

Preface

History and Founding Principles

On May 25-26, 1990, seven missionaries met in Elyria, Ohio, to seek God's will concerning the development of a new Home Mission Agency. As a result of this time of earnest prayer and discussion, certain founding principles were adopted to guide the development of the new Mission Agency. It is the prayerful hope of these missionaries that the future policies and activities of the Mission Agency will always reflect the following principles:

1. That the Mission Agency should have a representative form of government having a Council elected by the independent Baptist churches (both established and mission) who support the general fund and/or a missionary of the Mission Agency; that such Council never becomes self-perpetuating.
2. That the Council include pastors/laymen (60%) who are members of independent Baptist churches affiliated with the G.A.R.B.C., and missionaries (40%) who are elected by their peers at Baptist Church Planters' Field Councils.
3. That the Council refrain from forming an "executive" body within the Council and that it conduct business in sessions open to all the members of the Council, Administration and other properly seated representatives; that no "executive" or "closed" sessions be held.
4. That issues of vital importance affecting the entire family be presented to the Mission Agency family before a change in policy is finalized.
5. That the Articles of Faith remain unchanged.

(These principles have been upgraded by the Constitution.)

Constitution of
BAPTIST CHURCH PLANTERS OF NORTH AMERICA

PURPOSE

Whereas there are many places in North America where the Gospel is not preached in its simplicity and power,

And whereas there are many cities, suburbs and other areas where Baptist churches do not exist,

And whereas the work of church planting requires leadership, coordination and guidance,

Be it therefore resolved that Baptist Church Planters of North America be established to assist churches and missionaries to plant Baptist churches in North America and to provide specialized or supplemental ministries essential to church planting growth and development.

Be it also resolved that Baptist Church Planters seeks to recruit men and women who are called of God and committed to the ministry of church planting in North America and assist them to the fullest extent of our ability in raising support, in determining God's place and type of ministry, and carrying out the ministry of church planting.

Article I - NAME

The name of this mission agency is "Baptist Church Planters of North America," hereinafter referred to as the "Mission Agency."

Article II - CHARACTER

This Mission Agency is incorporated as a not-for-profit ecclesiastical corporation under the laws of the State of Ohio. Its tax exempt status has been confirmed by the I.R.S. under Section 501, c, 3 of the internal revenue tax law.

Article III - ARTICLES OF FAITH

The Articles of Faith of this Mission Agency is the published doctrinal position of Baptist Church Planters and is included at the end of this document (See Appendix A).

Article IV - ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

This Mission Agency shall be governed by a Council of men consisting of pastors, missionaries, and laymen. The Council shall be assisted by an administration consisting of a President and such other personnel as may be needed. The Council shall prepare and approve the Policy Handbook of the Mission Agency, and, with the administration, guide the affairs of the Agency.

Section 1. The Council

A. Composition

1. The Council shall be composed of no fewer than twenty-one (21) men and not more than twenty-five (25) and shall consist of no fewer than nine (9) pastors and eight (8) active missionaries serving with BCP. Of the missionaries and pastors on the Council, a ratio shall be maintained of not less than 40% missionaries and not more than 60% pastors.

B. Qualifications

1. Members of the Council must be men, members in good standing of Baptist churches, in agreement with the Articles of Faith of Baptist Church Planters, and not affiliated with any apostate or liberal organization, or any Convention of churches. Each member must annually sign the Doctrinal Statement and agree with the purpose and mission of BCP. Each member should be committed to attending the two meetings held each year.

C. Election

1. Election of Pastors

- a. Pastors will be elected by Baptist churches (both established and Baptist Church Planters' Mission churches) which are in agreement with the Articles of Faith of Baptist Church Planters and which have an active financial interest in the support of the Baptist Church Planters' general fund and/or of a missionary approved by the Mission.
- b. Pastors nominated and elected must be a member of a Baptist church (which is in agreement with the Articles of Faith of Baptist Church Planters) and hold the position of pastor at the church at the time of nomination.
- c. Pastors elected must have the approval of their churches.

2. Election of Missionaries

- a. Missionaries will be elected by their fellow BCP missionaries.
- b. Missionaries elected to the Council must be full-time active missionaries serving as a lead or associate church planter.
- c. All active missionaries (not retired) may vote.

3. Election of Laymen

- a. Laymen are elected by the Council.
- b. Laymen are defined as men not serving in a pastoral capacity. The Council seeks to find men committed to home missions, the local church, and who will embrace the ministry of Baptist Church Planters.
- c. Names of laymen will be presented to the Election Committee from the missionaries, churches, administrators, and Council members.
- d. The Election Committee will contact the pastor of each layman before presentation to the Council.

4. Election Committee

The President and Chairman of the Council shall appoint annually an Election Committee of no fewer than three (3) Councilmen. This committee will tally the nominations of the churches and verify the qualifications and willingness of those nominated to serve. They will provide a slate of pastors to be elected by the churches, and missionaries to be elected by the missionaries, and present laymen to be appointed by the Council.

- D. Term and Vacancies. Council members shall be elected for a term of four (4) years, so arranged that no more than one-fourth (1/4) of the Council will be elected each year. Each term begins with the seating of the new Council at the end of the fall Council meeting. In the event of vacancies, the Council may continue to function, providing quorum requirements are met.
- E. Organization and Officers. The agenda for the Annual meeting will be so structured to allow for all regular business to be conducted and eventually the adjournment of the old Council toward the end of the meeting period. The new Council members will be officially seated, and the new Council officially called to order. The newly-organized Council shall elect from its members a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary to serve during the following year. The President and Chairman shall appoint such committees as may be necessary to fulfill the Council's objectives for the coming year. The President, three (3) Councilmen, and a designated Administrative Personnel shall be elected to serve as trustees for the coming year. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman shall chair any given meeting. Likewise, in the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, the Council shall appoint a temporary Chairman.
- F. Removal. A Councilman may be removed from the Council by a majority vote of those present and voting. The removal process as outlined in the Policy Handbook will be followed.
- G. Indemnification. Each Trustee and Officer of the Mission shall be indemnified against all expenses actually and necessarily incurred by such Trustee or Officer in Connection with the defense of any action, suit or proceeding to which he or she has been made a party by reason of being or having been such Trustee or Officer except in relation to matters as to which Trustee or Officer shall be adjudicated in such action, suit, or proceeding to be liable for gross negligence or willful misconduct in the performance of duty. In addition, employees and other Administrative Personnel shall be indemnified against all expenses actually and necessarily incurred in connection with the defense of any action, suit or proceedings to which he or she has been made a party by reason of actions performed in the normal scope of their employment.
- H. Meetings.
1. Established meetings. The Council shall meet at least twice a year.

2. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Chairman of the Council or President of the Mission Agency in consultation with each other or by a majority of the officers of the Council.

When necessary, matters may also be voted on by obtaining consent from Council members per the requirements of Article IV, Section 1, [H] [1]. Said consent may be proffered via original or faxed signature, email, or conference call affixed to the ballot.

3. All meetings of the Council shall be “open” and shall include the Administration and any other representative sent by supporting churches or Field Councils. Matters relating to discipline or salaries must be investigated first by the Administration and/or a committee of the Council appointed for that purpose who will present their recommendation to the entire Council. Exceptions to this rule may include the following considerations, providing the motion and vote to finalize the issue be taken during an open session:
 - a. Brief sessions may be requested by the President or Council when the need for confidentiality is obviously appropriate or when the topic has been stated and approved in the agenda. At such times the Council and President may meet to hear the matter.
 - b. The Council may deem it necessary to discuss discipline matters in private. At such times the Council and Administration may meet to hear the matter.
 - c. And, during times when the Council deems it necessary to discuss the Financial Committee’s report of salaries in private. At such times, only the Council shall hear the report.
 4. Council members or their churches are to underwrite their travel expenses to Council meetings. Missionaries should expect to assist their representative with travel expenses to the meetings.
- I. Quorums and Voting.
1. Fifty percent (50%) of the Council members shall constitute a quorum, and a majority vote of the Council present shall be required to pass matters of business except when amending the Constitution when a 2/3 majority vote shall be required to pass amendments.
 2. Baptist churches (both established and Baptist Church Planters’ Mission churches) which are in agreement with the Articles of Faith of Baptist Church Planters and have an active financial interest in the support of the Baptist Church Planters’ general fund and/or of a missionary approved by this Mission may send a messenger to the Annual Meeting of the Mission Agency. These messengers come in an advisory capacity and may speak to issues but do not have a vote.
 3. The Administration may also speak to all issues but may not vote.

Section 2. Administration and Other Personnel

The Council shall seek a President and approve such other personnel as are deemed necessary for the efficient operation of the Mission Agency.

- A. President. The Council shall search out, recommend and approve a spiritual, qualified, and experienced man to serve as President of the Mission Agency and present him to the Mission Agency family. During the search process, the Council should welcome the recommendations of supporting churches and missionaries. The President shall be the chief executive officer, a trustee of the corporation, and the primary liaison between the Administration, the Council and the missionaries.
- B. Personnel. All executive and administrative personnel for the service center shall be presented to the Council for approval. The executive personnel shall be the President and Vice Presidents. The administrative personnel shall be Directors, Regional Field Directors and Coordinators. They shall perform the day-to-day operations of the Mission Agency. Their duties are further described in the Policy Handbook.
- C. Office Staff. The office staff shall be procured by the Administration to fulfill the necessary responsibilities of the Mission Agency.
- D. Termination. Termination of the President or executive personnel shall be by resignation or request of the Council with a sixty (60) day notice, except in the case of disciplinary action, when immediate termination is deemed necessary. Termination of all other personnel shall be by resignation or request of the Council with a two-week notice (or by mutual agreement), except in the case of disciplinary action, when immediate termination is deemed necessary.

Article V – MISSIONARIES

Section 1. Candidates

- A. Qualifications. Candidates for missionary service with Baptist Church Planters must be ***born again and spiritually mature*** men or women who have been baptized by single immersion, who are members in good standing in a Baptist church that is not affiliated with any apostate or liberal organization, or any Convention of churches, and who give evidence of a call to the ministry.

It is preferred that applicants have a minimum of three (3) years formal training in a Bible institute, college or seminary, and some practical experience in Christian service. It is not required that male applicants be ordained. No divorced person will be accepted as a missionary. An exception may be made for Missionary Builders at the recommendation of the Board of Directors of Church Care.

- B. Applications. Those who desire to serve with this Mission Agency will be asked to complete and submit an application for the ministry to which they are applying. All applicants will be interviewed by the Council and required to complete the Candidate Process as outlined in the

Policy Manual. Both husband and wife are considered missionaries when approved so both need to complete the appropriate sections of the application and meet the above stated requirements. BCP will not process applications from potential missionaries from foreign countries unless they have obtained appropriate authorization from the U.S. Government to obtain legal employment in the United States.

- C. Applications Committee. The Candidate Coordinator will keep the Applications Committee informed of all applications. A committee of **at least** three (3) members of the Council shall be appointed to serve on the Applications Committee. This committee shall carefully examine all applications for missionary service and recommend to the Council those whom they are convinced qualify to serve with Baptist Church Planters.
- D. Examination of the Candidates. The Council shall be furnished with a completed file of each candidate who has been approved by the Applications Committee, including the Committee's written recommendation.

The Council shall meet with each candidate for a personal interview in order to determine his/her qualifications for missionary service. Candidates will be expected to relate his/her own salvation experience, baptism by immersion, call to the ministry and doctrinal position.

Candidates approved for missionary service will be expected to sign the Mission's doctrinal statement (annually), Missionary Agreement, and abide by the policies of the Mission Agency and any other special requirement the Council may deem necessary.

- E. Sending or Accountability church. All active missionaries (those who are not retired) are required to have a Sending or Accountability Church.

Section 2. Termination

A sixty (60) day notice will be required for resignation or dismissal of a missionary, except when another time schedule is mutually agreeable. The Administration, in consultation with the commissioning church may, in cases of discipline, terminate the relationship immediately. In such cases, when physically possible, the missionary shall be personally interviewed before dismissal, except in cases of confessed immorality. Action of the Administration shall be confirmed by the Council.

Article VI - FINANCES

Seeking to serve churches, we look, by faith, to God for the supplying of our needs. In accordance with the Internal Revenue Code, all gifts received by the Mission Agency shall become the property of the Mission Agency and shall be classified as general or designated funds.

Section 1. General Fund

The General Fund shall be disbursed based on the annual budget as approved by the Council to care for the salaries, the facilities of the Mission Agency, promotion and the general expenses of the Mission Agency.

Section 2. Designated Funds

Designated funds shall be disbursed for the support of the missionaries or such other projects as are approved by the Council, who reserve the right to reject and return any donation offered for a purpose not consistent with our declared doctrinal position and practices.

Article VII - SUBSIDIARIES

The Corporation may provide for the formation, maintenance, and support of any subsidiary entity which the Council of the Corporation determines will promote the fulfillment of the Corporation's mission and purpose. The articles of incorporation and by-laws of any such subsidiary entity shall be approved by the Council of the Corporation. The subsidiaries of the Corporation shall include, but not be limited to, ChurchCare, Inc. Each subsidiary will include at least two men from the Council on its board as voting members.

Article VIII - AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to this Constitution or the Articles of Faith shall be presented to the Council members in writing at the bi-annual Council Meeting in which they will be considered. Any recommended change proposed by the Council shall be published and distributed to the Council, the Administration, and the missionary family to allow at least four (4) months for discussion and consideration before the actions are finalized. The determining vote shall be taken at the next Council meeting. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote will be required to pass an amendment.

Article IX - DISSOLUTION

Should this Mission Agency ever come to the place of dissolution, it shall follow the procedures outlined in the Articles of Incorporation.

APPENDIX A:

ARTICLES OF FAITH OF BAPTIST CHURCH PLANTERS

I. OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe in the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written; that it was verbally and plenary inspired and is the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks. We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed and opinions shall be tried (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21).

II. THE TRUE GOD

We believe there is one and only one living and true God, an infinite Spirit, the Maker and supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Exod. 20:2, 3; I Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11).

III. JESUS CHRIST

A. THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God and God, the Son (Gen 3:15; Isa. 7:14, Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14).

B. RESURRECTION AND PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ and in His ascension into Heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest interceding for us (Matt. 28:6, 7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-6, 51; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 3:21; Heb. 8:6; 12:2; 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 2:17; 5:9, 10).

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the Agent in the new birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, helps, and distributes service gifts to the believer, but that sign gifts were restricted to the Apostolic Period (John 14:16, 17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1:1-3; John 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5, 6; Eph. 1:13, 14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Rom. 8:14, 16, 26, 27; 12:6-8; Hebrews 2:3-4).

V. THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; and that he was created by God as an angel but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of his Creator, that he became the unholy god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of eternal justice in the lake of fire (Mark 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10).

VI. CREATION

We believe the Biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels, and man; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race (Gen 1:2; Col. 1:16, 17; John 1:3).

VII. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created in innocence (in the image and likeness of God) under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression Adam fell from his sinless and happy state, and all men sinned in him, in consequence of which all men are totally depraved, are partakers of Adam's fallen nature, are sinners by nature and by conduct, and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse (Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 3:10-19; 5:12, 19; 1:18, 32).

VIII. SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated and wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by the appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and honored the divine law by His personal obedience, thus qualifying Himself to be our Savior; that by the shedding of His blood in His death He fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin; that His sacrifice consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in Heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation. Repentance is a change of mind and purpose toward God prompted by the Holy Spirit and is an integral part of saving faith (Jonah 2:9; Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom 3:24, 25; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7, 8; Heb. 2:14-17; Isa. 53:4-7; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24).

IX. GRACE AND THE NEW BIRTH

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence

appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life (John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 John 5:1; Acts 16:20-33; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13; John 3:8).

X. JUSTIFICATION

We believe that justification is that judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer righteous upon the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any work of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood (Rom. 3:24; 4:5; 5:1, 9; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

XI. SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the divine setting apart of the believer unto God accomplished in a threefold manner; first, an eternal act of God, based upon redemption in Christ, establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Savior; second, a continuing process in the saint as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life; third, the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return (Heb. 10:10-14; 3:1; John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 4:3, 4; 5:23, 24; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24, 25; Rev. 22:11).

XII. THE SECURITY OF THE SAINTS

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6; John 10:28, 29; Rom. 8:35-39; Jude 1).

XIII. THE CHURCH

We believe that a local church is an organized congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers as pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures.

We believe the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only Superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; that on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final (1 Cor. 11:2; Acts 20:17-28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Acts 2:41, 42).

We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the Church which is the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 1:22, 23; 3:1-6; 4:11; 5:23; Col. 1:18; Acts 15:13-18).

XIV. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our identification with the crucified, buried and risen Savior, through Whom we died to sin and rose to a new life; that baptism is to be performed under the authority of the local church; and that it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He come, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. We believe that the Biblical order of the ordinances is baptism first and then the Lord's Supper, and that participants in the Lord's Supper should be immersed believers (Acts 8:36, 38, 39; John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-5; Matt. 3:16; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 11:23-28; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:41, 42).

XV. SEPARATION

We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness, ecclesiastical apostasy, and neo-evangelicalism (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11).

XVI. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed, except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ Who is both the only Lord of the conscience and the coming King of kings (Rom. 13:1-7; 2 Sam. 23:3; Exod. 18:21, 22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:29; 4:19, 20; Dan. 3:17, 18).

XVII. ISRAEL

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people; that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ; that she will be regathered in the Holy Land; and that, after the completion of the Church, she will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ (Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 11:1-32; Ezek. 37).

XVIII. RAPTURE AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

We believe in the pre-tribulational rapture of the Church, an event which can occur at any moment; and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 51-54; Phil. 3:20, 21; Rev. 3:10).

We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish the millennial kingdom (Dan. 9:25-27; Matt. 24:29-31; Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-9; Acts 2:29, 30; Rev. 20:1-4, 6).

XIX. THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the lake of fire (Mal. 3:18; Gen 18:23; Rom. 6:17, 18; 1 John 5:19; Rom. 7:6; 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34-41; John 8:21; Rev. 20:14, 15).