already on the agenda must prepare that business in writing. It must be submitted to the General Superintendent (President) along with the signatures of 12 authorized ministers and/or delegates. All matters so presented must relate directly to another item on the official agenda of the conference. No such business may be presented in this manner that requires a bylaw change, since a notice of 30 days is required to change bylaws. This procedure must be followed before any such proposed business can be discussed or considered by the body.

#### **B. Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the membership may be called by the Superintendent (President), the General Board of Directors, or by members having the signatures of one-tenth of the votes entitled to be cast at such meeting.

Written or printed notice of a special meeting stating the place, day, hour, and purpose for which the meeting is called shall be delivered not less than ten nor more than fifty days before the date of the meeting. This notice shall be delivered either personally or by mail to each member

entitled to vote at such meeting. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States Mail and addressed to the member at the address appearing on the records of the corporation with postage thereon prepaid.

### **C. Fellowship Sessions**

Members shall meet in their respective districts at such time and places as may be fixed by the General Board of Directors. The purpose of such meetings shall be for fellowship, information, sharing, reporting, and the election of various representatives as is necessary for the work. The members present at any district fellowship meeting shall not have power to make, alter, or amend any rule, regulation or bylaw of this corporation. The primary purpose of all such meetings is to promote the fellowship and the work of the church.

### **D. Quorum**

The voting delegation for the General Conference shall be as outlined in Article II: Section II, "Voting Rights of Members." The formula to determine the quorum as it relates to the number of lay delegates to the General Conference shall be two delegates per church and one delegate per approved home mission. This formula is for determining the quorum only and does not alter the general policy regarding representation.

The vote of a majority of the votes entitled to be cast shall be necessary for the adoption of any matter voted on by the members, unless a greater proportion is required by law, the articles of consolidation, or these bylaws. In matters pertaining to the district, proper notice shall be all that is required. The numerical minimum of a quorum will not be required.

## **ARTICLE IV: GENERAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **A. Composition and Election**

The General Board of Directors shall be composed of the four General Corporate Officers, one Ordained Minister and one Lay-Representative elected by their District, and a number equal to the number elected by the District of Laymen and Ordained Ministers that shall be nominated from the floor and elected by the General Conference. No person shall hold more than one position that would make them a member of the General Board of Directors. (Also, see Article V, Section F, "Separation of Corporate Officers and Staff.")

Information must be provided at the time of elections that will identify the church and district of each member of the General Board of Directors and those nominated.

Those persons serving as District Lay Representatives must be a member in good standing of a Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church located within the district he represents. The District Ministerial Director must be a resident of the district he represents and have his primary ministry in that district.

The Ordained minister selected by the district to serve as a member of the General Board of Directors shall be the District Ministerial Director who shall also serve as a member of the Ministerial Council.(Also, see Article VIII, Section B, “Advisory Council.”)

Those people elected by the district, and those General Board of Directors members elected by the General Conference who are not Corporate Officers, shall serve a four-year term beginning at the benediction of the General Conference and end four years later at the benediction of the General Conference.

## **B. General Powers**

The General Board of Directors shall be responsible for the implementation of the policies and management of the affairs of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. as outlined and prescribed by the General Conference. It shall have the authority to act on urgent matters requiring attention in between the business sessions of the General Conference. It may authorize the expenditure of funds for emergency or other reasons when it is deemed essential to the preservation and well- being of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. However, the authorization of expenditure of funds for special or unbudgeted programs or functions is limited for any segment of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. to ten percent of the total annual budget approved for that segment.

The General Board of Directors shall have advisory and directive powers in the business and administrative affairs of all executive offices and departments of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. It shall compile the agenda for the General Conference. All matters for the General Conference agenda must be submitted to the chairman of the General Board of Directors no less than 30 days prior to the General Board of Directors meeting. Exception to this is the right of petition from the floor with twelve signatures of voting delegates. Also, see Article III, Section A, Regular Meetings. The chairman shall assure that all official matters submitted for inclusion in the General Board of Directors agenda shall be duly processed with appropriate action reported.

## **C. Regular Meetings**

A meeting of the General Board of Directors shall be held not less than annually, after proper notice has been given. In the years in which the General Conference will meet, said General Board of Directors meeting should be held before the meeting of the General Conference. A notice shall be give of not less than ten days nor more than fifty days from the date of all such meetings. The date the notice is placed in the U.S. mail with the proper first class postage, address, etc. shall be considered the date the notice is given. The notice should specify the date, hour, and place of the meeting. Whenever it is possible, the administration is urged to provide each General Board of Directors member with a copy of the agenda in advance of the meeting so the member can give prior thought to the items to come before the General Board meeting. However, all General Board of Directors members should strive to approach the meetings with an open mind to evaluate the facts that shall be presented. It is not proper to approach the meeting with a closed mind; otherwise there would be little value in having a meeting.

## **D. Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the General Board of Directors may be called by the General Superintendent (President) or any two directors. Written or printed notice of a special meeting of the General Board of Directors stating the place, day, and hour of such meeting shall be made not less than five days before the date of the meeting either in person or by mail to each director. The majority vote of the members present may waive notice of any meeting.

## **E. Quorum**

One-third of the directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the General Board of Directors. The act of a majority of the General Board of Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the General Board of Directors, unless the act of a greater number is required by law or by these bylaws.

## **ARTICLE V: CORPORATE OFFICERS**

The officers of the corporation shall be General Superintendent (President), Assistant Superintendent (Vice-President), Secretary, and Treasurer, and such other officers as the General Board of Directors may authorize. The corporate officers shall serve as members of the General Board of Directors. No Corporate Officer shall hold more than one office. Such officers have the authority to perform the duties prescribed to them from time to time by the General Board of Directors.

### **A. Term of Office**

All General Officers terms shall be for four years. To eliminate the possibility of a complete change-over in any one year, elections shall be staggered. The General Superintendent (President) and Secretary shall be elected in one conference, and the Assistant General Superintendent (Vice President) and Treasurer shall be elected at the next General Conference. Each officer shall be elected each four years thereafter.

When on the General level there is a personnel change, the new officers are to be installed by the General Superintendent (President) on the last night of the annual Campmeeting. However, the new officer will not officially begin his duties until the first day of September. In the case where a parsonage is involved, the retiring officer shall not be expected to vacate the parsonage for sixty days following the date of the conference.

### **B. Election**

#### **1. Corporate Officers**

The corporate officers shall be nominated by the General Board of Directors, with privilege of nomination from the General Conference floor. The General Conference shall elect them.

Voting on corporate officers shall be by secret ballot, and balloting shall continue until all offices are filled. A simple majority of votes cast shall constitute an election.

## **2. General Divisional Board Members**

Because of the technical nature of the work, the General Conference may approve the constitution of certain departmental and/or divisional boards from the General Conference level without regard for district representation. In all such cases, the nomination shall come from the General Board of Directors and be elected by the General Conference in session. There will be privilege of nominations from the floor. Election shall be by secret ballot, and balloting shall continue until all offices are filled. Divisions approved for such board elections at the time of this writing include the World Witness Council. The President's Advisory Council serves as the General Services Board.

## **3. District Officers**

All District offices shall be for a term of four years. To qualify to hold office in the district, the person must be a member in good standing of a church in the district which the office represents, or be serving a church in that district in some administrative way such as pastor, director of Christian Education etc. Ministers must be pastoring or performing their ministerial duties within the district in order to represent that district. In the case where a minister leaves his church and leaves the district, the office shall be declared vacant. The Advisory Council shall fill all such vacancies. General officers or department directors are not eligible to serve as officers in a district.

### **a. District Ministerial Director**

This person is to be elected by the district in March or April of the even years (1998, 2000, 2002, etc.). He shall assume office at the benediction of the General Conference and shall serve for four years. The term shall expire at the benediction of the next regular General Conference. All nominations shall be from the floor with no nominating committee making a report. The person elected to this office must be an Ordained Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Minister with valid credentials. Further, the minister must have a primary ministry within the boundaries of the electing district, and the minister must reside within the boundaries of the electing district.

### **b. District Lay Representative**

This person is to be elected to the General Board of Directors by the district in March or April of the even years as outlined above. He shall assume office at the benediction of the General Conference of that year and shall serve for four years. All nominations shall be from the floor with no nominating committee making a report. The person elected to this office must be a layman in good standing of a church in the district. Any person with a Local, Conference or Ordination ministerial license is disqualified to serve in this role.

### **c. All Other Divisional Personnel**

Divisional Directors may be recommended to the General Superintendent (President) by the division and the director of that department. The General Superintendent (President) shall make the selection for the office and present his choice to the President's Advisory Council for approval.

### **C. Vacancies**

The Advisory Council shall be empowered to fill any vacancy that occurs on the department, division, or general level for the unexpired term. Any vacancy occurring among the General Board of Directors or Corporate Officers shall be filled by the General Board of Directors until the next meeting of the Corporation in general session.

### **D. Removal**

Any officer elected or appointed by the General Board of Directors may be removed by the General Board of Directors whenever in its judgment the best interest of the corporation would be served. Such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the officers so removed.

### **E. Compensation**

The compensation of all officers shall be determined by the General Board of Directors.

### **F. Separation of Corporate Officers and Staff**

The elected General Superintendent (President) is authorized to choose the executive ministry staff that shall lead the church with him. No salaried person on the General Superintendent's (President's) staff will be eligible to serve on any policy making board. A policy making board is defined as the General Board of Directors and the President's Advisory Council.

A slate of persons chosen by the General Superintendent (President) to be his executive ministry staff shall be submitted to the General Board of Directors for approval. If the General Board of Directors does not approve the person chosen by the General Superintendent (President), he shall submit another person for the staff position. This process will continue until all vacancies are filled.

Divisional Directors may be recommended to the General Superintendent (President) by the division and the director of that department. The General Superintendent (President) shall make the selection for the office and present his choice to the President's Advisory Council for approval.

### **G. Executive Ministry Staff Positions Defined**

There shall be five full time executive ministry staff positions comprised of World Witness, Christian Education, General Services, Region One Director, and Region Two Director. Job descriptions for each of these staff positions are to be developed and updated by the General Superintendent (President) and submitted to the General Board of Directors for approval. These

executive staff positions report directly to the General Superintendent (President) and are accountable to him for the exercise of the duties of their staff positions. Likewise, the General Superintendent (President) is accountable to the General Conference for their effectiveness and conduct.

The traditional practice of the General Conference is to utilize committees within the five ministry areas. The purpose of this practice shall be to promote specialization in feedback from the local churches and to assist the General Superintendent (President) in maintaining focus and direction among the ministry departments. Consistent with the General Superintendent's (President's) accountability to the General Conference, and the accountability of the executive staff members to the General Superintendent (President), he shall have authority to utilize these committees or councils in ways which promote unity and balance among the overall ministry of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. These ministry department committees or councils will be discussed in more detail under ARTICLE VIII: COMMITTEES.

### **1. World Witness Department**

The World Witness ministry department shall include Foreign Missions, Home Missions, and Evangelism. It utilizes a World Witness Council.

### **2. Christian Education Department**

The Christian Education Ministry Department shall include Crusaders for Christ, Sunday School, Ladies Auxiliary, Girls Auxiliary, and Royal Rangers. The primary council utilized by this ministry is the Christian Education Council.

### **3. General Services Department**

The General Services Ministry Department shall include office management, accounting, information management, purchasing and maintenance, publications, and Blessings Bookstore. This ministry department utilizes the General Superintendent's (President's) Advisory Council.

### **4. Region One and Region Two Directors**

Each of the Regional Directors shall serve as an administrative communications link between the general office and his assigned districts. It shall be their responsibility to manage, assist, and supervise the churches and ministers of the districts as an extension of the General Superintendent (President) under his direct supervision. This ministry department utilizes the Ministerial Council.

## **ARTICLE VI: DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

### **A. General Superintendent (President)**

The General Superintendent (President) shall be the general spiritual and administrative leader of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. He shall serve the entire Church. He shall be its chief spokesman and generally represent it to other organizations. He shall be the principal executive officer of the corporation and shall, in general, supervise and control all of the business and affairs of the corporation. He shall preside at all meetings of the members, the General Board of Directors and the Advisory Council. He shall be ex-officio member of all boards and committees of every department and division of the corporation. He should be notified in advance of all such meetings.

He shall visit the local church as often as deemed necessary and practical, to promote a cooperative fellowship with the denomination. He shall be called in the organization of a church and in the settlement of serious difficulties. He shall have the prerogative to make suggestions and offer counsel and directions in all matters affecting the general welfare of the local church and the denomination.

\*He shall be authorized to remove a pastor from a pulpit for cause. However, no removal shall be made, except in case of moral failure, without first consulting with the deacons.

\*He shall be authorized to appoint a pastor when the church demonstrates that they cannot agree on pastoral leadership. However, when an appointment is necessary, he shall confer with the deacons. In such instances, the local church reserves the right to reject such appointment by a two-thirds majority vote. It is to be generally understood that no such pastor can be appointed without his consent.

## **B. Assistant General Superintendent (Vice President)**

The Assistant General Superintendent (Vice-President) shall work under the administrative oversight of the General Superintendent (President) and at his direction in all phases of the denominational work. He shall give assistance to the General Superintendent (President) in the leadership of the church. He shall serve on the General Board of Directors. He shall chair the General Conference and meetings of the General Board of Directors in the absence of or at the direction of the General Superintendent (President). His portfolio shall be determined by the General Superintendent (President). In the event the General Superintendent (President) were to become incapacitated, the Assistant Superintendent (Vice President) shall call the Advisory Council together to decide the future course of action, and if needed, to call the General Board of Directors into session.

## **C. Secretary**

The secretary shall keep the minutes of the corporation in a place of safe keeping. He shall record the minutes of the meetings of the members, the General Board of Directors, Advisory Council, and Staff. He shall assure that all of the records of the corporation are kept in a place of

safety. He shall give notice in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws or as required by law. He shall be custodian of the corporate records and of the seal of the corporation.

He shall attend all annual and special meetings of the members and of the General Board of Directors. He shall furnish and tabulate data on the membership as needed to keep factual statistical records on the corporation's affairs. He shall publish to the membership a book of minutes as outlined by the General Board of Directors.

#### **D. General Treasurer**

The General Treasurer is to assure that the receipts and expenditures of the corporation are properly maintained and that appropriate and accurate accounting is maintained in every department and division. He is to assure that other related records are maintained as required by the membership, the General Board of Directors, and other laws relating to record keeping. He shall coordinate with the General Services Director all accounting and administrative services required in the orderly function of the office of treasurer. He shall report to the Superintendent (President) at regular intervals the work of this area calling attention to areas that need special attention.

### **ARTICLE VII: PASTORS**

Member churches of the corporation shall elect their pastors from among the ordained membership of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. Each pastoral election shall be for an indefinite period of time. As long as the church is happy with the pastor and the pastor is happy with his church, it is not necessary for the church to have a pastoral vote. However, when a pastor chooses to resign or a church decides that it needs a pastoral vote, it should be done in keeping with the procedures outlined under the practices section of this book of Faith and Practices.

There are three levels of pulpit ministerial licenses in this church. The entry level is the Local License which is issued by the local church. The second level is the Conference License and it is issued by the denomination. The third and highest level is Ordination and is also issued by the denomination. There are two specialized licenses issued by the denomination, the Christian Education License and Music License. These are considered as Conference License and people with such license are not eligible to be considered as senior pastor of a church. Only Ordained Pentecostal Free Will Baptist ministers may be considered as the pastor of a local church. Any exception to this policy must have the prior approval of the General Superintendent (President).

### **ARTICLE VIII: COMMITTEES**

#### **A. Committee of Directors**

The General Board of Directors, by resolution adopted by a majority of the directors in office, may designate one or more committees, each of which shall consist of two or more directors. Such committees, to the extent provided in said resolution, shall have and exercise the authority of the General Board of Directors in the management of the corporation, but the designation of such committees and the delegation thereto of authority shall not operate to relieve the General Board of Directors or any individual director of any responsibility imposed upon it or him by law.

### **B. Advisory Council**

The General Superintendent (President) shall be the chairman of the Advisory Council. The Council shall be made up of four District Ministerial and four District Lay-Representatives. There are four Districts at the time of this writing: the Cape Fear, the Neuse River, the New River, and the Bladen Lakes. This makes for a nine member Advisory Council, each of which is also a member of the General Board of Directors.

The Advisory Council shall meet frequently on a schedule determined by the General Superintendent (President). It shall meet to assist the General Superintendent (President) by making recommendations and giving feedback and guidance in decision making on issues in which the General Superintendent (President) feels he needs additional participation but does not merit calling the General Board of Directors into session. It shall deal primarily with routine matters and with matters of emergency. Additionally, it shall act as a council for the General Services ministry area.

The Advisory Council shall serve as the Church Admissions Committee. As a Church Admissions Committee, it shall examine for acceptance or rejection all church applicants for admission.

### **C. Conference Trustees**

The Corporate Officers shall serve as Conference Trustees. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to act on behalf of the General Board of Directors of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. and to do any and all things to the extent authorized. As such, their authority shall be the same as that of the General Board of Directors.

As Conference Trustees, they shall hold in trust all properties deeded to the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. whether they be general, district, or local properties. They shall be authorized to sign all official documents requiring the signatures of trustees from time to time.

### **D. Ministerial Council**

The Ministerial Council shall be under the direct supervision of the General Superintendent (President) and the General Board of Directors. It shall be responsible to serve as an Ordination council to examine and determine qualifications of applicants. It shall approve or reject all applicants for ministerial recognition whether it be for Conference License or Ordination. Ministerial candidates once approved by the Ministerial Council shall have authority to function

within the privileges of their licenses; however, all such approval shall be ultimately subject to the approval of the General Board of Directors. The Ministerial Council shall investigate all retirement applications and shall make a recommendation on the same to the Advisory Council.

The Ministerial Council shall recommend policy procedure related to the entrance, department, and retirement of the minister. They shall investigate and try all charges submitted to them against Ordained and Conference Licensed ministers in keeping with the policy of the denomination. They shall initiate, organize, and promote ministerial study courses for prospective ministers and refresher courses for ministers already in ministry. They shall organize and promote retreats, ministerial seminars, and other events that will be helpful in the development of the minister.

The Ministerial Council shall be composed of the District Ministerial Directors and the two Regional Directors. The chairman and secretary shall be elected from the seated District Ministerial Directors at their first meeting following the General Conference. The chairman and secretary's term shall be for two years with the privilege of succeeding themselves. Membership on the council is transferable to any new district director; however, the offices of chairman and secretary are not transferable. They must be replaced by election to be held at the regular council meeting. Such an election shall be for the unexpired term of the seat being replaced.

The Ministerial Council shall meet as often as needed to carry out the functions of their office. They shall establish and maintain complete records on all proceedings of the council. They shall establish a file source for maintaining information at the headquarters on the biographical and ministerial history of all ministers. They shall plan and execute programs of fellowship between ministers at all levels of the denomination. They shall act as advisors to the Advisory Council for the administration of the Retirement Incentive Program of the ministers. They shall perform such other functions as are presently assigned or that may be assigned by the General Board of Directors or the Annual General Conference.

The Ministerial Council shall have authority to delegate certain duties normally assigned to them as the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. grows and it becomes more difficult for people to travel to Dunn for the training and examination process.

Upon request, the Ministerial Council shall cooperate with a ministerial candidate who wishes to have a public ceremony of licensing or ordination in his local church. The responsibility for the planning and officiating will be done by the General Superintendent (President) or his designate. The responsibility for the promotion of this service will be that of the candidate and his pastor. This shall be done with open communication with the regional directors and with an invitation to all district and general leadership. However, there will continue to be a public service of recognition and celebration in connection with the annual Camp Meeting. No such service shall be conducted until after notification has been received from the chairman of the Ministerial Council that the candidate has fulfilled all requirements for the recognition being given and is eligible for such a service to be held. (Also, see Article II, Section I, B-1, Ministerial Council.)

## **E. World Witness Council**

As part of the re-engineering process of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. this section is currently being reviewed. Upon completion an addendum will be published.

#### **F. Christian Education Council**

As part of the re-engineering process of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. this section is currently being reviewed. Upon completion an addendum will be published.

#### **G. Heritage Bible College, Inc.**

All Trustees of Heritage Bible College, Inc. shall be elected by the General Board of Directors of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., or its successor organization. The President of Heritage Bible College, Inc., and General Superintendent (President) of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., shall interview prospective trustees prior to the annual meeting of the General Board of Directors. These names, along with nominees from the General Board of Directors, shall be considered for election as trustee.

Up to, but not in excess of one-third of the trustees may be members of the General Board of Directors of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. No person who is the director of a department of this denomination shall be elected to the Board of Trustees. Not less than two-thirds of the Board of Trustees must be members in good standing of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. Only persons that are evangelical Christians in harmony with the objectives of Heritage Bible College, Inc. may be considered for the other one-third of the board membership. The General Superintendent (President) by virtue of office shall be a member of the Board of Trustees.

All trustees shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. The term of office for all trustees, except that of the General Superintendent (President), shall be for three years, with one-third of the terms expiring each year. Trustees will be limited to two consecutive three year terms. There shall be no more than 21, nor less than 15 trustees. The General Board of Directors shall fill all vacancies occurring on the Board of Trustees. The General Board of Directors may at any time, for good cause, remove from office any trustee of Heritage Bible College, Inc.

The Board of Trustees shall elect annually the following officers of Heritage Bible College, Inc. from its membership: A chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, and such other officers as it may deem necessary. The president and vice-president shall at all times be members in good standing of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. and, shall hold their respective offices at the pleasure of the General Board of Directors.

The Board of Trustees shall operate Heritage Bible College, Inc. as an agency of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. Said corporation shall report for information to the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. as often as may be required on all work done. The Board of Trustees shall have no power to obligate the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. directly or indirectly, for any debt without the prior approval of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc.

## **ARTICLE IX: BOOKS AND RECORDS**

The corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of accounts. It shall keep minutes of the proceedings of its members and General Board of Directors. It shall keep at its registered office or principal office in the state of North Carolina a record of the names and addresses of its members entitled to vote. All books and records of the corporation may be inspected by any member or their agent, for any proper purpose at any reasonable time. In its principal office in this state, a personal file shall be kept of each church and each minister.

## **ARTICLE X: SEAL**

The General Board of Directors shall provide a suitable corporate seal which shall be in the form of a circle and inscribed thereon the name of this corporation, and said seal shall be impressed at the margin of the minute book containing this provision of the bylaws. The secretary of the corporation shall be the custodian of the corporate seal.

## **ARTICLE XI: WAIVER OF NOTICE**

Whenever any notice is required to be given by law, or under the provisions of the articles of consolidation or the bylaws of this corporation, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person, member, delegate, officer, or director entitled to such notice, whether before or after the date set therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice as acceptable time.

## **ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed, and new bylaws may be adopted by at least two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast by members present at any regular meeting of the members or at any special meeting, if at least thirty days written notice is given of intention to alter, amend, or repeal or to adopt any bylaws at such meeting.

**PRACTICES OF  
THE PENTECOSTAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.**

This section of the Faith and Practices reflects policies that have been adopted by the General Conference that has direct application to the operation of a local Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church.

**Section I: The Organization of a Local Church**

**A. The Established Church or One Not a PFWB Mission**

When ten or more gainfully employed believers desire to be organized into a Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, they are to be examined by the General Superintendent (President) and the Church Admission Committee. They should request from the headquarters a membership application. That application should include a statement certifying that the applicant group accepts the doctrine, faith, and practices of this denomination and that they are willing to comply with its bylaws and amendments thereto.

If the examination is satisfactory, the General Superintendent (President), on a day mutually agreed upon, shall visit the group and organize it as a church in the following manner:

1. The Bible shall be declared as the only rule of faith and practice.
2. The Church Covenant of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. as recorded in this Book of Faith and Practices shall be read and adopted by the membership present.
3. A brief ceremony of organization shall be conducted by the General Superintendent (President). It shall be followed by a prayer of consecration.
4. A cordial welcome shall be extended by the General Superintendent (President) and the hand of fellowship shall be given.
5. The General Superintendent (President) shall lead the congregation to formally elect its pastor. The pastor will then moderate the meeting to elect the other officers needed, unless such election has been previously held.

## **B. Moving From a Mission to a Church**

When new missions are started by the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., and they feel that they have grown to the point that they are ready to become a sovereign church, they should notify the Home Missions Director and make their request known. The Missions Director shall investigate the suitability of the mission becoming a church and shall report his finding to the World Witness Council who shall decide the matter. If the Home Missions Board agrees to the request, they shall make a recommendation of the same to the General Superintendent's (President's) Advisory Council, which is the Church Admission Committee. In the case where the mission disagrees with the World Witness Council, they may appeal the decision to the Advisory Council. When the Advisory Council has approved a church for membership, the General Superintendent (President) shall visit the church and accomplish those things as outlined above in Section A to establish it as a church.

The general criteria that shall be used to determine when a mission is ready to become a church shall be as follows:

1. The mission must have not less than ten gainfully employed members who are actively supporting and faithful to the mission.
2. The mission must demonstrate evidence of financial stability, including providing their place of worship and meeting all of their financial obligations as well as their financial support of their pastor in an arrangement that is sufficient to relieve the department of any financial responsibility.
3. The mission must show that it is capable of self-government, and that it has sufficient unity in the congregation to make decisions without great division in the body.
4. The mission must have sufficient lay-leadership to supply the officers and staff necessary for the maintenance and growth of the local church.

It should be understood that these are general guidelines necessary to become a church. Even though a mission may have reached the numerical standard, it is not to have an automatic change of status. The total atmosphere in the mission shall be evaluated in the decision to designate it as a church.

## **C. Moving From a Church to a Mission**

When a local church becomes weak and falls below the guide outlined above, or the congregation cannot agree and thus it becomes incapable of governing itself, it may lose its status as a church and be declared a mission by the Advisory Council. When a church is declared a mission, the pastor and vice-chairman of the deacon board are to be notified in writing

by the General Superintendent (President). If the church does not agree with the decision of the Advisory Council, it may within thirty days of notification call a meeting of all the members, giving a proper ten day notice, and by a two-thirds majority vote overrule the decision of the Advisory Council. The general guidelines used to determine when a church no longer qualifies as a church shall be the same as those outlined in item B above.

#### **D. Privileges and Limitations of a Mission**

It is the desire of the leadership of this denomination that a mission become a church just as soon as it is practical. The mission status is designed to protect and assist the new, weak, or struggling group. When a group is declared a mission, its affairs are to be managed by the Home Missions Board and its director. The Home Missions Director shall appoint for them a pastor that is an ordained minister of this denomination.

All offices and elected positions in the local church, except the trustees, shall be declared vacant when a church becomes a mission. The appointed pastor and the Home Missions Director, in cooperation with the membership of the mission, shall appoint the necessary offices for the maintenance and growth of the congregation. In cases where the church cannot meet its financial obligations, help through the Home Missions Department may be available. When financial aid is required, the local church properties must be deeded in whole or in part to the trustees of the denomination. This is to protect the investment of the members of this denomination who are trying to help a sister church in need. Additional detail of the privileges and limitations of the mission are outlined in the Home Missions Manual.

### **Section II: Pastor of the Local Church**

#### **A. Duties of the Pastor**

The pastor is the spiritual leader of the church. His first concerns shall be to lead in worship, to lead in the nurturing of believers, to help them discover and develop their ministry gifts, and to win the lost to Christ. He is to observe the spiritual welfare of the church, while faithfully preaching the Word, visiting the sick, administering the ordinances of the church, and promulgating the influences of the church in the community.

The pastor is the chairman of the deacon and/or church board and the ex-officio member of all boards and committees in the local church. In the event that a local church is incorporated, the pastor shall serve as president of the local corporation and the executive officer. He is responsible for planning and presenting a program to the church to build it spiritually, numerically, and financially. He shall hold periodic conferences with the members to report and to expedite the necessary business for the proper function of the church. He shall be responsible to see that proper reports and funds are forwarded to the denomination. He shall oversee the work of all the officers, staff, and committees in the local church. Additional duties of the pastor are outlined in the Ministerial Handbook of this denomination.

## **B. The Pastoral Vote**

### **1. General Information Regarding Pastoral Voting**

Each church is free to elect its pastor from among the Ordained Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Ministers with a valid credential. Each election is for an indefinite period of time. This is interpreted to mean that once a church elects a pastor, as long as the pastor feels he is in God's will, and/or the church believes he is serving in God's will, the church does not need to vote again at any designated interval.

Anytime a pastor is leaving a church, the deacons should assure that proper honor and expressions of appreciation both materially and verbally are given to him and his family. What is appropriate will vary from one situation to the next. It is suggested that a person or group of persons, such as the Ladies Auxiliary, be designated for this responsibility.

No minister may be the pastor of any church that has been suspended or expelled from the denomination. No church is permitted to use for services any preacher that has been expelled. A failure to comply with this policy may result in termination of membership in this denomination.

All voting on pastoral selection matters shall be done by secret ballot in a meeting where proper notice has been given. In all pastoral voting, only members of the church in good standing should be allowed to vote. Under no circumstances should a non-member of the church be allowed to vote. Proper notice for a church business meeting, unless otherwise specified in the church bylaws or minutes, shall be defined as notice having been given not less than ten days in advance, and public announcement having been made in all general services of the church.

The denomination has no stated policy on absentee voting in local church matters. Therefore, the policy as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, shall prevail unless the local church bylaws, the most recent historic practice, or the church minutes specify differently. The church may adopt a policy, but if no policy exists, no absentee or proxy voting will be allowed for any reason.

Unless it is specified by the church prior to the election being held, a pastor will be elected or re-elected by a simple majority vote. If the church desires to require a higher percentage, it must approve the percentage that it will require and properly record it in the church bylaws or book of minutes. The services of the General Superintendent (President) are available upon request to assist the church in locating potential candidates, conducting pastoral votes, settling serious disputes, or as needed for the well-being of the church and of the pastor.

### **2. Types of Votes and Specific Related to Each**

Three types of pastoral votes may be taken. They are identified and defined as follows:

#### **a. Expression Ballot**

This vote may be taken only by the incumbent pastor. He may request this vote no more than one time in a twelve month period. When he desires such a ballot, he should first make his intention known to the deacons. He must give a proper ten-day notice, but not more than a thirty-day notice as outlined above to the entire membership. Only members may vote. Since this is the pastor's vote, he may set the date and time for the vote. He may collect and count the votes himself without a church representative present; it is his vote.

This vote is for information only. Regardless of the outcome of the voting, the pastor may remain until otherwise relieved, or he may elect to resign after the vote is taken. The pastor, upon the request of the deacons, is required to share the results of the votes with the Board; however, he is not required to share the results with the congregation. Let it be understood that an expression ballot, when so stated, is not an elimination or re-election ballot. It is merely an expression to help the pastor know where he stands in terms of acceptances.

In the case where the pastor has taken an expression ballot and was not satisfied with the result, he may choose to resign. If he does not resign and the deacons feel that it is in the best interest of the church to make a pastoral change, the deacons may call for an Elimination and/or Re-Election Ballot giving a proper ten-day notice as outlined above. They are not required to wait six months to vote as in the elimination or re-election ballot.

The expression ballot should read as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I vote for our present pastor to continue to pastor this church.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not desire our present pastor to continue as pastor of this church.

In cases where prepared ballots are not used, the chairman of the meeting must explain the vote as stated above and have the people simply write yes or no. Yes, shall be for him to continue. No, shall be for a pastoral change.

#### **b. Elimination and/or Re-Election Ballot**

This is the only pastoral vote that may be called for by the church when there is an incumbent pastor. Individual members may not call the church together for a vote on the pastor. Under normal conditions, it is called when the majority of the deacon board feels it is needed. If a vote is requested by a member and the deacons refuse to call for such a vote, the member has the option to circulate among the membership a petition calling for a pastoral vote. If a majority of the eligible voting members sign such a petition, and it is delivered to the vice chairman of the deacons, it is incumbent upon the deacons to give the membership the opportunity to vote. This vote should be held within forty-five days from the date the petition is delivered to the vice-chairman, giving proper notice.

When the deacons feel that the church should make a change in pastoral leadership, or that the church should be given the opportunity to vote, the following procedure should be followed: The deacons shall make their desire known to the pastor. The pastor and deacons should meet to discuss the matter. If the pastor chooses to resign, he should first let it be known to the deacons.

At the time agreed upon, he should resign to the congregation, giving a sixty-day notice. If the pastor chooses to not resign, the deacon board will set a time not less than ten or more than thirty days from the date of the meeting with the pastor, for the church membership to vote on the issue. Proper notice should be given in keeping with the procedure outlined above.

This vote will be by secret ballot. It should be worded as outlined above under the expression ballot, and will be a "yes" or "no" ballot for the purpose of re-electing or eliminating the incumbent pastor. If he receives a majority of "yes" votes or the percentage specified by the church, he will be re-elected as pastor for another indefinite period of time. If the balloting reveals a majority "no" votes, the pastor will terminate his official pastoral duties sixty days from the date of the balloting.

The pastor may not terminate immediately unless there is a satisfactory agreement reached between him and the deacons respecting immediate termination. There are rare situations when immediate terminations would be in the best interest of the pastor and the church. When this is considered by both parties to be the case, the deacons and the pastor may reach some mutually agreeable financial settlement and release him immediately. However, when the church desires an immediate termination but the minister does not agree, the church is under financial obligation to him for the full sixty days, but may relieve him of all duties immediately or before the sixty-day period has expired.

When the minister is living in the church parsonage, suitable time must be given for him to vacate. This shall normally be interpreted as sixty days, but under no circumstances will he be required to vacate in less than thirty days from the date of notification. This policy shall apply regardless of whether he serves out the normal sixty-day period. If there are state laws affecting vacating a parsonage, the state law shall prevail if the law requires additional notice.

This vote may be taken anytime during the year; however, it cannot be initiated closer than six months from the last vote called by the deacon board or church body. This does not apply to an expression ballot which may be called for by the pastor. No other minister can be nominated or voted on while there is an incumbent in office. It is considered a serious breach of ministerial ethics for a minister to give an interview to a deacon board while there is an incumbent in office.

### **c. Election Ballot**

This ballot is to be used when there is no incumbent and the pastorate has been declared vacant, such as by the death, resignation of the incumbent, or the elimination ballot of the church. When the pastorate is vacant, the deacon board automatically becomes the pastoral nominating committee unless the church chooses to make another designation. See the section of the manual dealing with *"Step by Step Procedure When The Church Has No Pastor."*

After suitable candidates have been determined, normally this will be after consultation with the General Superintendent (President), the deacons should interview potential and eligible ministers. They may solicit suggestions of ministers to be considered from the congregation; however, all interviewing should be done by the deacon board. The deacon board must attempt to interview all candidates who are Ordained Pentecostal Free Will Baptist ministers that

members request to interview. Individual members may not personally interview candidates nor invite them to give a trial message. In the church business meeting in which the voting takes place, only persons interviewed by the deacons may be voted on.

When the deacons have settled on a candidate, they will announce a meeting of the members as outlined above. At the meeting, the deacons will nominate the candidate they have agreed upon informing the church of the conditions under which he will serve as their pastor. The matter shall then be put to a vote. The vote should be secret ballot and should read as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I cast my vote for the deacon's nominee.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not cast my vote for the deacon's nominee.

In cases where prepared ballots are not used, the chairman of the meeting must explain the vote as stated above and have the people simply write "yes" or "no." "Yes" shall be for the nominee of the deacons. "No" shall be for the deacons to submit another nominee. If the majority of votes are for the candidate, there is an election.

If the majority of votes cast are "no," then the process should continue. The deacons, if prepared, may submit in the same meeting their next candidate. The second candidate may be presented only after the balloting on the first one has been completed, the votes counted, and the result announced. The only persons that should be placed in nomination are those who have been interviewed by the deacons and deemed eligible according to the standards of the Faith and Practices. If the deacons do not at that time have a second candidate, they may postpone the voting until a later meeting.

### **3. When the Pastor Resigns**

If and when the pastor desires to resign, he may do so at anytime during the conference year. It is the normal practice that he will consult with the General Superintendent (President) regarding his intention prior to talking with the deacons and the church. When his decision has been made, he should discuss the matter with his deacons before making any public announcement. After informing the deacons, he should make his resignation public. He may choose his own timing, but it should be done in a manner that will promote harmony and be for the good of the church.

The pastor is to give the church a sixty-day notice before he terminates his services. The days will count from the time the notice is delivered to the vice-chairman of the deacon board. Such notice should be given in writing. The minister must not terminate immediately unless there is a satisfactory agreement respecting immediate termination. If the minister insists on terminating immediately, the deacons should negotiate a financial settlement with him that may not include salary for the normal sixty-day period.

There may be rare situations when immediate termination would be in the best interest of the pastor and the church. When this is considered by both parties to be the case, the deacons should pay the minister sixty days salary and relieve him of all pastoral duties immediately. When this

is the case, his departure from the parsonage shall be as described under the section dealing with the elimination of a pastor.

#### **4. The Period Between the Pastors**

When the pulpit is vacant, the General Superintendent (President), and /or the Regional Director, will upon request, assist the vice-chairman of the deacons in securing ministers to fill the pulpit. There is no reason that a church would not be able to secure a minister for any given service. However, it is requested that when the services of the Superintendent (President) are needed, that he be given as much advance notice as possible. It is unfair to call a minister at the last minute to fill the pulpit when it has been known that one would be needed for several days in advance.

If in the transition period a pulpit is vacant for an extended period of time, the church may select a supply minister to serve until a pastor is elected. No church should consider any person for a supply minister who is not a minister in good standing with this denomination. The church may select a supply minister, or they may request the General Superintendent (President) to appoint one for them.

#### **C. Step By Step Procedure When the Church Has No Pastor**

When a pastor is considering resigning his pastorate, it is normal for him to make an appointment with the General Superintendent (President), which is his pastor, to discuss the situation. It shall be the Superintendent's (President's) role in such a case to serve as his counselor and help to evaluate the circumstances. When the pastor has fully decided to resign, he should meet with his deacons and inform them of his decision and also agree upon a termination date that shall be sixty-days from the date of such notification of the deacons.

The pastor should select and announce the time that he will publicly resign to the congregation. The pastor should call the headquarters office to give official notice that he has resigned and the date he will be leaving that church. A meeting should be planned with the General Superintendent (President) and/or the Regional Director to discuss the minister's future ministry plans. He should provide the name, address, and phone number of the vice-chairman of the deacon board or the contact person for the church, if different. He should inform the vice-chairman of his responsibility to set up a deacon meeting with the General Superintendent (President).

The General Superintendent (President), and/or the Regional Director will meet with the deacons of the church to discuss the church's future. At that meeting, the pastor calling procedure shall be clarified, the needs and resources of the church identified, and the names of prospective pastors submitted. The deacons will prioritize the prospects and designate a spokesman for the deacons.

The deacons will call the prospect, and if the minister is interested, an interview will be set up for all the deacons to meet him. Deacons should not interview or consider for pastor any minister that is not an Ordained Pentecostal Free Will Baptist minister with a valid credential. At the interview, the deacons should discuss the church's goals, vision, budget, indebtedness,

philosophy of ministry, salary, and benefit package. They should generally get to know the prospect. The minister will also have questions to which he needs answers. This should be a very open and candid meeting. The more information one learns up front, the fewer surprises there will be after a commitment has been made.

When all questions are answered and the meeting is adjourned, both parties are to spend time praying and seeking the mind of God in the matter. There is no commitment implied by either party because of an interview. The deacons may interview as many candidates as they feel is necessary until they come to the one on which they can agree. However, if the deacons promise to give the candidate a response by a certain time, they should be sure to do it. The General Superintendent (President) should be kept informed on the progress.

When a suitable candidate has been found and the candidate is interested in the church, a date should be set for him to visit the church. It is suggested that he preach on Sunday morning, and that the church prepare a lunch in the fellowship hall for all the members to get to know the candidate and his family. He will preach that night and return home. A church may want to hear him several Sundays before making a decision. Some churches have found that a week-end revival is a good way for the people to get to know the candidate.

When the deacons are satisfied that the people are ready to vote, the vote should be announced, giving not less than a ten-day notice. The voting process is covered in another section of this manual. If the majority is "yes", the pastor is elected. If the majority is "no", the deacons should go to the next person on their list.

Under no circumstances should the church vote on more than one minister at the time. A nominee should be put before the congregation and accepted or rejected before another name is submitted. The issue for the church to decide is this: do we feel as a body that this is God's person for this church for now? It is not a popularity contest, and thus there is no need to put one minister against another in the voting process; the concern is to know and do the will of God.

### **Section III: Officers of the Local Church**

Each church is to elect officers sufficient for the maintenance and growth of the local church. Each church may by the proper vote of the congregation choose to expand or modify the responsibility of these general officers. It should be understood that the pastor is the chief spokesman for the local church. As such, he is not to function independently of the other officers, but in agreement with the "*Duties of the Pastor*" as found on page 28. He is the leader of the local church.

#### **A. Clerk**

This office is often referred to as the church secretary. It is the duty of this officer to keep the written records of the church. These shall include the Church Covenant, the names of the members and the date and manner, if possible, when they joined. He shall keep minutes of all business proceedings of the church in the exercise of its discipline and management of its temporal affairs. He shall upon request meet with the deacon board and keep minutes of the

same; however, he shall not by virtue of the office of clerk be a voting member of the deacon board.

The clerk shall sign all letters and other communications made by the authority of the church. He shall report for the church at each local church business conference the activities of his office. He shall be responsible to assure that all requested reports are properly filed with the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., and that they are submitted by the established deadline. As the official custodian of the church records, he shall file the annual statistical report for the church to the denomination that shall be published in the denomination's book of minutes and also any reports that shall be required by the government.

## **B. Treasurer**

It is the treasurer's duty to keep accurate records of all receipts, accounts, and disbursements of monies. Two persons shall be appointed by the deacon board to count and record all collections received by the local church. The treasurer shall deposit all monies of the church in a duly authorized bank in the name of the church. He shall disburse funds as authorized by the church or church board. All such expenditures shall be by check.

The Treasurer shall give financial statements as requested, but not less than quarterly, to the deacon board. Failure to do so shall be grounds for dismissal. The deacon board has the privilege and authority at anytime during the year with reasonable notice to call for an internal audit. It is recommended for the protection of the treasurer and the church, that when a church receives more than \$30,000.00 annually, that an external audit be made.

## **C. Deacons**

Deacons should be men distinguished among their brethren for piety and benevolence. Before entering upon the duties of their office, they are to be ordained by the pastor or another ordained minister of this denomination. A charge and prayer is given in their dedication to the task of a deacon.

The pastor shall serve as the chairman of the deacon board. The deacons shall select from among their number, one that shall serve as the vice-chairman. They may select one from among their number to serve as secretary, or they may elect to have the church clerk meet with them to keep minutes of their meetings.

### **1. Duties of Deacons**

Deacons are to work with the pastor as spiritual leaders of the church to promote the ministry and program of the church. They are responsible for the cooperation of the local church with the general ministries of the denomination. They shall assist the pastor in the spiritual and temporal welfare of the church. The pastor may draw up a job description to be assigned to the deacons in the course of their work. Deacons, because of the nature of their leadership, must adhere to a policy of confidentiality when dealing with matters pertaining to morals or other issues that could be detrimental to persons or the local church.

Deacons shall keep the church membership roll up to date in keeping with the local church bylaws. No member should be dropped without contacting the person for the purpose of restoring him to fellowship with the congregation. Deacons shall be responsible with the pastor or his appointee, to investigate rumors which may reflect upon the church, to hear complaints against them, and to settle differences in the congregation when possible. No deacon board or church shall make any rule or policy that is contrary to the General Conference policy.

Deacons, unless the church by official action otherwise designates the responsibility, shall set or recommend the pastor's salary and compensation package. This shall be done on a semi-annual basis. The church may designate the months in which they will review the salary to conform to the church budgeting process. However, if no such designation of months is made, the pastor's salary should automatically appear on the deacon board agenda in the months of September and March.

The compensation package should be set taking into account the unusual and heavy business expense of a pastor. Deacons should distinguish between business expense and salary. It should be realized that the average full time pastor will drive his car 25,000 to 30,000 miles per year in the course of his work. The U. S. Internal Revenue Service sets annually the estimated cost per mile of all such travel. Reimbursement for travel should not be considered salary. The minimum salary standard set by the conference should be duly considered each time the pastor's salary is reviewed. The local church by minutes or bylaw may require the approval of the congregation in setting the compensation package. However, in all such cases, it is the responsibility of the deacons to see that it is adequately cared for.

## **2. Authority of Deacons**

The deacon board is at all times answerable **to** the vote of the membership of the church for its actions and policies. The membership may, by the vote of the majority, reverse, change, or alter the action of the pastor and/or deacons.

Any member of the deacon board can request the pastor to call a meeting of the board. It is the duty of the pastor to call such a meeting within 30 days. In the event the pastor refuses to call such a meeting, the vice-chairman of the board has the right to call the meeting provided that each member of the board, along with the pastor, is notified. The vice-chairman must assure that the time and place of the meeting is convenient to the greater number of the board. The vice-chairman shall preside at any meeting called by him. Any deacon meeting called by a deacon but not as herein outlined shall be an illegal meeting.

There may be occasions when the deacon board feels the need to meet and discuss matters related to the pastor in his absence. This is possible, but the vice-chairman must make it known in advance to the pastor and all the deacons. There is no place for secret meetings in such matters. The pastor should be made aware of the date, time, and place of all the meetings in order to avoid confusion. The pastor should not attend these meetings unless requested to do so by the vice-chairman. The meeting should be moderated by the vice-chairman, minutes should be kept

as in other deacon meetings, and a copy of the minutes should be furnished to the pastor upon request.

If the majority of the deacons request that the church be called into business session other than at the regular appointed time, it becomes the duty of the pastor to call such a meeting. In the event the pastor refuses, then the board can notify the church being assured that all members, including the pastor, are notified and that proper notice is given. The vice-chairman of the deacon board in such case shall moderate the church meeting. However, when the atmosphere has become tense over some issue, it is strongly recommended that the General Superintendent (President) or his designate moderate such a meeting.

The General Superintendent (President) may become involved in a local church dispute at the request of the pastor, the board of deacons, or by a petition circulated among the membership requesting his involvement. However, such a petition must contain the personal signature of a majority of the eligible voting membership. In any of the above named situations, the General Superintendent (President) is authorized, at his discretion, to call a deacons meeting or a church business meeting to settle the dispute.

### **3. Election of Deacons**

It is generally held that a deacon is ordained for life. However, that does not mean that he will serve as an active deacon for life. He may carry the title for life, or as long as he is a member in good standing with that church, but not remain in active service as a deacon of the local church. In this manual when deacons are referred to, it always refers to active deacons serving a current term.

Before electing deacons, churches would be well advised to search the scripture to find the minimum qualification of a deacon. They should seek to find those that meet that standard. A local church may determine the method of election of its officers, including deacons, and set their term of office. Unless it is otherwise specified by the church, the office of deacon will be regarded as a two-year office. Many churches have a system of rotation of terms to assure that at no point they will have a totally new deacon board. It is advised that a church consider this option.

### **D. Deaconesses**

A local church may elect to have deaconesses serve the church. If so, deaconesses are elected in the same manner as deacons and for the same term of service, unless otherwise specified. They should be women distinguished among the female members of the church for piety and benevolence. They assist the deacons in visiting the sick, in collecting funds, and distributing among the needy, and enforcing proper discipline among the female members.

## **E. Elders**

The selection of elders in addition to the deacon board is an option available to each local church. Generally, these persons are spiritual leaders in the church that work closely with the pastor in the teaching and spiritual leadership of the church. Their concerns are of a spiritual nature. They generally should not concern themselves with the temporal, business affairs of the church. Their role is to function as a group of spiritual advisors to the pastor. They may or may not be deacons. Elders are usually appointed by the pastor and ratified by the church. They serve at the wishes of the pastor and should, in the event of a change of the pastor, consider their office vacated.

## **F. Trustees**

When the real estate of the local church is deeded in part or in whole to the local church, the church should elect trustees. Unless specified otherwise in the local church bylaws, the trustees are to serve for life or as long as they are in good standing with the church and are physically and mentally capable of performing the duties of their office. Any trustee whose character and faithfulness to the church is in question should be replaced. Any trustee may resign at any time he desires.

Trustees are to sign documents as authorized by the church. This shall include, but not be limited to, deeds of trust, promissory notes and other legal documents. Any trustee who refuses to carry out the wishes of the congregation in matters voted by the congregation in a duly called meeting may be dismissed as a trustee by a two-thirds majority vote of the deacon board.

It shall be the duty of the trustees to hold in trust all properties or portions of property deeded to the local church. In the case of outside interference, the trustees shall ask the deacon board of the church to meet with them to help solve their problem. If this does not solve the problem, the Trustees of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. shall be requested to meet with them in the matter. Trustees should assure that all deeds, legal certificates, and records are deposited in a place for safe keeping.

## **Section IV: Local Church Membership**

### **A. Reception of Members**

Any person who gives evidence of a change of heart, and who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and has been immersed in water by proper administration, may be received into membership by the vote of the church. No one against whom any valid objection is made is to be received into membership. When any member objects to the reception of an applicant, the matter is deferred until the pastor and deacons can ascertain the nature of the objection. If in the opinion of the church, the objection is not valid as reported by the pastor and deacons, the applicant may be received. Excluded members are received again only after they confess their errors and give evidence of repentance.

Persons may transfer their membership from other churches. Persons satisfied with their baptism are to be received by letter of transfer. Persons who have not been baptized should be baptized and then present themselves for membership. Persons who have been excluded from other churches are not to be received into membership without due investigation by the pastor and/or deacons.

Each church may decide the age in which a member may have voting privileges. If the church bylaws or minutes do not specify, all members regardless of age, may vote on any issue coming before the body. The church may also specify what constitutes an active and an inactive member. If the church does not have an inactive membership designation, it shall be concluded that all members are active and have voting privileges.

Each church may determine its method of receiving members into the church. Normally, a person will make his desire known to the pastor. The pastor shall talk with them about the faith, customs, and practices of the church. When the pastor is assured that the candidate is in agreement with the same, the pastor shall present the request to the deacons. The deacons shall recommend the candidate for membership to the church. The typical procedure is at a designated time; the person is called before the church, the Church Covenant is read, appropriate questions are asked, a motion is received, a vote taken, and the person becomes a member. The hand of fellowship is extended to all who are received into the membership of the church.

## **B. Discipline of Members**

Offenses that may require the exercise of discipline may be either private or public. Private offenses are from their nature known to very few persons; public offenses include all others. The local church has no disciplinary jurisdiction over the Conference Licensed or Ordained minister of this denomination. However, it does have jurisdiction over his local church membership. If at anytime a minister is not living according to his ministerial vow, it should be reported to the Ministerial Council or the General Superintendent (President).

In the case of private, individual transgression, the offender is admonished privately by the pastor and deacon board. If satisfaction is given, the case is carried no further. If satisfaction is not given, the case is brought to the church for final action.

In cases of private grievances in which two or more members are concerned, the aggrieved and aggrieved parties should be brought together privately by the deacon board and the matter settled privately if possible. No such case is allowed to come before the church except as directed in Matthew 18:15-17 *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 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. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."*

When a member is openly at variance with his fellow-man, whether it is a member of the church or not, he shall be required by the church to make a reasonable effort to become reconciled according to Matthew 6:14-15, Mark 11:25-26. If and when the grievance cannot be resolved, the offended may take his grievance to the deacon board. The deacons shall examine the matter

and request a meeting of the offended and the offender. If either party does not appear, the deacon board will investigate the nature of the report. If the member is found guilty and does not give evidence of penitence after suitable discipline, the deacon board shall bring the matter to the church and exclude him from the church membership.

It shall be due cause for discipline when a member is guilty of any of the following: habitually absenting himself from the meetings of the church; refusing to bear his proportionate part of the church expense, (except in the case of a Conference Licensed or Ordained minister whose tithe supports the denomination); using his influence against the church. In all such cases he is to be admonished by the deacon board. If he still persists, the deacons are to bring his case before the church.

All Christians are admonished to guard carefully and prayerfully against anything that could hurt one's testimony. Past due debts of members are a source of embarrassment and hurt the influence of the church. If a member fails to make a reasonable effort to meet his financial obligations, he should be disciplined as for other offenses.

## **Section V: Meetings of the Local Church**

### **A. General Meetings**

Each local church is to meet as often as practical for public worship, instruction, celebrating the Lord's Supper, foot washing, revivals or other meetings that are designed to glorify God and strengthen the church. The leadership of the church should be sensitive to the schedule needs of its members. While we believe that saints "should not forsake the assembling of themselves together", it should also be recognized that people do have other responsibilities. Care should be given in scheduling to assure adequate opportunity for families to be together and to take care of business, school, and other civic involvement.

Churches may choose the frequency with which they will observe the Lord's Supper and foot washing. Many churches observe these quarterly and on special occasions such as Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc. All churches are urged to observe the ordinances not less than two times per year.

### **B. Business Meetings**

Business meetings are to be scheduled by each local church to suit its own convenience. Business meetings are to be opened and closed with suitable devotional exercises. The pastor shall be the moderator of all church business meetings unless the pastor chooses to designate the responsibility or as herein provided. The church should not meet in the absence of the pastor to conduct business unless it is an emergency situation. There may be occasions when the church will meet on issues concerning the pastor, such as to set the salary and compensation package. In such cases, it may be in the best interest of all concerned for the pastor not to be present. When this is the case, the vice-chairman of the deacons will moderate the meeting. In all such cases the pastor should be aware of the date and time of the meeting.

Anytime the church desires to meet for business other than its regularly scheduled business meeting, it must give the minimum of a ten-day notice to all of its membership. This may be done by letter, in person, or by public announcement in all of the worship services of the church during the ten days required. Failure to give proper notice may result in an illegal meeting and the matters voted on may be reconsidered.

A local church special business meeting may be called in one of three ways. It may be called by a duly incumbent pastor. It may be called by the vote of the majority of the board of deacons. It may be called by the General Superintendent (President). In all such meetings proper notice must be given.

When the church has no pastor, the vice chairman of the deacons is authorized to conduct local church business meetings. If, however, the atmosphere has become tense over some issue, or if the vice-chairman is not sufficiently familiar with Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised on how to carry out such a meeting, or if for some other reason known to the deacons or the vice-chairman, the vice-chairman may call the General Superintendent (President) to conduct the meeting.

All business meetings of the church should be conducted according to, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. Any exception to this must be so stated in this book of Faith and Practices, the local church bylaws and/or book of minutes, or the recent historic practice of the local church. It is strongly urged that churches include in their bylaws and/or minutes any exceptions to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised that it chooses to make so that in the event of a dispute, the moderator will not be required to interpret historic practice.

### **C. General Order of a Local Church Business Meeting**

The following shall be the suggested general order of a local church business meeting. The moderator has the option of altering this agenda.

1. Opening devotion and prayer
2. Roll call of members
3. Reading and approving of the minutes
4. Confessions
5. Censures
6. Unfinished business
7. Receiving of reports\*
8. New business
9. Miscellaneous business
10. Adjournment and closing prayer

\*Reports should be received from the following: Local Licensed preachers of the church, department heads such as S.S. Supt., C.C. Sponsor, L.A. President, G.A. leader, R.R. Commander, Brotherhood President, etc. Reports should be received from all special and standing committees and boards such as deacons, building, and grounds, etc.

## **Section VI: Independence of the Local Church**

Each local church is a distinct and independent organization. It has full authority to manage its own internal affairs, elect its officers, receive, dismiss, discipline, and exclude its members. This principle of the independence of each church is not to be held as a law of isolation; on the contrary, churches conveniently situated are to associate and cooperate in all things which tend to advance the common cause.

Councils are therefore called in the organization of the church and the settlement of serious difficulties. On the same principle, churches meet by delegation in fellowship meetings in the district, and for business at the General Conference as provided in the bylaws. The General Conference being the highest tribunal shall have final jurisdiction over the local church. No local church may make, alter, or amend any of the rules, regulations, or bylaws of this corporation.

## **Section VII: When the Local Church Desires to Borrow Money**

There may be occasions in the life of the local church when it desires to borrow money, such as for the purchase of land or for the construction or remodeling of a building. Churches are urged to exercise extreme care in such matters. Churches are strongly urged not to borrow money for operational expense of the church. If the property is held in trust totally by the local trustees, the local church may set its own standard concerning borrowing. If, however, any portion of the property is held in trust by the Trustees of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc., the following guidelines should be adhered to in order for the General Trustees to co-sign with a church.

1. The real estate must be deeded to the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. in total or not less than a one-half undivided interest.
2. A duly called business meeting of the church membership must be properly conducted and an appropriate resolution adopted authorizing the loan. A copy of the adopted resolution and minutes of the meeting must be furnished to the headquarters along with the request.
3. There must be general harmony among the membership of the church with no major division of the congregation.
4. There should be a set of properly prepared plans of the proposed alterations to the property that meets all applicable codes and contractors bids sufficient to demonstrate that the project can be completed within the allotted budget.
5. Financial reports of the income and expenses of the church must be submitted, providing sufficient evidence the

congregation is capable of meeting the loan repayment schedule.

6. The appraised current market value of the completed project must be more than the total indebtedness against the real estate in question.
7. All the above data shall be submitted to the Advisory Council of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. which shall have jurisdiction over whether or not a loan transaction may be entered. The local church may appeal the Advisory Council decision to the General Board of Directors in the case of a dispute.

## **Section VIII: The Local Licensed Minister**

### **A. General Information**

The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. issues four forms of ministerial credentials. Each of these is explained under a separate publication known as the Ministerial Handbook. The entry level license is the Local License which is the only one issued by the local church.

This license serves two primary purposes. It is appropriate for those lay ministers who do not wish to enter a full-time ministry outside of their local church; however, they do feel called to be a pulpit minister. It also serves as the initial period of apprenticeship for those who wish to later expand their ministry. All applicants wishing to enter the preaching ministry of the denomination must serve not less than twelve months as a Local Licensed minister before being eligible to be promoted to the rank of Conference License. Every pastor should have in his possession a current Ministerial Handbook. It should be consulted to learn the study course and process one needs to follow to receive his Local License. The same handbook outlines the privileges and limitations of the Local Licensed minister.

### **B. The Work of the Local Licensed Minister**

The Local License is a local order of the ministry as is evidenced in the fact that the license is issued by the local church and its pastor. As a Local Licensed minister, he is to perform his ministry under the supervision of his pastor and his district ministerial director.

The applicant must have been a Christian and leading a consistent walk with the Lord for not less than twelve months. He must be a member in good standing of a local Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church. He must be willing to work with the pastor and support the total program of the local church. He shall keep the pastor informed at all times as to the type, extent and success of his ministry. He shall meet not less than quarterly with the pastor, to review his current and potential future ministry. He must read the Bible both Old and New Testaments completely

through. He must complete the study course for Local Licensed minister available through Blessings Bookstore. He must be familiar with this book of Faith and Practices.

### **C. Discipline, And Trial of a Local Licensed Minister**

A Local Licensed minister is answerable for his conduct to the church that issued him the license. This discipline process is a suggested model for the local church to use in the case of discipline of a Local Licensed minister. When the minister seeks to be advanced in the ministry, his pastor and/or church will be requested to submit a reference on him and his work.

If a Local Licensed preacher is accused of conduct unbecoming to a minister, the accusation must be in writing, signed by the accuser, and delivered to the pastor. The pastor shall appoint an investigating committee from among the church membership. This committee should consist of three responsible members of the church. This committee shall cause the accused and the accuser to meet face to face before them and give testimony.

If the committee considers a trial unnecessary, the case shall be closed, unless the pastor in charge differs in judgment from the committee. In such a case the pastor shall appoint a second committee from among the church membership. If that committee deems a trial unnecessary, the matter shall be closed. If either of the committees deems a trial necessary, they shall formulate a bill of charges and specifications and deliver them to the pastor. The pastor will call together the board of deacons to inform them of the proceedings. The deacons shall designate a person to present the evidence in the case. A copy of the charges shall be sent to the accused giving sufficient time before the trial to enable him to make preparation for his defense.

Once the bill of charges have been formulated and delivered to the accused, he shall not be allowed to exercise the functions of the office of a Local Licensed minister until such time as the case is settled. The pastor shall be in charge of the proceedings and shall set the time and place for the trial and preside over the same.

When witnesses refuse to appear for trial, the pastor may appoint some discreet and respected member of the church to take the written testimony of the witnesses. The witness shall sign the testimony, and such testimony shall serve as evidence in the case. The decision of the deacon board shall be final, except the right of appeal to the total membership of the church. If the minister wishes to appeal case to the membership, he must indicate his intention within twenty-four hours of his receipt of the decision of the deacon board.

Offenses that a Local Licensed minister may be tried for include but are not limited to the following: proclaiming doctrine contrary to this book of Faith and Practices; sexual impropriety including adultery, fornication, homosexuality; bad debts; improper words, tempers, and actions; failure to work in a supportive way with the pastor and/or local church.

This process applies only for the Local Licensed minister. Conference Licensed and Ordained ministers are answerable to the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. for their conduct. The local church may deal with the minister's membership in that local church. Anytime a minister's membership in the local church is brought into question for disciplinary reason, the General

Superintendent (President) should be notified. For the disciplinary procedures of ministers that are Conference Licensed or Ordained, see the Ministerial Handbook. It may be obtained through Blessings Bookstore or the Conference Resource Center in Dunn, North Carolina.

## FAITH

### ARTICLE 1: THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible. The Bible is the inerrant Word of God, free from any error and is the final authority in matters of faith and life. These are the Old and New Testaments. They were written by men divinely inspired and are God's will as revealed to man. They are the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried (*II Timothy 3:16-17*).

### ARTICLE 2: THE TRUE GOD

The Scriptures teach that there is only one true and living God (*Jeremiah 10:10; I John 5:20*), who is a spirit (*John 4:24*), self-existent (*Exodus 3:14; John 5:26*), eternal (*Psalms 90 and 2; I Timothy 1:17*), immutable (*Malachi 3:6; James 1:17*), omnipresent (*Psalms 139:7-10; Acts 17:24*), omniscient (*Acts 15:18; I Chronicles 28:9*), omnipotent (*Revelation 19:6; Job 42:2*), independent (*Daniel 4:35; Romans 11:33-36*), good (*Psalms 145:9; Matthew 19:17*), wise (*Daniel 2:20; I Timothy 1:17*), holy (*Leviticus 19:2; I Peter 1:15-16*) just (*Deuteronomy 32:4; Romans 3:26*) and merciful (*Ephesians 2:4; Exodus 34:6*); the Creator (*Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16*), Preserver (*Nehemiah 9:6; Colossians 1:17*), and Governor of the universe (*Psalms 47:7; Matthew 2:6*), the Redeemer (*Isaiah 47:4; Jeremiah 50:34*), Saviour (*Isaiah 43:3; Isaiah 49:26*), Sanctifier (*Exodus 31:13; Jude 1*), and Judge of men, and the only proper object of divine worship (*Exodus 20:4-5; Matthew 4:10*).

The mode of His existence, however, is a subject far above the understanding of man (*Job 11:7; Job 33:13* finite beings cannot comprehend Him (*Romans 11:33; Job 26:14*). There is nothing in the universe that can justly represent Him for there is none like Him (*Exodus 9:14; I Chronicles 17:20*). He is the foundation of all perfection and happiness. He is glorified by the whole inanimate creation, and is worthy to be loved and served by all intelligence (*Psalms 145: 10; 150:6*).

### ARTICLE 3: DIVINE GOVERNMENT AND PROVIDENCES

God exercises a providential care and superintendence over all His creatures (*Matthew 10:20; Job 14:5*) and governs the world in wisdom and mercy, according to the testimony of His Word (*Psalms 97:16; Isaiah 33:22*). God has endowed man with powers of free choice, and governs him by moral laws and motives; and the power of free choice is the exact measure of his responsibility (*Deuteronomy 30:19; Isaiah 1:18-20; John 5:40*).

All events are present with God from everlasting to everlasting, but His knowledge of them does not in any sense cause them, nor does He decree all events, which He knows, will occur (*Ezekiel 33:11; Acts 15:11; Ezekiel 18:20, 25, 31*).

### ARTICLE 4: CREATION, PRIMITIVE STATE OF MAN AND HIS FALL

#### A. Creation

We believe in the literal account of creation, that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are the literal and historical accounts of God's creation of all things, and that man was created by God in His image and is not the product of some process of evolution.

We believe in the existence of a personal devil who at one time was holy, honored in heaven, but through pride fell from his lofty estate and is now completely evil, unholy, anti-God and is now the power and the prince of the air.

God created the world and all things that it contains for His own pleasure and glory, and for the enjoyment of His creatures (*Revelation 4:11; I Timothy 6:17*). The angels were created by God (*Colossians 1:16*) to glorify Him, and obey His commandments (*Psalms 103:20*).

Those who have kept their first estate He employs in ministering blessing to the heirs of salvation (*Hebrews 1:14; Jude vs. 6*) and in executing His judgments upon the world (*II Samuel 24:16; Revelation 16:1*).

### **B. Primitive State of Man and His Fall**

Our first parents, in their original state of probation, were upright; they naturally preferred and desired, to obey their Creator, and had no preference of desire to transgress His will (*Ecclesiastes 7:29; Ephesians 4:24*) until they were influenced and inclined by the tempter to disobey God's commands. Previous to this, the only tendency of their nature was to do righteousness. In consequence of the first transgression, the state under which the posterity of Adam came into the world is so far different from that of Adam, that they have not that righteousness and purity which Adam had before the fall; they are not naturally willing to obey God, but are inclined to evil (*Psalms 51:5; Genesis 8:21; John 3:6*).

Hence none by virtue of any natural goodness and mere work of their own, can become the children of God (*John 6:44; I Corinthians 2:14*); but all are dependent for salvation upon the redemption effected through the blood of Christ, and upon being created anew unto obedience through the operation of the Spirit (*John 1:13; Colossians 1:14; Titus 3:5*), both of which are freely provided for every descendant of Adam.

### **ARTICLE 5: CHRIST**

Jesus Christ, the Son of God possesses all Divine perfections, as He and the Father are one. He in His Divine nature filled all the offices and performed the works of God to His creatures that have been the subject of revelation to us. As man, He performed all the duties toward God that we are required to perform, repentance of sin excepted.

His divinity is proved from His titles, His attributes and His works. The Bible ascribes to Christ the title of Savior (*Isaiah 45:15; John 4:42; II Timothy 1:10*), Jehovah (*Psalms 83:18*), Lord of Hosts (*Isaiah 8:13, 14; Malachi 2:2*) the First and the Last (*Revelation 1:11*;

*Isaiah 44:6*), God (*I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:8*), true God (*I John 5:20*), Great God (*Titus 2:13*), God over all (*Romans 9:5*), Mighty God and the everlasting Father (*Isaiah 9:6*).

He is eternal (*Colossians 1:17; Micah 5:2*), unchangeable (*Hebrews 13:8; Hebrews 1:12*), omnipresent (*John 3:13; Matthew 18:20*), omniscient (*John 16:30; 21:17*), omnipotent (*Matthew 28:18; Revelation 1:8*), holy (*Acts 3:14; Revelation 3:7*), and is entitled to Divine Worship (*Hebrews 1:6; John 5:23; Matthew 28:9*).

Christ created the world (*Hebrews 1:8, 10; John 1:3, 10*). He preserves (*Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17*) and governs it (*Isaiah 9:6; Ephesians 1:21*); He has provided redemption for all men (*Hebrews 9:12; Galatians 3:13*) and He will be their final judge (*II Timothy 4:1; John 5:22*).

The Word, which in the beginning was with God, and which was God, by whom all things were made, condescended to a state of humiliation in becoming like us, pollution and sin excepted (*John 1:14; II Corinthians 8:9*). In this state, as a subject of the law, He was liable to the infirmities of our nature (*Hebrews 2:17; John 11:33-35*); was tempted as we are (*Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 4:1-11*); but He lived our example, and rendered perfect obedience to the Divine requirements (*I Peter 2:21; John 13:14-15*). As Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, He is called the Son of Man, (*Matthew 5:17; Galatians 4:4*) and as the Divine existence is the foundation from which He proceeded, and was the only agency by which He was begotten (*Luke 19:10*). He is called the Son of God (*John 16:27; Matthew 1:18, 20*) being the only begotten of the Father (*Luke 1:35; John 1:34 & 20:31*) and the only incarnation of the Divine Being (*John 3:16; 1:18*).

#### **ARTICLE 6: THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Scriptures ascribe to the Holy Spirit the acts of an intelligent being. He is said to guide (*John 16:13*), to know (*I Corinthians 2:11*), to move (*Genesis 1:2; Acts 8:39*) to give information (*John 14:26; Acts 10:19; I Corinthians 2:13*), to command (*Acts 13:2*), to forbid (*Acts 16:6*), to send forth (*Acts 13:4*), to strive (*Genesis 6:3; Hebrews 3:7-8*), to reprove (*John 16:8*), can be grieved (*Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30*) can be sinned against (*Mark 3:29; Acts 7:51*). The attributes of God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit such as eternity (*Hebrews 9:14*), omnipresence (*Psalms 139:7*), omniscience (*I Corinthians 2:10*), goodness (*Psalms 143:10*), and truth (*John 14:17*). The works of God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit creation (*John 3:34; Psalm 134:3*) inspiration (*II Peter 1:21*) giving of life (*I Peter 3:18; Romans 8:11*) and sanctification (*I Corinthians 6:11*).

The same acts, which in one part of the Bible are attributed to the Holy Spirit, are in other parts of the Holy Scriptures attributed to God (*Isaiah 6:8, 9; Acts 28:25, 26; John 3:16; Matthew 1:18*). The Apostles assert that the Holy Spirit is Lord and God. (*Acts 5:3, 4; II Corinthians 3:17*). From the foregoing the conclusion is, that the Holy Spirit is in reality God, and one with the Father in all-Divine perfections. It has also been shown that Jesus Christ is God, one with the Father. Then these three, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, are one God.

The truth of this doctrine is also proved from the fact that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are united in the authority by which believers are baptized, and in the benedictions pronounced by the Apostles (*Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; I Peter 1:2*), which are acts of the highest religious worship.

#### **ARTICLE 7: THE ATONEMENT AND MEDIATION OF CHRIST**

As sin cannot be pardoned without a sacrifice, and the blood of beasts could never wash away sin, Christ gave Himself a sacrifice for sins of the world (*Isaiah 53:5; I Peter 3:18; Hebrews 9:26*), and thus made salvation possible for all men (*Isaiah 45:22; Titus 2:11; I Timothy 2:6*).

He died for us, suffering in our stead, to make known the righteousness of God, that He might be just in justifying sinners who believe in His Son (*Romans 3:25, 26; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 2:24*). Through the redemption effected by Christ, salvation is actually enjoyed in this world, and will be enjoyed in the next, by all who do not in this life refuse obedience to the known requirements of God (*Romans 8:1; Revelation 7:13-14*). The atonement for sin was necessary (*Hebrews 9:22; Ephesians 1:7*). For present and future obedience can no more blot our past sins than past

obedience can remove the guilt of present and future sins. Had God pardoned the sins of men without satisfaction for the violation of His law, it would follow that transgression might go on with impunity, government would be abrogated, and the obligation of obedience to God would be, in effect, removed. Our Lord not only died for our sins, but He arose for our justification (*Romans 4:25; I Corinthians 15:17*) and ascended to heaven (*Mark 16:19; Acts 1:11*), where as Mediator between God and man, he will make intercession for men until the final judgment (*Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; Romans 8:34*).

## **ARTICLE 8: THE GOSPEL CALL**

The call of the Gospel is coextensive with the atonement of all men (*Isaiah 55:1; Revelation 22:17*) both by the Word and the striving of the Spirit (*Isaiah 55:11; Luke 2:10-11*). These means of salvation are rendered equally possible to all (*Ezekiel 33:11; I Timothy 2:4; II Peter 3:9*). Therefore if any fail, it is the fault of the individual and not of God (*Hosea 13: 9; John 5:40*).

## **ARTICLE 9: SALVATION, SANCTIFICATION, BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST, DIVINE HEALING, AND THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST**

### **A. SALVATION**

#### **1. Repentance**

The repentance that the Gospel requires includes a deep conviction, a penitential sorrow, and open confession, a decided hatred, and an entire forsaking of all sin (*Psalms 51:3-4, 17; II Corinthians 7:10*). This repentance God has enjoined on all men; and without it in this life, the sinner must perish eternally (*Luke 13:5; Acts 17:30*).

#### **2. Faith**

Saving faith is an assent of the mind to the fundamental truths of revelation (*Romans 10:9; Hebrews 11:1*) an acceptance of the Gospel through the influence of the Holy Spirit (*Romans 10:10; Galatians 5:22*) and a firm confidence and trust in Christ (*Acts 16:31; Ephesians 3:12*). The fruit of faith is obedience to the Gospel (*James 2:17; I Timothy 1:5*). The power to believe is the gift of God (*John 1:12; Philippians 1:29*); but believing is an act of the creature which is required as a condition for pardon, and without which the sinner cannot obtain salvation (*John 3:36; Hebrews 11:6*). All men are required to believe in Christ; and those who yield obedience to His requirements become the children of God by Faith (*John 1:7; 3:15; Romans 5:1*).

#### **3. Justification**

Personal justification implies that the person justified has been guilty before God; and in consideration of the atonement of Christ, accepted by faith, the sinner is pardoned and absolved from the guilt of sin and restored to the Divine favor (*Isaiah 53:11; Romans 5:1, 16*). Through Christ's atonement is the foundation of the sinner's redemption, yet without repentance and faith, it can never give him justification and peace with God (*Acts 13:38-39; Hebrews 11:6*).

#### **4. Regeneration**

As man is a fallen and sinful being, he must be regenerated in order to obtain salvation (*Galatians 5:19-21; John 3:3*). This change is an instantaneous renewal of the heart by the Holy Spirit (*Ezekiel 36:26, 27; Titus 3:5*) whereby the penitent sinner receives new life, becomes a

child of God (*Romans 8:16; II Corinthians 5:17*), and is disposed to serve Him (*Ezekiel 11:19, 20; I Peter 2:5*). This is called in Scripture being born again, born of the Spirit (*John 1:13; 3:5, 6-8*) being quickened (*Psalms 119:50; Ephesians 2:1, 5*) passing from death unto life (*I Corinthians 15:54; I Peter 1:23; I John 3:14*) and the partaking of Divine Nature (*II Peter 1:4; Ephesians 3:14*).

The moral nature is renewed and the dominion and power of sin is broken (*Ephesians 2:10; II Corinthians 4:6, 5:17; Ephesians 2:1, 5*). Regeneration is the beginning of the believer's personal sanctification. The new life principle (*John 3:16*) imparted in regeneration is a principle of holy love (*I John 5:1*) and effects initial sanctification. Negatively, the regenerate is sanctified in the sense that he is washed from the acquired guilt and acquired depravity of his sinning (*Titus 3:5; I Corinthians 6:11*). Positively, he is sanctified in the sense that he is a new creature and by the grace of God lives "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present" world (*Titus 2:12*). We call this "washing of regeneration" (*Titus 3:5-6*) initial sanctification because it is the beginning of sanctification and is partial because it deals with specific sin and does not rid the regenerated of the sin principle.

## **5. Adoption**

We believe that adoption is that gracious act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer is constituted a Son of God (*John 1:12; Romans 8:15-23; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 1:5; I John 3:2*).

## **B. Entire Sanctification**

We believe that entire sanctification is the act of God, subsequent to regeneration by which believers are made free from original sin, or moral depravity, and are brought into a state of complete devotion to God and renunciation of self-reliance (*I John 1:7; Romans 6:6-7, 11; Galatians 2:20; I Thessalonians 5:23-24*). Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus Christ (*Hebrews 10:10; 13:12, 20-21*) is wrought instantaneously (*Romans 6:6, 11; Galatians 2:20, 6:14; Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 2:11*) is preceded by entire consecration (*Romans 6:13, 16, 19; 12:1-2; I Thessalonians 4:3-4*) and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness in perfect love (*Romans 15:16; I John 4:13-21*).

We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart (entirely sanctified) and mature character. The former (the pure heart) is obtained in an instant; the latter is the result of growth in grace. Entire sanctification includes the impulse to grow in grace, which must be consciously nurtured, and careful attention given to the requisites and processes of spiritual development and improvement in Christ-likeness of character and personality (*II Peter 1:4, 3:18*). Without such purposeful endeavor the sanctified believer's witness may be impaired and the grace itself frustrated and ultimately lost (*II Peter 1:9-10; 3:17*).

## **C. Baptism of the Holy Ghost**

We believe that the baptism of the Holy Ghost may be obtained by a definite act of appropriating faith on the part of the fully cleansed believer. This is not an impossible condition, but an imperative command (*Ephesians 5:18*) and that the first evidence of the reception of this experience is the speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (*Acts 1:5; 2:14; 8:17*).

#### **D. Divine Healing**

We believe that the Bible teaches that the healing provided in the atonement is both spiritual and physical. This is conclusive from the interpretation of *Isaiah 53:4-5* and also *Matthew 8:16-17*. In the Great Commission for the proclamation of the Gospel in the entire world, the healing of the body is promised along with the salvation of the soul.

People were healed in the Old Testament. They were healed in the New Testament, and we believe that people are and can be healed today.

Sickness and suffering are the result of sin. That is, there never would have been any sickness and death if the human race had not fallen into sin. We would not say, however, that all sickness is the direct result of sin, but sin certainly is directly or indirectly responsible for it. But the same Christ who can deliver from sin can, if it pleases Him, deliver from sickness.

While it is God's highest will for His people to anoint, lay hands on and pray for the healing of the sick, we do not believe that the Bible teaches that there is anything morally wrong with taking medicine, or receiving human aid, if one is not able to fully trust the Lord. We believe healing is God's promise and privilege to those who will receive it, rather than a command that must be obeyed (*James 5:14-15*).

#### **E. The Second Coming of Christ**

We believe in the imminent, personal, pre-tribulation, premillennial second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Acts 1:11*) "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: (*I Thessalonians 4:16*). This indicates more than a mere figure of speech, but an actual sudden, grand historical event, in which Christ assembles to himself his own from among the living and the dead, on a vast and mighty scale. The saints of past ages will be raised, those still in the flesh will be changed, and, as Enoch and Elijah were translated, the whole Church will rise in joyful welcome to the returning Savior, to be with Him forevermore.

There is nothing in Scripture to indicate when it will be (*Matthew 24:36*). The Scriptures indicate when the Second Coming happens; it will be with unexpected suddenness. "Signs" will precede the Coming, so that patient believers may feel that it is near, while the world generally scoffs at the idea. But even those who are watching are warned lest they be caught off guard. It will be as a "thief in the night." Jesus said that over and over, and with solemn earnestness warned his disciples to "Watch" (*Matthew 24:42*).

We believe that immediately after Jesus makes this sudden appearance in the sky to rapture or catch away his saints, great tribulation shall prevail on the earth. Matthew writes, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (*Matthew 24:21*). When tribulation has consummated and the day of Apostasy is over, and then shall be the second event of the Second Coming of our Lord (*Luke 21:27*). The particular feature emphasized in this event of His coming is that it will be a day of terror for the disobedient. At this coming the Lord will be accompanied "with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;" (*II Thessalonians*).

The Bible seems to indicate that God designed that each successive generation should live in expectation of the Lord's Second Coming (*Matthew 24:42-44*).

## **ARTICLE 10: GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

### **A. Gifts Resident in Holy Spirit**

The Heavenly Father in His wisdom has bestowed a diversity of gifts upon His church for the building up of His Kingdom. We believe that it is the privilege of the Spirit-baptized believers to enjoy the benefits of spiritual gifts-wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, and that these gifts are separate and apart from the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Recognizing the inherent spiritual capacity of men and the work of grace that is shared by all believers, we should cherish these manifold endowments and desire to bring each to full development, that the whole body may be fitly framed together by that which each member supplies (*I Corinthians 12:1-11*). We believe that these gifts are resident in the Holy Ghost and that He uses them severally as He wills and through whom He wills.

### **B. Gifts Resident in the Believer**

In addition to the sign gifts which are the gifts of the Holy Spirit and under His sovereign control, there are other Spiritual Gifts mentioned in Scripture that are not merely used through individuals, but are given to individual believers either at the time of conversion or when the need arises in the body of Christ. These spiritual gifts are defined as "A special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the body, according to God's grace for use within the context of the body."

Spiritual gifts are classified as Ministry Gifts, (*Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:28*), Motivational Gifts (*Ephesians 4:11*), and Miscellaneous Gifts (*I Corinthians 7:7; Ephesians 3:6-9*). The most important thing in a believer's life is to discover, develop and deploy the gifts God has given.

One is urged to confuse neither spiritual gifts nor the gifts of the Spirit with natural talents, the fruit of the Spirit, Christian roles, or counterfeit gifts. A spiritual gift acknowledges the Lordship of Christ, operates out of love and builds up the body of Christ.

## **ARTICLE 11: PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS**

There are strong grounds to hope that the truly regenerate will persevere unto the end and be saved through the power of Divine grace which is pledged for their support (*Romans 8:38-39; I Corinthians 10:13; II Corinthians 12:9; Job 17:9*), but the future obedience and final salvation are neither determined nor certain, since through infirmity and manifold temptations, they are in danger of falling; they ought therefore to watch and pray lest they make shipwreck of their faith and be lost (*II Chronicles 15:2; Ezekiel 33:18; John 15:6; II Peter 2:20*).

## **ARTICLE 12: DEATH AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE**

### **A. Death**

As a result of sin, all mankind are subject to the death of the body (*Psalms 89:48; Ecclesiastes 8:8; Romans 5:12; Hebrews 9:27*).

## **B. The Intermediate State**

The soul does not die with the body; but immediately after death, it enters into a conscious state of happiness or misery, according to the moral character here possessed (*Ecclesiastes 12:7; Matthew 17:3; II Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 6:9*).

### **ARTICLE 13: THE RESURRECTION, FINAL JUDGMENT AND REWARDS**

We believe, according to the Scriptures, that there shall be a resurrection from the dead, both of the just and of the unjust (*Acts 24:15*) and that God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ whom he hath ordained (*Acts 17:31*). The Apostle Paul said, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (*II Corinthians 5:10*).

We sincerely believe, not only a resurrection in Christ from the fallen and sinful state here, but a rising and ascending into glory with Him hereafter; that when He at last appears, we may appear with Him in glory. But that all the wicked, who live in rebellion against the light of His Grace and die finally impenitent, shall come forth to the resurrection of condemnation. And that the soul of every man and woman shall be preserved, in its own distinct and proper being, and shall have its proper body, as God is pleased to give it. It is sown a natural body and it will be raised as a spiritual body (*I Corinthians 15:14*). The natural body first and afterwards the spirit (which is spiritual). And though it is said, "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality," (*I Corinthians 15:53*), the change shall be such as will accord with the declaration, 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption' (*I Corinthians 15:50*). We shall be raised out of all corruption and corruptibility, out of all mortality, and shall be the children of God, being the children of resurrection (*Luke 20:36*).

### **ARTICLE 14: THE SABBATH**

This is one day in seven, which, from creation of the world, God set apart for sacred rest and holy service (*Genesis 2:3; Mark 2:27*). Under the former dispensation the seventh day of the week, as commemorative of the work of creation, was set apart for the Sabbath (*Exodus 20:8-11*). Under the Gospel, the first day of the week, in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, and by authority of the apostles, is observed as the Christian Sabbath (*Luke 24:1-7; John 20:19; 26; Psalms 118:22-24*). On this day all men should seek to refrain from secular labor and devote themselves to the service of God (*Isaiah 58:13-14*).

In these days when the Lord's Day is being desecrated by so many, we as a church feel it our duty to take a stand against the practice of buying and selling unnecessarily on Sunday.

We believe that it is proper to perform only deeds of mercy and acts of necessity on the Lord's Day.

### **ARTICLE 15: WORLDLY AND SINFUL AMUSEMENTS**

We believe that it is decidedly against the Christian Character and influence of all people to engage in unwholesome and degrading amusements. The individual must choose only such activities as are in accord with Christian principles and standards. Many amusements will raise

doubts, and when such doubts cannot be intelligently and conscientiously resolved, these amusements should be avoided.

The Church and the community should cooperate in furnishing wholesome and constructive social activities and pastimes for the young people, in accordance with their needs. Thus, high standards of quality and moral influence may be maintained, and the problem of unwholesome commercialized amusements largely avoided.

#### **ARTICLE 16: TEMPERANCE**

Pentecostal Free Will Baptists maintain a strong testimony against the use of intoxicating liquors and drug abuse. We believe that beverage alcohol and drug abuse are major causes of poverty and crime and that it is destructive to the body and to the mind; spiritually, it wrecks and degrades the lives and characters of those who indulge in it. Our members should not participate neither in the trafficking of liquor or drugs nor encourage it in any form, but should be earnest and energetic in their opposition to it.

Members who persist in the use or owning and operating a business that sells intoxicating liquors and illegal drugs, after they have been admonished, are to be excluded. We believe that moderation should be practiced in everything touching the welfare of one's life. Members should not over indulge in eating and drinking. They should avoid immodest styles and fashions of the world. We should heed the Apostles admonition to 'abstain from all appearance of evil.

We should not indulge in anything that is inconsistent with the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and morally wrong. We should be temperate in all things that are permissible.

#### **ARTICLE 17: TITHING**

We believe that all Christians should tithe, and that the tithe should be given directly into the church for the support of the cause. The Old Testament teaches tithing, and Jesus set His approval on the practice (*Matthew 23:23*). One-tenth of the net income belongs to God and should be given to him through the local church. In addition to this, we ought to give free-will offerings for the support of His cause, and according to His promise, He will pour upon us abundant blessings.

By net income we mean the total income from all sources, excepting only what it costs to produce that income. For other scriptures on tithing see *Genesis 28:22; Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:8-10*.

#### **ARTICLE 18: MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE**

Divorce must be viewed against the background of what is taught in the Bible about marriage. God ordained marriage as a basic human relationship (*Genesis 1:27*). The relationship is social as well as physical (*Genesis 2:18*) and one of privilege as well as responsibility (*Genesis 2:23*). God intended marriage to be a life-long relationship (*Genesis 2:24*). Jesus recognized that Gods ideal in marriage is monogamy (*Matthew 19:8*). Marriage is a solemn binding, unconditional covenant, a covenant between man, woman and God. The marriage covenant has four aspects.

(1) Love. (2) Living together in a single household (*Genesis 2:24*). (3) Faithfulness, to the marriage bed (*Hebrews 13:4*) (4) Provision for the wife by the husband (*Genesis 3:16*). The

marriage union is constituted (1) When there is mutual affinity, (2) Public consent, evidenced by buying a license, (3) When there is a covenant agreement publicly expressed in ceremonial vows, (4) When there is physical union, which consummates. The essence of all this is love.

As a Religious Body that believes in the literal interpretation of the scriptures and seeks to exemplify a Holiness Lifestyle, we are decidedly opposed to sexual immoralities and perversions of any and all kinds, to include, but not to be limited to, homosexuality, adultery, or perverse sexuality of any nature. We believe the only Biblically approved sexuality is within the confines of a monogamous heterosexual marital relationship.

With a Biblical understanding of marriage, we can understand divorce. God hates divorce (*Malachi 2:14-16*). The law restricts divorce. The law permitted it but did not command it. Divorce is contrary to God's will and work (*Matthew 19:5-6*). Paul forbids a Christian divorce initiative when the spouse is an unbeliever (*I Corinthians 7:10-16*). A divorce initiative is permitted a Christian by Jesus when the spouse is guilty of fornication; i.e., habitual sexual immorality (*Matthew 5:32; 19:9*). Paul permits divorce when there is irreconcilable desertion (*I Corinthians 7:10-15*).

Where scripture permits divorce, it presupposes the right to remarry (*Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11 and Luke 16:18*). Jesus forbids remarriage if fornication is involved (*Matthew 5:32; 19:9*). However, Jesus recognized the divorced could be expected to remarry. The basic purpose in what Jesus says is to prevent divorce in the first place. Paul forbids remarriage by a believer if the believer initiates the divorce. However, the law permits remarriage when there is divorce (*Deuteronomy 24:1-4*). Jesus permits remarriage for the innocent party when fornication has been committed (*Matthew 5:32; 10:9*). Paul permits remarriage for the believer if the unbeliever departs. Remarriage is to be considered a new contract or a covenant and a new union. Whatever the cause of divorce or the circumstances surrounding the remarriage, whether it took place before or after becoming a Christian, it still is not unforgivable. Persons divorced on Biblical grounds and remarrying commits no sin. Divorce dissolves the first marriage even for the guilty party, so remarriage does not cause the divorced to have two wives - adultery is not a state but an act.

Membership in Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church is open to all born again believers whatever the marriage entanglements. Deacons and ministers are received ONLY if divorced and remarried as Gods Word allows, which is for fornication, or desertion.

The Deacon Board and Ministerial Council shall conduct a prescribed investigation to determine the acceptability of a prospective deacon or minister.

The minister is expected to counsel with his members about marriage before and after marriage as well as divorce. However, the minister has liberty of conscience related to performing marriage ceremonies for all persons. He should, however, approach the divorce and remarried with a ministry of love and understanding.

## **ARTICLE 19: THE CHURCH**

The Church is an organized body of believers in Christ, who stately assemble to worship God, and who sustain the ordinances of the Gospel agreeable to His Word (*I Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:41, 47; I Corinthians 16:1-2*). In a more general sense, it is the whole body of Christians

throughout the world, and none but the regenerates are its real members (*I Corinthians 12:27, 28; Colossians 1:18, 24; I Peter 2:5*). Believers are admitted to a particular Church on their giving evidence of faith, being baptized, and receiving the hand of fellowship (*Acts 2:41; 8:12; Galatians 3:27*).

## **ARTICLE 20: ORDINANCES OF THE GOSPEL**

### **A. Christian Baptism**

This is the immersion of believers in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in which are represented the burial and resurrection of Christ, the death of Christians to the World, the washing of their souls from the pollution of sin, their rising of newness of life, their engagement to serve God, and their resurrection at the last day (*Matthew 28:19; Colossians 2:12; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:4; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:27*).

### **B. The Lord's Supper**

This is a commemoration of the death of Christ for our sins, in the use of bread, which He made the emblem of His broken body; and the cup, the emblem of His shed blood (*I Corinthians 11:23-26; Matthew 26:26-28*). And by it, the believer expresses his love for Christ, his faith and hope in Him, and pledges to Him perpetual fidelity (*I Corinthians 10:16*). It is the privilege and duty of all who have spiritual union with Christ thus to commemorate His death and no man has a right to forbid these tokens to the least of His disciples. (*I Corinthians 10:17; Matthew 26:27; Romans 14:1, 10; I Corinthians 12:12-27*)

The Bible does not teach how often this ordinance should be observed. It only says, "do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me." We believe that once each three months is often enough for the observance. We also urge that each church observe communion on World-wide Communion Sunday.

### **C. Feet Washing**

This is a sacred ordinance of humility, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ and enjoined upon His Disciples as a duty to be observed by them. In this He set the example (*John 13:1-17*).

## CHURCH COVENANT

(This Church Covenant should be read before receiving any member into the church and a statement should be received from the candidate that they will obey it.)

Having been brought, as we believe, by divine grace to accept the Lord Jesus as our Savior and Preserver, we do now solemnly and joyfully covenant and agree, by God's help to walk together in brotherly love.

We, therefore, enter into covenant as members of this Church and as Christians, that we will watch over each other in love, sharing together each other's joys and sorrows; and that we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor omit the great duty of prayer for ourselves and others; that by divine assistance we will endeavor to bring up those under our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that in all things we will strive to exemplify our profession by the corresponding practice; to abstain from all sinful conformity to the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in all departments; that we will sustain the worship, ordinances, faith and practices, and doctrine of this Church, that we will contribute cheerfully with our tithes and offerings to the church according to our ability, to the support of the ministry, the expense of the church, the relief of the poor and the general spread of the Gospel.

In keeping this solemn Covenant, may we ever enjoy the blessings and presence of the great Head of the Church.

## **HISTORY OF THE PENTECOSTAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH**

By Preston Heath, Herbert F. Carter, Don Sauls, and R. M. Brown

Historically, Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Churches have traced their roots to Benjamin Randall and the Free Will Baptist movement, which was started in the New Hampshire area. However, more complete research has led to the conclusion that not any of the Free Will Baptist Churches in North and South Carolina owe their roots to the Randall movement. Free Will Baptists in North and South Carolina trace their roots to Paul Palmer. The Palmer movement is older than the Free Baptist or General Baptist movement in any other state, having begun officially in 1727.

The first official mention of “Free Will Baptist” in the Randall movement appeared on the ministerial credentials in 1779. The North Carolina Free Will Baptist Denomination began no later than 1727, which was fifty-two years before the Randall movement. The North Carolina Free Will Baptist Movement has continued uninterrupted since that time. Free Will Baptist Churches in North Carolina were never a part of the Randall movement in the real sense; however, in 1831 a fellowship was attempted between the two groups. The North Carolina group was represented at one of the Randall meetings. Because of that, Randall listed the North Carolina members in his 1835 minutes. In 1837, the fellowship was interrupted over the question of slavery; thus merger was never accomplished.

North Carolina Free Will Baptists date their beginning earlier than the Randall group of Free Will Baptists in the north. Furthermore, the Randall movement merged with the Northern Regular Baptist in 1911. This resulted in Randall’s group of Free Will Baptists losing their identity to the Northern Regular Baptists.

Palmer was a native of Maryland. His history can be traced in the colonial records of North Carolina. On April 3, 1720, he became involved in a court case concerning the ownership of a slave named Sambo. We know that Palmer was living in North Carolina at that time because in 1722, in Perquimans County North Carolina, he asked for a certificate of dismissal from the Quaker congregation in that county. There is record of his going north to be baptized by Owen Thomas at Welsh Tract, Pennsylvania. He was later ordained in Connecticut. On this trip, he preached throughout New England but returned to North Carolina for most of his ministerial work.

Palmer married Johanna Baker Peterson prior to 1720. She was the widow of Thomas Peterson in the Perquimian precinct in the northeastern part of North Carolina. Thomas Peterson had left her a plantation of about 500 acres surrounding the town of Edenton, North Carolina. After their marriage, Palmer became a wealthy landowner by the addition of his wife’s property. Prior to his ministry, he was an important political figure in that area.

In 1726, Palmer began to attract attention as an evangelist in Chowan County. There is no record that Palmer ever pastored any church. Much of his ministry was as an evangelist preaching in homes that were open to him. He was a man of great ability, and revival seemed to follow his ministry. Two people associated with Palmer who later had an impact on the Free Will Baptist movement were Joseph Parker and William Parker. Three churches can be traced directly to Palmer’s work. They were known at the time as General Baptist churches.

The name General Baptist distinguished them theologically from those who were Particular Baptists. The difference between the two had to do with the gospel call for sinners to be saved. General Baptists believed that God desired for all men everywhere to be saved and that the call was issued generally for “whosoever will.” This is in contrast to those who believed that some people are predestined to be saved, and some are predestined to be lost, and that they have nothing to do with it. We believe God calls all men to repentance, but whether or not they are saved has to do with the exercise of their free will. So as a matter of decision, people began to call them Free Baptist or Free Will Baptist.

The first church established by Palmer was in Chowan County near the community of Cisco. It was established with thirty-two members in 1727; Joseph Parker was the first pastor. The second church was in the Pasquotank precinct. This group of dissenters was lead by Palmer to file a request with the court of this precinct for a license to worship in the home of William Burgess. The date of the beginning of this church was September 5, 1729. Morgan Edward’s history tells of Palmer’s gathering another Church at New River, near the South Carolina border.

There is some question about what ultimately happened to those three original Free Will Baptist Churches. Palmer’s influence and ministry gave beginning to the Free Will Baptist movement in North Carolina. He is regarded today as the Father of the General or Free Baptist Churches in North Carolina. It is not certain when or how Palmer died, but it appears to have been sometime around 1747.

Although Palmer established the first Free Baptist Churches in North Carolina, Parker became the more important figure in the continuing story. His extended ministry and missionary travels with his brother William had tremendous impact. J. D. Huffman in his history concluded that from 1700 to 1757, “this energetic evangelist band of Baptist provided most of North Carolina’s spiritual enlightenment.” There were twenty Free Will Baptist Churches in fourteen counties in North Carolina by 1755. These churches were on North Carolina’s east coast, but the influence had gone as far north as Hertford County, west as far as Granville County, and south as far as Onslow County.

The events that transpired from that humble beginning are far too numerous to attempt to cover in this abbreviated history. The country was in a developing stage, and from secular history, it is clear that there was much struggle in the development. New churches continued to be added, and small fellowship conferences were springing up all over North Carolina. As the years passed, Rev. Reading Moore became a key figure in our history.

Rev. Moore, born in 1781, and reared in Greene County, was ordained in 1816. He ministered over a wide area and organized three churches in the Marion, South Carolina, vicinity. In 1831, the Free Will Baptists in North Carolina released Moore and his churches to form a conference of their own in South Carolina. The Free Will Baptist Churches of North Carolina were in the northeastern part of the state, and travel for Moore’s group was difficult. Rev. Moore organized the South Carolina conference, and churches and ministers were added to the fellowship. It became a very successful endeavor.

The Stoney Run Church, located approximately five miles east of Dunn, N.C., and the Hodges Chapel Church, located three miles west of Benson, N.C., in Harnett County, are the two oldest churches of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church. For years, the Stoney Run Church in Sampson County was regarded as the oldest Church of this denomination.

Stoney Run Church considers the year of 1850 as the date of its beginning. It is the site where the Cape Fear Conference was organized. The Stoney Run Church membership grew to well over three hundred before 1860 when it disbanded because of the dangers of the Civil War. Several battles were fought in the immediate area, such as the Battle of Aversboro and Bentonville. The church was re-gathered and re-established immediately following the war and has continued until this day.

The Hodges Chapel Church was formed out of a land grant made by a Mr. John Hodges. Mr. Hodges donated five acres of land on August 22, 1840, to be used “for the purpose of building a house thereon for religious worship.....”. That building was used as a meeting place for the Quakers, Primitive Baptist and Free Will Baptists. Each of these was a distinct church occupying the same building. Since none of them had a full-time minister, they designated the Sunday for each group to have charge of the service.

We cannot identify the exact time the Hodges Chapel Church was organized. We do know that it was a part of the group that formed the Cape Fear Conference in 1855. The Hodges Chapel Church could have had its beginnings in 1840, but was started no later than 1855. There are records in a history written by Mrs. E. Pernice Barefoot and published by Hodges Chapel Church in 1985 that indicate that the church was in existence in the early 1840's. If this is true, it would make the Hodges Chapel Church the oldest church of this denomination.

There were seven other Free Will Baptist Churches organized during this general time frame that were in association with Rev. Reading Moore's conference in South Carolina. James Turnage and William Harris went to South Carolina in 1855 to petition the South Carolina brethren for permission to start a conference with the seven churches in the Cape Fear River basin. Permission was granted, and the churches met at Stoney Run on November 1, 1855, and organized the Cape Fear Conference. Elder John Williams served as the first moderator with William Harris as his assistant. The conference was named after the Cape Fear River that flows through that part of the state.

The following churches were present and became charter members of the Cape Fear Conference: Stoney Run of Cumberland County (now Sampson County), Long Branch of Cumberland County (now Harnett County), Fayetteville of Cumberland County, Shady Grove of Sampson County, Bethsaida (now known as Hodges Chapel) of Harnett County, Prospect of Harnett County, and Elbethel of Robeson County.

The Pentecostal experience came to the Cape Fear Conference early in 1907. As a result of the great holiness revival that broke out following the Civil war among Methodists, there were formed holiness conventions. Blackmon Crumpler was the leader of one called the North Carolina Holiness Convention. That Wesleyan Holiness emphasis influenced the Cape Fear Conference of Free Will Baptist to adopt Sanctification as a second definite work of grace in the heart of a fully justified believer, subsequent to and separate from regeneration. This prepared the hearts of the

ministers and members for reception of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit when the Pentecostal revival came to North Carolina.

The following account shows how the Pentecostal message came to the Free Will Baptist Church: A Methodist minister named G.W. Cashwell, who was associated with Crumpler in the North Carolina Holiness Convention, traveled to Los Angeles, California in 1906 to attend William Seymore's Azusa Street mission revival. He received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gave utterance.

Cashwell returned to North Carolina and very quickly scheduled a revival in an old tobacco warehouse in Dunn, North Carolina. The meeting started on New Year's Eve in 1906 and continued through February of 1907. The meeting was a phenomenon that attracted many people of various religious faiths in the area. Leaders of the Cape Fear Conference of Free Will Baptists attended the meeting, and a number of them testified to receiving the Holy Spirit's fullness and anointing. Among them were H.H. Goff, Willis B. Strickland, J.A. Blalock, C.A. Jackson, Hannibal Jernigan, James (Jim) B. Barefoot and others. The new doctrine and experience so influenced these leaders that they led the Cape Fear Conference to adopt the new faith as a part of the statement of faith for the Conference in the November 1-4, 1907, meeting held at the Long Branch church, one of the original member bodies.

The influence of the Cape Fear Conference grew. Ministers and churches were added so that the conference expanded over a wide geographic territory. Travel and the size of the group caused the leaders to begin to think about dividing the conference to accommodate the people. In the 1908 meeting of the Cape Fear Conference, Rev. O. B. Garriss of Watha, North Carolina, and Rev. C. J. Carr of Clinton, North Carolina, offered a petition that the conference be divided to accommodate travel. They requested that another conference be established under the Cape Fear Conference discipline to be known as the Wilmington Conference of the Free Will Baptist Church. Permission was granted and the first Wilmington Conference of the Free Will Baptist Church was held at the Lebanon Church (now disbanded) near Clinton, North Carolina, on Thursday before the fifth Sunday in November, 1908. The moderator, Elder E. L. Parker, preached the first sermon in the Wilmington Conference. Seventeen churches and twenty-three ministers were represented in that first meeting.

Approximately three years later, in 1911, a group of representatives from some of the churches along with some of the ministers, formed another group known as the New River Conference of the Free Will Baptist Holiness Church, Inc. This group was located for the most part in the extreme southeastern section of North Carolina. Details of how this conference was formed are not fully known. We have interviewed some of the men who were alive at that time and participated in the beginning of the New River group. It seems that something similar to what happen with the Cape Fear Conference occurred. The Pentecostal Revival spread from the Dunn area to that community some seventy miles Southeast. Instead of those who embraced the Pentecostal experience changing the doctrine of the Eastern Conference of Free Will Baptist Church, as the Cape Fear Conference did, they rather split with the parent group and organized their own conference and named it after the New River that flows in that part of the state.

In about 1910, a Bible College was attempted in the Lebanon Church area just south of Clinton, N.C., in the Beulah Community. Little can be found in our history about it. We do know,

however, that a school was established and operated for about three years and was closed due to lack of support.

The 1911 Cape Fear Conference met at the Long Branch Church near Dunn, N.C. At this meeting, it was discovered that some of the churches and ministers neither believed the doctrine of sanctification as historically taught by the Free Will Baptist, nor accepted the doctrine of the baptism with the Holy Ghost according to the official teachings of the Cape Fear Conference since 1907. A resolution was adopted forbidding these churches and ministers from being seated as delegates because of their doctrinal irregularities.

The group that could not be seated left the conference, and a few weeks later, on January 12, 1912, held a meeting at the Shady Grove Free Will Baptist Church near Dunn, N.C. At that meeting, they decided to send a letter to all Free Will Baptist Churches of the Cape Fear Conference. The letter was an invitation and request for all churches to send delegates to a special meeting being called by the splinter group. E. R. Wilson, R. M. Parker, and W. A. Jackson signed the letter. As a result, twelve churches pulled out of the Cape Fear Conference to form a new group. Why these men were departing the Cape Fear Conference is clearly stated in the document they drafted at the 1912 meeting at Shady Grove Church eleven miles south east of Dunn, N.C. They expressly declared that they did not believe the doctrine of “entire sanctification” nor did they accept the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of tongues as agreed on in the 1907 meeting of the Cape Fear Conference held at Long Branch Church.

The 1889 discipline that the splinter group objected to have read on sanctification:

“Man’s side: A. A complete consecration of himself and all his to God and his service.

“God’s side: B. Is an instantaneous work of God’s grace in a believer’s heart whereby the heart is cleansed from all sin and made pure by the blood of Christ; it is obtained by faith and is subsequent to regeneration. The Christian can and should abide in this state unto the end of life, constantly growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The 1907 discipline records the newly formed position of the Cape Fear Conference on the doctrine of Pentecost that the splinter group dissented from. It was a declaration of belief in the baptism in the Holy Spirit of a fully sanctified believer; an endowment of power that comes with the attendant experience of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance.

The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church’s teaching on sanctification and the baptism in the Holy Spirit today is consistent with the original teachings of the Cape Fear Conference as outlined above. Therefore, the Cape Fear Conference that joined with the Wilmington and New River Conference to form the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church in 1959 was the original Cape Fear Conference of the Free Will Baptist Church which was organized at Stoney Run Church in 1855. It teaches the same position on sanctification as the 1889 discipline. It contends for the same position that was adopted by the Cape Fear Conference on the doctrine of Pentecost in the 1907 meeting, four years before the split over these two issues in 1911. The Pentecostal Free Will

Baptist Church has more than seventy per cent of the churches with it today that were with the Cape Fear Conference prior to the 1911 split, including the church in which the Cape Fear Conference was formed.

The splinter group could fellowship with Free Will Baptist Conferences in other parts of North Carolina and in other states because others were also denying the doctrine of sanctification as historically taught as well the newly adopted Pentecostal doctrine.

There is no doubt that the main thing that precipitated the division was the doctrine of Sanctification and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the initial evidence of speaking with other tongues. Ministers throughout the Cape Fear Conference were teaching that one could receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost today even as it was received and practiced by the 120 on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. The group that met at Shady Grove near Dunn in 1912 denied the doctrine of sanctification that Free Will Baptists had held, and they never accepted the teaching of Pentecost.

Because of the doctrinal disputes, the break with other Free Will Baptists of non-Pentecostal persuasion came. Our churches did not enjoy a close fellowship with other denominational bodies for many years. Today our identification is more with the Holiness and Pentecostal bodies than with the non-Pentecostal Free Will Baptist groups. This is evidenced by our membership in the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America and its successor organization.

In 1935, our churches began to publish Sunday school curriculum. Miss Nettie Johnson, the daughter of Rev. Jesse Johnson of Wilmington, N.C., was selected as the first editor-in-chief of the Free Will Baptist Sunday School Literature. She served in this role until 1947. Various writers were selected to prepare the age-level material.

Upon his retirement, Dr. Harvey English was selected as the editor-in-chief. He continued in that role until the amalgamation in 1959. At that time it was decided to enter into a contractual agreement with larger Pentecostal publishers to use the Sunday School Literature they provide. We have continued in that relationship until the present.

In 1940, there was an attempt to establish a Bible College by the Wilmington Conference. Mr. Carlton French chaired the effort. Mr. Will Butler from the Dublin church in Dublin, N. C., donated the land. It was to be known as Emmanuel Bible College. After several months of trying to raise funds, some building materials were gathered. The people just did not seem to have the vision for a school, so the project was abandoned.

On April 7, 1943, a very significant meeting was called at the Free Will Baptist Church in Lumberton, North Carolina. All of the ministers and churches of four Free Will Baptist conferences that embraced the Pentecostal experience, the Cape Fear, Wilmington, New River, and South Carolina Conferences of the Free Will Baptist Church were asked to attend. The meeting was to discuss uniting the above mentioned conferences into one general conference. Each of these conferences had been the same in faith and practice but had not been organizationally united since the agreement of 1908 in the Cape Fear conference meeting at the church in Benson, N.C., to allow some of the churches to form a Wilmington Conference. No previous effort has been made to reach out to our sister body of Free Will Baptists in the New

River conference that believed and experienced Pentecost, nor the South Carolina conference that was formed as a result of leadership, revivalism and influence from ministers of the Wilmington conference.

The meeting was a success and a new general conference was formed with three of the four joining. Only the New River did not accept membership in the group. However, they did faithfully attend the meetings. The General Conference continued to meet each three years until the 1959 amalgamation, at which time individual charters of the Wilmington, Cape Fear and New River conferences were dissolved. Though the New River conference did not ever join the General Conference, they did participate in the 1959 amalgamation. Unfortunately, the South Carolina conference of the Free Will Baptists did not agree to be a part of the consolidation of 1959. They did rename their conference to "Free Will Baptist of the Pentecostal Faith." Even though each of the individual conferences that made up the one General Conference remained in tact as their own highest tribunal from April of 1943 until April of 1959, fellowship was fostered between the groups. This was a key factor in bringing a closer working relationship that paved the way for the consolidation.

In 1951, the Wilmington Conference appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of starting a Bible College. Dr. Barney English chaired this effort. They developed a curriculum and selected the name, Temple Bible College. Unfortunately, one of the members on the committee decided to start an independent College in the spring of 1952, in the general proximity of this denomination's churches. Therefore, not wanting to compete, the conference's efforts in this regard were dropped.

Much of the success of the 1959 amalgamation can be traced to the General Conference formed in 1943. Each conference continued to have its own officers and operate under its separate charter. A close fellowship was fostered, and they began to work on mutually beneficial projects. There was a free exchange of pastors from one conference to the other without regard for conference lines.

One of the major projects jointly attempted was to sponsor an orphanage. They were able to obtain a facility built by the county, which was formerly used as the Long Branch public school near Dunn, N. C. With the purchase, came approximately three acres of land and a house suitable to be used as a superintendent's home. The orphanage was opened in 1945, and the first superintendent was Rev. Vance Davis. He was succeeded in 1948, by Rev. J. Edward Johnson who continued as superintendent until the orphanage was closed in 1961. That facility is still in use today as the main classroom and administrative building of Heritage Bible College.

There were early attempts to involve the church in a foreign missions outreach program. In 1918, George Kelly was sent to China as the first missionary from this church. He married a girl from the First Magnolia Church in Magnolia, NC. She died while they were serving in China. When the government changed so that it was no longer safe for missionaries to be there, he came home and pastored a church in Cerro Gordo, N.C.

In the late thirties, Mrs. Pearl Balleu approached the Wilmington Conference leaders about her burden to work in India. The conference raised the money and sent her. One person remembered a Rev. Marvin Parrish being sent to a foreign field for a brief period in this general time frame.

However, after serving on the field, Rev. Parrish returned to pastor a church in Roanoke, Virginia. Rev. Carlton French petitioned the church to send him as a foreign missionary. The church responded and he went; unfortunately, little is known about the result of that effort.

In 1947, Mrs. Myrtle Blanton Holder approached Rev. J. T. Blanton, Wilmington Conference moderator and the treasurer, Mr. J. Richard Parker, about her burden to begin a denomination youth ministry. The idea was brought to the conference and accepted.

The Wilmington Conference owned a facility for campmeetings near Watha, N. C. In June, 1948, at the campgrounds, twenty-one boys and girls gathered for the first denomination youth camp. The first youth convention was held on Saturday afternoon of that week. The youth ministries were very useful in helping to bring about the fellowship that led to the 1959 amalgamation. The New River Conference began its youth program in 1953. Mrs. Jacqueline Hopewell was their first president, and Rev. B. A. Daughtry was the chairman of the monthly rallies. The New River and Cape Fear Conferences did not have a youth camp. They were encouraged to send their youth to the camp at Watha.

The Conference moderators continued to lead the conference in a closer working relationship. Numerous things happened that made merger more and more encouraging. The membership was seeing in a new light what could be accomplished by working together. Many began to envision these four conferences consolidated under one charter and one administration with one denomination name. Leaders began to meet and discuss the possibility. Ultimately, each moderator placed the amalgamation issue before his individual conference.

In 1959, at the time of the merger, Rev. J. T. Blanton was the moderator of the General Conference. The following persons were moderators of the individual conferences at the time the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church came into being in its present form: Rev. J. E. Andrews - Cape Fear Conference, Rev. A. C. Wheeler - Wilmington Conference; Rev. Ransom Kennedy - New River Conference; Rev. Ray Rumsey - South Carolina Conference. Each of the conferences voted for an immediate amalgamation except for South Carolina. They voted to drop out.

A joint Committee was formed from the Executive Committees of the three groups that voted to continue; their task was to do those things necessary to bring to reality a proposed merger. First, the committee had to agree on the plan of merger. They drew up the articles of Consolidation and outlined the necessary legal steps to be taken. After several meetings, it was agreed to add the word Pentecostal to the name to designate it from the Free Will Baptist Church that was not Pentecostal in faith. The plan was submitted for the approval of each conference. After most of the concepts had been resolved, an attorney was secured to prepare the charter and new by-laws for the merged groups.

In the merger plan, the former joint committee became the Board of Directors of the proposed new group. It was their duty to lay the foundation and organize the newly amalgamated denomination. Once the charter had been secured and approved by the Board of Directors, a historic organizational meeting of the churches and ministers was called. The meeting was held April 28, 1959, at the Owen Grove Church near Clinton, North Carolina. The moderator for the meeting was the Rev. Herbert Carter. They first adopted a set of bylaws to govern the body. In

accordance with these bylaws, the conference ratified the board's selection of officers. The necessary committees were established to get the infant organization moving.

The first officers to serve the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. were as follows: General Superintendent - Rev. Herbert Carter; Assistant General Superintendent - Rev. J. E. Andrews; General Secretary - Rev. A. B. Dawsey, Jr.; General Treasurer - Miss Charlotte Wells. These people, along with the General Board of Directors, were charged with the responsibility of establishing an office and putting together a program. With great faith and enthusiasm, they went about their work.

On August 26-27, 1959, the first General Conference of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church was held. The meeting was held at the First Methodist Church of Clinton, North Carolina. In this meeting, the organization work was approved, the directors properly elected, and their terms designated. A program of work was set for the year ahead. The total merged group was 129 churches, 180 ministers, with a total membership of approximately 6,300. There were ministers and churches that almost immediately decided to withdraw. When things had settled, the total number of churches that remained was reduced to 93 with less than 6,000 members.

The first headquarters office was established in the city of Clinton, North Carolina, in rented facilities. During the first year, problems developed with the orphanage at Dunn that resulted in its being closed in 1961. It was closed primarily because of lack of financial support and declining student body. There was a sizable farm and a number of buildings available that the orphanage had occupied. It was decided to move the headquarters to those facilities and to sell the farm because it was located elsewhere in the area. The money from the sale was to be used to purchase additional acreage joining the existing buildings. When this was accomplished, the total land owned by the denomination was approximately thirty-eight acres. It had a building to be used as its headquarters office and a home for its superintendent.

A part of the program for the first year was to divide the geographic area in which churches are located into districts. This was to encourage fellowship and make it convenient for communication and reporting. District officers were elected to help the general officers in the building of the new denomination. A similar organizational structure continues to be used. It was also during the first year that the work was divided into departments, and various boards and committees were established for the promotion of each phase of the work.

The second General Conference was also held in Clinton, N.C., at the Kerr School Auditorium. A large crowd attended the conference. Several churches and ministers were added to the fellowship, including the first person to represent the merged church on foreign soil, Rev. P. John Thomas. Rev. Thomas of Kerala, South India, had a mission work there and called upon this church to assist him in the building of a Bible School. The people adopted the project. Money was raised and the school was built. The first foreign mission project of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church was completed in 1961.

During this time, Rev. and Mrs. Winfield Kelly petitioned the church to send them as missionaries to Hawaii. Though it is a part of the United States, it was a distant area in which the new denomination had no churches. The church agreed, and for the first time in its history, sent out missionaries in January, 1960. Since the days of those early beginnings, the church has

established works in these foreign countries: Mexico, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Guatemala, Nigeria, the Philippine Islands and El Salvador. God has blessed our efforts to reach those beyond our borders.

After the amalgamation, the Watha Campground served as the official campground facility for the merged church until 1962. Then the camp was moved to Dunn where the denomination headquarters was located and shared the thirty-eight acres of land owned by the denomination. The camp has grown and today it serves several hundred young people every summer. Additional acreage has been acquired so that today the total acreage at the site is approximately eighty. It has a beautiful western town setting with modern facilities used throughout the year as a retreat center.

This denomination began to merchandise Sunday school literature, from its headquarters along with other Christian books, Bibles and materials in January, 1963, under the operational name of Blessings Bookstore. Rev. R. M. Stewart was the first manager of the store. Rev. Don Sauls followed him in 1971. Rev. Curtiss Tatum became the manager in 1975 and continues as manager today. The store continued to operate from the headquarters after the new headquarters was built in 1973. In September 1981, it was moved into the Wayne Avenue Shopping Center in the town of Dunn where it is today.

The building originally used for the headquarters has in it a small auditorium. As the attendance for various meetings increased, it very quickly became too small to hold the crowds attending the General Conferences and Campmeetings. A large metal building was built on the headquarters' property that would be adequate for this need. This building, with a seating capacity of approximately 1,200, was finished in time for the 1964 conference and campmeeting. Dr. C. M. Ward was the invited quest speaker for the first meeting in the new tabernacle. He was the nationally syndicated radio speaker for the Assemblies of God "Revival time" Program.

The tabernacle at first was an open-air shelter. A couple of years later, metal walls were added but left unfinished on the inside. In 1985, large entrance foyer and restroom facilities were added. On the following year, the interior was completed. It serves today as both a general assembly facility and a recreational facility for the college and camp.

In 1971, the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church established a college in Dunn, N.C. under the operational name of Heritage Bible College. The founder and first president of Heritage was Rev. O. T. Spence. In 1974, Rev. Ned Sauls became president and served until 1984. The current President, Rev. William Ellis followed him. Heritage Bible College, Inc. is a four-year Bible College, owned and operated, by the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. The college occupies the building that was formerly used as the orphanage and later the headquarters near Dunn.

It has since added a modern dormitory and remodeled some of the other buildings creating a comfortable study place. A student life center was completed in 1995, and currently a beautiful library building serves as administrative offices, a computerized learning resource center, and library.

Upon the opening of Heritage, it became necessary to build a headquarters building. Six acres of land were purchased approximately one mile north of the college campus for that purpose. The land faces the Interstate 95, thus providing excellent visibility for the organization. The office building is modern and well-equipped. It serves as the International Headquarters of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc.

Departments have been developed and new ones added as the work has grown. The General Superintendents Department is responsible for the Regional Directors. The Christian Education Department includes Crusaders for Christ, Sunday School, Ladies Auxiliary, Girls Auxiliary and Royal Rangers. The World Witness Department includes foreign missions, home missions, and evangelism. The General Services Department includes office management, accounting, information management, purchasing and maintenance, publications, and Blessings Bookstore.

The church continues to publish The Messenger, a sixteen-page monthly magazine that has been in continuous existence since the late 1800's. The Cape Fear Conference began to publish The Free Will Baptist Herald. The name was later changed to The Free Will Baptist Messenger with the sub-title "An Advocate of Bible Holiness." After the 1959 merger, the word Pentecostal was added to the name, causing it to be consistent with the name of the new denomination. It is today widely received as The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Messenger.

The church has, for many years, been concerned with reaching out to Hispanics. That concern began to receive focus and direction during 1995. In October of that year the World Witness Board held a meeting in which a "Field Coordinator for U.S. Hispanic Ministries" was employed for the first time. The Board also approved a budget for one year and authorized the Field Coordinator to begin on January 1, 1996. The person hired as the first Field Coordinator was the Reverend Juan Velazquez who has been a Pentecostal Free Will Baptist ordained minister since 1979.

In the last months of Rev. Don Saul's leadership as General Superintendent, he led the board of directors in self-study with professional consultant assistance. In the first meeting the consultant raised the question: "Should we continue to exist as a separate organization. If not, why not, and if we should, then what course of action should we take to make the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church a better organization?" The discussion of that question led to the conclusion that we have a distinctive role to play in the Kingdom of God, and we should apply our best intelligence to the task of finding a way to perform the mission we are called to.

Five task groups were selected to lead in a study of five areas of concern. They were (1) organizational structure, (2) Service to Ministers, (3) Service to Churches, (4) Size and Growth of the churches, (5) and Partnering with other denominations. In order to get input from the grass roots, all ministers were given an opportunity to choose a task force they would like to meet with to assist in a plan of action. The results of the study done by each task group were thoroughly debated by the General Board of Directors. A resolution committee put the final results in resolution form. Then all ministers and delegates designated to serve each local church in the soon-to-be held General Conference were invited to a public meeting by district for a complete briefing followed by questions and answers.

The Board of Directors decided to present to the General Conference only the work of the task group on organization structure. The program task group conclusions were left to be instituted by the administration that would be in place following the General Conference of 1996. The organizational structure changes were as follows: (1) separation of offices, (2) procurement of staff, (3) defined leadership, (4) defined corporate offices, (5) establishing of the general superintendent's advisory council, and (6) make-up of the General Board of Directors. The separation of offices resulted in removing all elected corporate officials from voting privileges on the General Board, a policy making group. Another result of organizational change was to allow the General Superintendent to hire the departmental leaders instead of using the election process. The advisory council was created to take the function of the former General Executive Committee. The Superintendent was granted the privilege to select regional directors.

General Superintendent Sauls felt that the process would not be considered an objective one if he remained in office. Feeling that the general membership might see it as self-serving, he graciously resigned his office at the beginning of the process, but continued to chair the board through the next General Conference. The board of directors nominated Rev. Preston Heath, a minister of thirty years in the fellowship, to be their candidate to place before the delegates. He was elected and officially took office at the benediction of the 1996 General Conference. Superintendent Heath immediately restructured the church in accordance with the approved plan adopted by the Conference. He selected his co-workers for the various departments and regions and proceeded to guide the church toward a bright future. He has served for three and a half years to date. He is well accepted, and there is great optimism for the church and its mission to the world in the years ahead.

The mission statements that we adopted for the denomination and for the local churches are as follows:

## **PENTECOSTAL FREE WILL BAPTIST STATEMENT OF MISSION**

The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church is a Christian fellowship committed to building biblically functioning communities through worship, instruction, fellowship and expression. (Adopted by the General Conference August 14, 1996.)

### **MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE PENTECOSTAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH**

The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Headquarters exists to serve the fellowship in fulfilling its mission in a spirit of cooperation. This mission is to be accomplished through the following specific objectives:

- To provide an organization by which churches and ministers may be duly affiliated and certified, and to provide ministry and services to those ministers, churches, and other entities of the Fellowship.
- To promote world evangelization through involvement in both home and foreign missions.
- To provide for the educational needs of our fellowship in a manner that strongly emphasizes our Pentecostal Free Will Baptist fundamental truths.
- To provide Pentecostal curricular materials, literature, periodicals and publications that may be a service to our Fellowship and the Kingdom of God, using all available mediums.
- To provide for cooperation and fellowship with other organizations outside our Fellowship who are furthering the Kingdom of God.
- To provide a model of servant leadership that exceeds the expectations of our Fellowship and fellow team members. (Adopted by the General Conference August 14, 1996.)

Our ministers are respected in the areas in which they serve because they live honorably before God and men. Never has there been a time when the ministers and churches of this denomination had more with which to work than today. God has been faithful to us. We believe the brightest days for this church are ahead.

This is His church! We now have a mutually agreed on statement of mission. We know why we exist, why we are on earth and not in Heaven. We have presented that mission in two parts, first, the mission of the Denomination, and, second, the mission of the local member bodies. It exists to point men to the King of Kings who is the Savior of the world. This church exists to make

disciples of men so that they can go and make disciples of others. Our purpose is that all men may be redeemed and come to praise Him. That is our challenge!

We call upon every member of this denomination to unite as never before and to live, labor, and worship daily in a way that will praise Him. Our opportunity is now; God is moving in a wonderful way in this generation. Let us not miss the opportunity. We have a wonderful history; we can have an even more wonderful future.

God created man for His pleasure. He chose to create us as beings of worship and praise to His glory. Worship is the privilege of God's children. Praise brings God near, and it forms an atmosphere for personal interaction with God.

Let us join together as His people to praise Him for who He is. Let us join together to praise Him for what He has done through our rich and wonderful history. Let us join together to praise Him for what He is going to do as we walk with Him and trust Him for daily guidance. Let us praise Him for His sovereignty. Let's praise Him for His faithfulness. Let us praise Him for His benefits. "Let the people praise thee, O God: let all the people praise thee" Ps. 67:3.

The leadership of this church acknowledges a great debt to those that have lived and served before us. Many have served God and this church with distinction and today are with the Lord. The progress of this church has to a large extent been because of the sacrifice of these people, some living and some dead. To all that God has used, we acknowledge a great debt of gratitude. Life for us is more pleasant and our work much easier because of those pioneers. We have a heritage of which we can be justly proud.

We especially acknowledge with grateful appreciation the contribution of Rev. Herbert Carter. Rev. Carter was a key person in bringing the amalgamation to pass in 1959. He provided effective leadership to the merged church as General Superintendent for its first twenty-five years. In 1984, when his term expired, he chose to dedicate himself to the world mission phase of the denomination's work.

## **IMPORTANT PENTECOSTAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH DATES**

- 1720 The ministry of Paul Palmer and Benjamin Randall began.
- 1779 The First Free Will Baptist Church was established.
- 1855 The Cape Fear Conference was established.
- 1908 The Wilmington Conference was established; this Conference became Pentecostal.
- 1911 The Cape Fear Conference split with other Free Will Baptist; the New River Conference was formed.
- 1948 The joint youth camp at Watha was formed among the conferences.
- 1959 The Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church, Inc. was formed by amalgamation of the three conferences; Dr. Herbert Carter was elected as the first General Superintendent.
- 1960 Rev. & Mrs. Winfield Kelly were the first PFWB Church foreign Missionaries commissioned.
- 1961 The Orphanage formerly operated by three conferences was closed and the church general office was moved from rented facilities in Clinton to Dunn to use the old orphanage property.
- 1962 The Crusaders Youth Camp was moved to Dunn.
- 1963 The Blessings Bookstore was opened.
- 1970 The Mutual Benevolent Fund was established.
- 1971 The Heritage Bible College was opened.
- 1984 Dr. Don Sauls was elected as the second General Superintendent.
- 1992 The Cape Fear Christian Academy was purchased.
- 1996 Dr. Preston Heath was elected as the third General Superintendent. The General Conference adopted an extensive reorganization plan. The Benevolent Fund ceased operations.
- 2000 The Cape Fear Christian Academy was sold.
- 2003 A Conference Planned Giving Program was established.