

**Faith Journey, Christian Experience, and Call to the Ministry**

I was born in Akron, Ohio where my spiritual development began when I was about five years old after the upheaval of my mom and dad's divorce. My mom brought my brother, sister, and I back to Akron following our approximately three-year stint in my dad's homeland of Lagos, Nigeria. Shortly after, I came to know Jesus as my personal Savior through the teaching and preaching emphasized in this truth: "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Based on my confession of faith in Jesus Christ, I was baptized by Rev. John Milton Burrell at Prince of Peace Baptist Church. The Holy Spirit had much to teach me about Christ's Lordship as I came to know Jesus more and more throughout my life.

By God's kindness, my mom made sure I was part of a church for most of my upbringing. She told me that one day when she was on a plane, she experienced so much turbulence that she thought she could die. Mom prayed to God that if she survived, she would make sure her children were raised in the church. God brought her safely home, and she fulfilled her part of the bargain. Consequently, I have many good memories of being brought up in our church, singing in the children's choir, and participating in Sunday School with my siblings, cousins, with my Uncle Hugh leading as the Superintendent. God had intervened early in my life to help me grasp hold of His great love for me in Jesus Christ. This led me to trust him by God's Spirit working in me. Initially, I did not know the full implications of this free gift of salvation, but God had stepped into my life and changed me. Having Christ in my life shaped my values and impacted many of my actions for the better.

I was overall an easygoing, studious child, who enjoyed playing outside with my sister and cousins. With my mom working a great deal, I still felt well-adjusted and enjoyed spending

time with other family members and being part of the church. I grew up appreciating my grandmother's loving presence, her generosity, and hearing her break out into joyful hymns. My understanding of Christ's work in my life continued to grow as God sovereignly used setbacks and comebacks along the way to help me know more of his transforming love.

During my junior year of high school, I went my own way instead of God's way and needed to go back home, physically and spiritually. Yet, just as Jesus relayed in his wonderful parable in Luke 15, when I came to my senses and decided to return, the heavenly Father lavishly welcomed me back home, and so did my family. By God's graciousness and the help of my family, I had a smooth transition when I came back to school and to work, pregnant, with the resolve to do my best. Shortly thereafter, I became a single mother of a beautiful son, Daivon. Though I was not proud of my actions, I had repented and felt no shame, for God took away the shame when I came back to him. I knew that my wonderful heavenly Father forgave my sin because of the blood Jesus willingly shed on the cross for me. This lesson I learned while still a teenager helped me to value God's love and mercy, and not to take God lightly. However, it took a while longer for me to learn how much I had been restored.

While balancing raising a child, working, and finishing high school with the help of my family, I kept my grades high and applied to college. God's loving hand remained on me as I received honors and numerous scholarships and enrolled in Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH. Thankfully, I received significant help raising Daivon from my grandmother, mom, and stepdad, who assisted me full time during the weekdays when school was in session as I studied and worked on campus to provide for my son.

On the weekends when I returned home from college, I began going deeper in my relationship with God through topical studies in our young adult Sunday School classes on God

48 as Lord and on biblical methods for managing money. I discovered verses that helped me to  
49 increasingly know and cherish God. These experiences gave me a newfound spark for the depth  
50 and breadth of God's Word and its practicality for my life. My deeper knowledge of God and his  
51 grace helped me to more fully express my faith through a re-commitment to personal choices  
52 that stood apart from my previous friends at home, which included my pledge to live abstinely.  
53 The Holy Spirit showed me it was not too late. This discovery led me to a greater appreciation  
54 for God's complete restoration. Not only was I forgiven, but God saw me with the righteousness  
55 of Jesus Christ, and God also empowered me to live out this righteousness by my actions.

56         During my last semester of college, I had my first long distance phone conversation with  
57 my future husband, Charles, who was in Chicago. We were introduced to one another through  
58 mutual friends. Initially, I was leery about engaging in a committed relationship, based upon my  
59 desire to avoid distractions at the time. I was on target to finish college a semester early so I  
60 could return to raising my son full time. As I got to know Charles more, we laughed together and  
61 conversed at length about our backgrounds, our families, character, schooling, jobs, and our  
62 faith. As we continued talking, I made sure to bring up my commitment to living out this walk  
63 in God's way with abstinence until marriage, and Charles agreed. In this and every way, Charles  
64 showed he was supportive of the people and things I cared about, including lovingly accepting  
65 my son. Instead of being a distraction, Charles became my confidant. A couple of months later,  
66 Charles relocated to Wilmington, NC for a new employment opportunity. The next year, I  
67 jumped at the opportunity to move to a warmer climate near someone I knew- so my son and I  
68 moved near Charles in Wilmington. While there, we enjoyed many days together bonding while  
69 walking and playing in that beach town and attending worship services and Bible studies  
70 together. I also volunteered in my son's school, worked hard and applied to medical school. The

71 following year, Charles and I were engaged. After our engagement, the pastor who conducted  
72 our premarital counseling asked us if we believed God brought us together. Then and now, we  
73 know the answer is a resounding yes.

74 After I married my husband Charles in 1998, our family grew to include two lovely  
75 daughters, Azana and Niara. Prior to my last child's birth, I had been significantly focused on my  
76 rigorous studies in medical school while trying to balance a family. As I was taking a family  
77 leave to focus more on my family, the flame that was lit in my heart for God as a youth, grew  
78 brighter. We were discipled through the preached and taught word, through large and small  
79 discipleship groups, through the example of fellow believers in Christ, as well as by prayerfully  
80 reading through the Bible. I saw the more expansive truths of God's Word and applied them  
81 more fully to my life by God's Spirit working in me. I could see Christ's resurrection power  
82 again at work in my life. It was a tremendous blessing! I have never been the same.

83 Through an *Experiencing God* study, which our church had been using for Bible study, I  
84 gained a new perspective on serving the church.<sup>1</sup> As my husband and I engaged in the study, the  
85 curriculum allowed me to embrace a proactive way to approach areas of need in the church.  
86 Within this study, Blackaby and King suggested that if I see an area of need, prayerfully consider  
87 that God may be leading me to help meet that need. Since then, the Lord has continued to show  
88 me areas of need in the church. Wherever we have lived, to the present, I have continued serving  
89 the church and beyond. This includes implementing a hands-on Bible curriculum for our  
90 church's children's nursery, helping at risk children improve their reading and writing skills, and  
91 working to bring more unity and cultural awareness by serving on multicultural committees  
92 within our daughters' school.

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<sup>1</sup> Blackaby, Henry T., and Claude V. King. *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God, Workbook Edition*. Nashville, TN: Lifeway Christian Resources, 1990.

After the recession of 2001, we moved to Massachusetts and were led to Union Baptist Church, in Cambridge. As I continued to serve the church and reflect on the expansive truths of God's Word, I was able to see them evidenced in my life more fully by God's power. Over the last decade and beyond, the Holy Spirit has increasingly been growing me in my knowledge of Christ through prayer, hardships, study of his Word, theology, and the practical ministries of serving the community and the church. My ministries while at Union Baptist included serving our church youth as a youth leader at Oceanwood, teaching children's and adult Sunday School, teaching Vacation Bible School, helping lead the youth with my husband who was the Youth Pastor, as well as serving the church as a Deaconess and as an ordained Deacon. The Lord placed a burden on my heart to expand my discipleship of others. This led me to begin engaging in consistent weekly disciple-making, outside my official ministry roles.

Following a recent completion of a discipleship study on the books of Timothy, in which we looked at the historical cultural contexts of Paul's messages regarding women, I had a surprising experience. One day, when I was visiting another church, hearing the Word preached, I felt the Lord was calling me to preach the gospel. I called my husband to share the message with him and he showed his support. God was calling me to the pastoral ministry. I waited to see God's timing.

Shortly afterward, when my husband was called to pastor Baptist Church of All Nations in Taunton, the time was right for me to enroll in Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. My ministry continued to expand as I walked into my call to the pastoral ministry, working with my husband and our church as an Associate Minister. Since then, I continued visiting the sick and shut in and began providing pastoral counseling. In addition, I preached and helped lead worship services within our church and other churches when called upon. I helped make increasingly

comprehensive discipleship plans for our church, starting at the pre-membership stage. I also taught classes for our church and facilitated workshops and taught courses for the broader Baptist community. Likewise, I attended preaching, family and community engagement conferences on behalf of our church.

While I help others, I desire to know God in Christ more. I want to show my love for Jesus by obeying him. God is faithfully forming me spiritually through prayer, devotional reading and studying his Word, through fellowship with the local church and beyond, as well as other personal and educational activities in seminary. Many of these endeavors have helped me serve the Lord's people more effectively. In turn, I have been equipping my sisters and brothers in Christ for ministry, so we all can mature as we become more like Christ. I treasure lifelong learning as a tool God uses to help me and the rest of his people grow. By Christ's authority, I passionately desire to help fulfill his great commission of making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in his triune name, teaching them to obey all he commanded us. I thank God that he chose me, and I am truly humbled as I think about him calling me to pastoral ministry to serve his precious people for Christ's glory. Through the Holy Spirit leading, by God's grace, I hope to accomplish all that I am placed on this earth to do. One day God will make all things new, and with my siblings in Christ, I will see him face to face and enjoy God's radiant presence forever.

### God

"Awesome God!" This is my granddaughter's favorite song. When she was about three years old, she wanted to listen to it repeatedly and raised her hands in worship when the choir sang this song. It summarizes what I think about God - our God is awesome! No one else is like God, so we tell of his awesome works to the generations after us. God is before all, creator of all,

over all, and in all, and he endures forever more. God is perfect and needs nothing but finds joy in his people. God is one in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is holy and worthy of our humble worship. God's ways are higher than ours. God's manifold wisdom is beyond our understanding. Yet, he chose to show himself to us through his Word, coming here in the flesh as Jesus Christ, keeping his covenant promise to his people. God is righteous and loving. I am so glad to know how much God loves me, for he sent his only begotten Son here to willingly die for my sins and rose him up again to grant me eternal life. God is faithful beyond our imagination. God is good all the time, the epitome and example of justice, mercy, and grace. God is our glorious Lord of all who shows no favoritism. God is all powerful, no thing and no one is not under his authority, nor escapes his notice. I thank God for being a gracious God, who provides for me, reveals himself to me, and helps us me to see his wonderful light in the midst of the darkness of this world. God is always working, and he allows us to participate in his amazing work of bringing others into his family and helping others grow in Christlikeness, sharing his magnificent light in the world. Thank God!

### *Jesus Christ*

Other songs wonderfully express my feelings about my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, "It's good to know, Jesus!" and .... "I really love the Lord. You don't know what he's done for me, he gave me the victory, I love him, I love him, I really love the Lord!"

I believe Christ, the Messiah, is the Eternal Son and Eternal Word. Christ is the second, equal, yet distinct person of the one Triune God. Christ the Lord humbly came down and wrapped himself in human flesh as Jesus of Nazareth who is Immanuel - God with us. Jesus Christ knowingly and willingly received our holy God's righteous wrath on

humankind's behalf due to sin. As simultaneously God, the Lord Jesus showed God's unsurpassed and unparalleled love by coming down himself to make the perfect sacrifice for sin. By dying on the cross, he brought humanity back into a harmonious relationship with God. Three days later, Jesus physically rose from the dead with all power and He lives forever to make intercession for us.

Jesus being fully God and fully man from conception is a great paradox. For instance, he revealed his human side by growing in knowledge and wisdom, sleeping, weeping, getting hungry, suffering, bleeding and dying. The Lord Jesus claimed his divinity by saying "Before Abraham was born, I am" and he said, "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 8:58; Jn. 10:30, NIV). Jesus showed his divinity by performing miracles only God could do, revealing his power over life and death, his power over all kinds of human maladies, and his divine power over nature. Jesus Christ taught with God's authority and gave authority and power to his disciples to preach and to heal.

Jesus revealed the Father to us, bringing his people forgiveness and into right relationship with God as well as giving us the Holy Spirit. As God, Jesus knew he would die on behalf of the world, and he was able to make plain the intentions of God that he would suffer and die for us and rise again three days later. I believe Jesus had to be God to receive worship, and for all his claims to be true that he was one with the Father and existed as God before Abraham.

At the same time, it was necessary that Jesus also be man. Only man can die, God cannot. Men were high priests, who continually made sacrifices to God on behalf of the people and themselves. Jesus Christ, who never sinned is the Great High Priest whose one sacrifice is effective forever. Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses, so I know he



understands me. Those who repent and believe in Jesus are freed from captivity to the effects and consequences of sin and receive righteousness through Christ.

The functions and stages of Christ's Work reveal more of him. Jesus not only fulfilled the law, but he was the fulfillment of numerous functions people held in the Old Testament. In Jesus' revelatory role as prophet, He is greater than Moses. As ruler and king, Jesus exceeds David. Additionally, the stages of Christ's work include his humiliation, which encompasses his incarnation and death, and by dying on the cross Jesus made the devil powerless, who had power over death. Jesus obeyed the law for us and died as my substitute and I look forward to Jesus coming back again.

### *Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit is the precious gift of God's presence to his children. Through the Holy Spirit, I experience all the persons of the Triune God and live out the goodness of God. All of God's attributes abide in the Holy Spirit, who is God. The Holy Spirit manifested as a dove that rested on Jesus when he was baptized, and as fire when the hundred and twenty were in the upper room. When believers first trust in the Lord Jesus Christ they are saved and at that point the Holy Spirit indwells in them. The Spirit gives life to those who were dead in their trespasses. By coming to live in and with the Lord's people permanently, the Holy Spirit simultaneously seals them. The seal of the Holy Spirit preserves believers from having their faith destroyed and gives me a delightful assurance of my salvation with the hope of eternal glory in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit mysteriously prompts believers and I know the Holy Spirit helps me. The Spirit enables us to comfort one another and comforts us through inspiring our hearts directly, by prayer and the Word of God, bringing us peace. The Spirit of God empowers me to abound in

hope and strengthens me to be a witness for Jesus Christ. Unlike the world, as affirmed in 2 Timothy 1:7, we do not have a Spirit of fear, but God’s Spirit gives us power, love, and self-discipline.

The Holy Spirit transforms us to believe in the truth and strive toward holy living, allowing us to be agents of reconciliation, justice, and mercy. The Holy Spirit continues to minister within us by interceding for us and bestowing spiritual gifts for the church.

The Holy Spirit helps me to know that Jesus is Lord and produces fruit in my life, reminding me of Christ’s teachings, illuminating me by giving me understanding of Scripture, wisdom when I’m perplexed, and teaching me all things. The Holy Spirit produces fruit in believers, counsels me, directs me when I have difficulties, teaches me how to pray according to the will of God.

The Holy Spirit is a necessary prayer partner. Christ’s Spirit intercedes for us when we do not know what to pray, working in and through us to teach us what to say and how to ask. These prayers from the Spirit succeed because the Holy Spirit is one with the Father, who knows and approves the prayer, according to his eternal purposes.

### **Humanity**

In the beginning, God created man and woman and they were very good. God created man and woman in his image, to give him glory. God created them equal, with different roles, which reflects the unity of the Trinity. Humans are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” .... “a little lower than the angels” (Ps. 139:14; Ps. 8:5, NIV). The human soul connects the heart (will), mind (thoughts), and body (flesh) in the presence of God.

Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent and voluntarily disobeyed God, which brought sin into the world. After sin entered the world, it clenched human beings in its clutches. Due to the fall, all are sinners with a self-centered propensity toward sin. Our sin deserves God's wrath. All people who are of age experience the existential questions or tensions that come with consideration of our finiteness and death apart from Christ, causing anxiety, depression, and other disorders which mark the lives of human beings.

### Salvation

Sin separates humanity from our righteous, loving creator, God. All humanity has a sinful nature that desires to be gratified. Sin's penalty is death. God is and has the solution to all these distortions and has begun restoring humanity through Jesus Christ. God chose to pay the price for our sin by coming to earth himself as a man on a mission to lay down his life for sinners. Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth to perfectly reveal God's great love and justice in saving those who trust in him. He also initiated God's restoration of all things. Jesus never sinned, but he willingly suffered crucifixion, being nailed to a rugged cross on Calvary. He shed his blood to pay the penalty for our sins so that we could receive forgiveness. He died so that we might be saved. Jesus Christ was buried, and three days later God raised him from the grave with all authority in his hands. The sins of those who trust in Jesus Christ as Lord were ascribed to him on the cross, for Christ carried our sins, and Jesus' righteousness is attributed to us. Christ, through his death on the cross on behalf of sinners, gives believers eternal life, frees us from sin's bondage, guilt and penalty, and makes us right in the sight of God. Salvation comes

258 through Jesus Christ alone to individuals who repent, confess Jesus Christ as Lord, and  
259 believe that He rose from the dead, thus receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

260         As a person grows in faith, he or she moves towards being a fully devoted  
261 follower of Jesus Christ, offering themselves in submission to Christ's rule over their  
262 lives in a lifelong journey of commitment and obedience to Jesus. By trusting in Jesus  
263 Christ, we can draw near to our holy, majestic God in prayer through Christ our High  
264 Priest and mediator. I have a personal relationship with God as his child, receiving access  
265 to God by the blood of Jesus. We receive God's grace to help us live out his  
266 righteousness as we press to know Jesus Christ more and become more like him  
267 throughout our days in our attitudes and by our good works in our daily lives. We  
268 continue to press forward, pursuing obedience to God personally and as active members  
269 of the church, to show more of Christ to others. Since I have surrendered to Jesus Christ  
270 in obedient faith, though I will suffer in this world, I believe I will never completely fall  
271 away from Christ and never fall out of his kingdom— for Jesus Christ governs and  
272 protects me as I remain in him.

273         One day, Jesus Christ will return and restore all of creation. This includes  
274 restoring the earth, restoring humans' bodies by giving his followers incorruptible  
275 glorified bodies, and completely restoring our relationships with God and others as we  
276 live eternally in God's presence. Jesus Christ will vindicate the righteous and bring  
277 judgment on the wicked. Until then, believers are to continue to live for God's glory,  
278 manifesting God's glorious excellence in our lives as we depend on Jesus Christ. We  
279 grow in obedient love for God and Christ-like love for others through the Holy Spirit

working in our lives by God’s grace. Those who believe in Jesus Christ can worship God forever, giving honor and glory to him who laid down his life for us. We continue to give sacrifices of praise, giving thanks to our merciful, gracious, loving God who saves us by our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

### *Scripture*

Increasingly, I came to know the living Word of God, Jesus, through the preached, taught, and written word found in the Scriptures. The Holy Bible is the inspired written word of God through people moved by the Holy Spirit. God’s authoritative word is inerrant. I agree with Kevin Vanhoozer’s definition of inerrancy, because I have faith that Scripture is wholly true in all things the authors affirm when interpreted rightly by readers with a right heart and mind—those who are reading with faith, humility, and general literary competence.<sup>2</sup> Scriptures reveal God and his love to his people and draws us closer in our relationship with the living God, bringing about salvation, and enabling us to do good work. Jesus’ imperishable word is truth which sanctifies me, making me grow up in my salvation as I feed on his good word by meditating on it and living it out in obedience, becoming more like him. The word of God actively works in my heart to transform me by renewing my mind, convicting me of sin, and prompting me to love God and love others.

### *The Church*

Jesus built the church with those who believe He is the Christ. The church is both the church universal, consisting of all believers in Jesus Christ, and the local church. The local

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<sup>2</sup> “Well-Versed Inerrancy: Literary Meaning, Literal Truth, and Literate Interpretation in the Economy of Biblical Discourse,” Henry Center for Theological Understanding, April 12, 2013, [https://henrycenter.tiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/2013April\\_Vanhoozer-inerrancy.pdf](https://henrycenter.tiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/2013April_Vanhoozer-inerrancy.pdf).

church is the body of believers who gather on Sunday mornings and other times to worship the Lord God and build up one another in Christ through the exercising of our gifts in love, until we all reach maturity in Christlikeness as witnesses to the world. Through prayer, fellowship, service, preaching, teaching, and study of the Word, the body of Christ grows in its loving relationship with Christ and builds Christ-centered community with others. The believers' conduct is to shine as lights in the world together in unity through virtuous living with humble service as we continually strive toward the goal of knowing Christ more until we see him when He returns. We live out and proclaim the gospel to others and grow in Christ personally and as active members of the body of Christ, the church. We engage in missions by giving and sending out others in partnership for the gospel of Christ. Thereby our churches have local, national, and international impact by meeting others' needs and bringing people to faith in Christ, providing a contrast to others who are in opposition. Through our unified partnership in Christ we reveal and express the nature and character of Jesus Christ to society and the world. The local church can work with associations, other Christian churches, as well as inter-religious and non-profit organizations. Through our relationships and work together we can serve one another in the community by prayer, advocacy, seeking justice for the poor and oppressed, and helping deliver others out of the spiritual, physical, emotional, and economic oppressions they face. All of this is by the grace of God working in and among us through Christ, to make us "willing and able to obey his own purpose (Phil. 2:13, GNT)."

#### ***Ordinances:***

##### **Baptism**

Believers' baptism by immersion is an important visual demonstration of our faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus, though sinless, chose to be baptized in this manner by John to fulfill all righteousness. In so doing, Jesus identified with the sins of others which he carried on the cross

and he showed and symbolized the path we should follow. John baptized with water, yet he said the One coming after him would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to those who turn to him in repentant faith. The apostle Paul described baptism as a symbol of the believers joining in Jesus' death to sin and rising to life in Jesus Christ, so we no longer are ruled by sin's power.

When the Holy Spirit brings someone to faith as a disciple of Jesus Christ, the church corporately celebrates the work God has already begun in the believer. The disciple publicly confesses Jesus Christ as Lord in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and is immersed in water. We are excited to see the Lord's work continue in believers as they develop in their faith journey in Christ Jesus as partnering members of the church. They are transplanted into the body of Christ and they continue growing through spiritual disciplines, fellowship, and discipleship in obedience to Christ.

As disciples identify with Jesus Christ and his church through baptism, they also experience joy and suffering. This occurs through dismissal, rejection, and/or persecution by family, friends, co-workers, or others. When disciples remain faithful to Christ, they cling to Jesus knowing he has not promised freedom from trials, but contrastingly said tribulation would indeed come, but he has overcome the world. We too overcome the world by our faith in Christ and we are blessed.

***Ordinances Continued:***

***The Lord's Supper (Communion)***

Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is another important ordinance which allows us to visually remember the blessed Lord Jesus Christ in a special way. The bread represents Jesus' body that was broken on our behalf, and the cup signifies Jesus' blood shed for our sins on the

cross. Jesus used the bread and wine as familiar parts of the Passover ceremony celebrated by the Jews in memory of God's delivering their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. On the night before Jesus died, he broke the bread and drank the cup, saying "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19, NRSV). Jesus indicated that unless symbolically we eat his body and drink his blood, we have no part in him. Through the cup, we participate in the blood of Christ, signifying the forgiveness we receive through his atoning sacrifice. Through the bread we participate in the body of Christ, showing our commitment to allow Christ to live in us and our commitment to live in him, allowing us to increasingly walk as He walked. Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy that he would be bruised, wounded, and afflicted for our transgressions and he received the punishment that brought us peace. As we partake in Communion, we understand that Christ put away our sin through his sacrifice. Therefore, the church continues to remember the Lord Jesus' awesome sacrifice on Calvary in this visible manner on an ongoing basis.

Scripture encourages us not to take this ordinance in a way that dishonors Christ but consider ourselves and others in the Lord's body while we partake in the Lord's Supper. When we eat the various forms of bread and drink today, such as wafers and juice, we wait for each other and show care for one another as we remember Christ. It is an opportunity for self-examination and to commit oneself to do our part to make any amends necessary with our brothers and sisters in Christ. For the dividing wall of hostility has already been torn down by the blood of Jesus, and we are members of God's household. Christ wants his church to be unified, representing him as citizens of heaven and his ambassadors to the world. Thus, at Baptist Church of All Nations, we read the Church Covenant prior to participating in this ordinance to affirm our unity in faith and we recommit to walking together in love and Christ centered community, as we strive to live out our faith as one body in Christ.



**Attitude toward the American Baptist Churches, USA**

I am thankful to be a part of the American Baptist Churches, USA (ABCUSA) denomination and I am committed to its mission. I will faithfully support the ABCUSA's mission of being biblically grounded, Christ-centered, with ethnically diverse people who are called to radical personal discipleship in Jesus Christ. In partnership with ABCUSA, I will be committed to nurturing devoted disciples of Jesus Christ who help to fulfill the Great Commission of going into the world, making disciples of all nations, striving to teach them to obey all that Jesus commanded the body of Christ.

I believe the following about our Baptist churches: In relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, each individual and local church is free to study and obey the word of God. All people have the right and responsibility to come to God without compulsion or the interference of clergy or the government. Each local church is free, under the Lordship of Christ, to choose their style of worship, to determine their membership, to select lay leadership, to select and ordain ministerial leadership, to serve in the kingdom of God, and to participate in unity within the larger body of Christ. Individuals are entitled to have freedom to exercise their religious beliefs in public as well as in private, without persecution or harassment from the government.

**Code of Ethics**

I have read, understood, signed, and accepted the Covenant and Code of Ethics of the Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches (ABC) in the U.S.A. I agree to faithfully support its purposes and ideals.