



FIRST DURHAM YOUTH
BAPTISM CLASS

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Introduction

At First Baptist Church, it is our desire to see youth place their faith in Jesus Christ and walk in obedience to his commands from the very start of the Christian life. As a part of our desire to see youth faithfully living out their commitment to Christ, we have a goal to teach and prepare youth for taking steps toward publicly sharing their faith in Christ through baptism, gladly partaking of the Lord's Supper, and joining in covenant fellowship with the members of this church.

As you go through this class, know that we are excited about the work that the Lord Jesus Christ is doing in your lives. We are eager to walk through this process with you! We are praying for you as you consider the truths we will cover through the class!

In Christ,

Kevin Schaub, Assistant Pastor

STEPS FOR Baptism & Membership

Step 1: Baptism Class. Youth who are interested in baptism will be invited to a baptism class led by the youth pastor. In the class, we will present an overview of the gospel, teach on the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and explain the elders' philosophy on youth baptism.

Step 2: Written Testimony. After indicating interest in pursuing baptism, youth should begin writing out their testimony. At First Baptist Church, we ask candidates for baptism to give a public testimony of their faith along with their baptism as a way to give witness to how God has been at work to change their lives. Instructions for writing a testimony are included in the baptism class booklet.

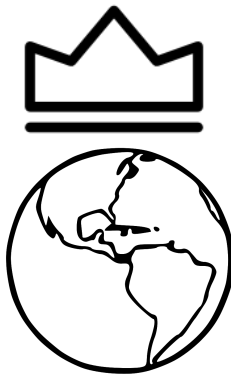
Step 3: Interview with a Pastor. Once the written testimony has been prepared, baptism candidates should arrange to meet with a pastor for an interview. The purpose of the interview is to discern whether he/she is ready for baptism and eager to follow Christ.

Step 4: Baptism. Once it is determined that the candidate is ready, he/she will be scheduled for baptism on a Sunday morning at a near future date.

Step 5: Membership Process. Following their baptism, at the age of sixteen youth believers are encouraged to attend First Baptist Church's weekend membership class, interview with a pastor, and join in covenant membership with the church.

LESSON 1: What is the Gospel?

In this lesson, we will go over the basic message of the gospel.¹ We are saved by faith alone, by God's grace alone, through the work of Christ in our place alone. Belief in the gospel is therefore a prerequisite to baptism, participation in the Lord's Supper, and church membership.



GOD: CREATOR, KING, JUDGE

The first point of the Christian message is that God is in charge of the world. He is the one who made the world.

- "In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1).

¹ Some of the material in this lesson is adapted from *Two Ways to Live* (Kingsford NSW: Matthias Media, 2003).

And in God's creating, he demonstrates that he is loving.

- *"Yet he has not left himself without testimony: he has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy" (Acts 14:17).*

God rules the world because he created it.

- *"For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise" (Ps 47:7).*

As king of all the earth, God is therefore sovereign over all his creation.

- *"The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all" (Ps 103:19).*

As sovereign king, God therefore also makes laws, which are summarized in the Ten Commandments and the Two Great Commandments.

- **Ten Commandments**
 - You shall have no other gods
 - You shall not make or worship idols
 - You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain
 - Keep the Sabbath day holy
 - Honor your father and mother

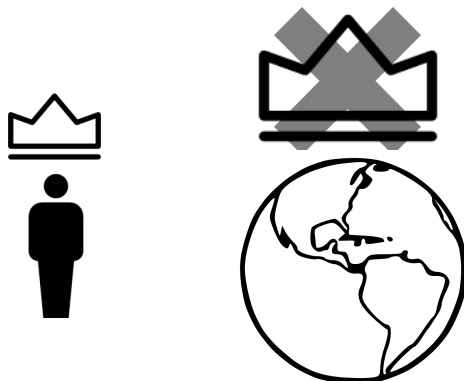
- You shall not murder [and *anger* is the root of all murder]
- You shall not commit adultery [and *lust* is adultery in your heart]
- You shall not steal
- You shall not bear false witness
- You shall not covet anything
- **Two Great Commandments**
 - You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength
 - You shall love your neighbor as yourself

As sovereign king and lawmaker, God is the rightful **judge** over his creation.

- *"... the LORD ... comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness." (Ps 96:13).*

Therefore, God is **holy** and righteous.

- *"Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong." (Hab 1:13)*



MAN: CREATED BY GOD, REBELLIOUS, UNDER JUDGMENT

The second point of the Christian message of the gospel is that man, though created by God, is sinful and in need of God's forgiveness.

- *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Gen 1:27)*
- Created to **be like** God, to **know/love** God, to **serve** God

Sadly, from the very beginning, man has **universally** rejected God by **rebell**ing against his righteous laws.

- *"As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.'" (Rom 3:10–12)*

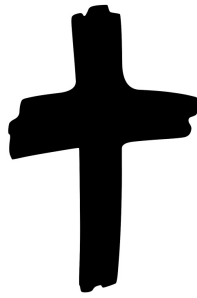
- Rebellious against God's commandments

Because of their sin, people are **under God's judgment.**

- ***Judgment Day:*** *"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every care-less word they have spoken."* (Matt 12:36)
- ***Judgment Penalty:*** *"... the wages of sin is death ..."* (Rom 6:23)

QUESTION FOR APPLICATION

How can a sinful person enter heaven
where God allows no sin?



CHRIST: SAVIOR, DEATH, RESURRECTION

The third point of the Christian message of the gospel is that God, in his love for the world, sent his only Son to save the world by dying on the cross for sins.

Christ is the only Savior, born to save his people from their sins.

- *"For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us." (Is 33:22)*
- *"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." (Matt 1:21)*

As the Son of God, Jesus lived a perfect life and demonstrated his power to save through his miraculous works.

- **God-man:** *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:1, 14)*

- **Miraculous:** *"The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor." (Matt 11:5)*
- **Sinless:** *"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." (1 Pet 2:22)*

On the cross, Jesus laid down his life as a substitute to pay the penalty of **death** for our sins.

- *"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed." (1 Pet 2:24)*
- *"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor 5:21)*

But Jesus was **raised** from the dead on the third day and is now seated at the right hand of God's throne.

- *"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve." (1 Cor 15:3–5)*

The cross and resurrection of Christ secured **spiritual gifts** for all who trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

- **Total forgiveness of sins:** *"In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." (Eph 1:7)*
- **Eternal life:** *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 6:23)*

QUESTION FOR APPLICATION

What must I do to be saved?



RESPONSE: BELIEVE & REPENT

The fourth point of the Christian message is that God forgives and justifies sinners by faith in Christ. This means there are two things we **must do** in response to the gospel: (1) believe, and (2) repent.

- *"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15)*
- *"... if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Rom 10:9)*
- **Repent (U-Turn):** *Away from sin; Toward God*
- **Believe the gospel:** *Believe THAT it's true; Believe IN Christ*

There are also two things we **must not do** in response to the gospel message: (1) do not work for it, and (2) do not wait for tomorrow.

- ***Do not work for it:*** *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Eph 2:8–9)*

- **Do not wait for tomorrow:** *"For he says, 'In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.' I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, no is the day of salvation." (2 Cor 6:2)*

In calling on the name of the Lord for salvation, we are given precious gifts and privileges by God.

- **New creation by the Creator:** *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor 5:17)*
- **Joyful servant of the King:** *"Those who obey his commands live in him, and he is in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us." (1 John 3:24)*
- **Completely pardoned by the Judge:** *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24)*
- **Adopted by the Father:** *"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12)*
- **Life forever in heaven:** *"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' (John 11:25–26)*

LESSON 2:

What is Baptism?

In this lesson and the next we'll cover the topics of baptism and the Lord's Supper, two ceremonies Jesus commanded his church to perform.² Baptists believe that baptism is *appropriately administered only to those who give a believable profession of faith in Jesus Christ*.

THE HOW & WHY OF BAPTISM

The practice of baptism in the New Testament was carried out in one way: the person being baptized was *immersed*, or put completely under the water, and then brought back up again. Baptism by *immersion* is therefore the "mode" or the way in which it was carried out in the NT.

This is evident for the following reasons:

First, the Greek word for "baptize" means "to plunge, dip, immerse" something into water. This is the commonly recognized (normal) meaning of the term in Greek literature both inside and outside the Bible.

² Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999). This lesson outline contains content directly quoted or adapted from chapter 27 of Grudem.

Second, the sense “immerse” is appropriate and probably required for the word in several NT passages. In Mark 1:5 people were baptized by John “in the river Jordan.” Mark also tells us in v 10 that when Jesus was baptized “he came up *out of the water*.” It takes more water to immerse than to sprinkle. (See John 3:23 and Acts 8:36 in support of immersion.)

Third, the symbolism of union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection seems to require baptism by immersion. (See Rom 6:3–4. Also Col 2:12.)

When the candidate for baptism goes down into the water, it is a picture of going down into the grave and being buried. Coming up out of the water is then a picture of being raised with Christ to walk in newness of life.

Baptism very clearly pictures death to one’s old way of life and rising to a new kind of life in Christ. But baptism by sprinkling or pouring simply misses this symbolism.

In addition to the symbolism of death, burial and resurrection, purification from sins is also symbolized in baptism. The emphasis in Scripture, however, is on death, burial and resurrection with Christ.

The amazing truths of dying and rising with Christ and having our sins washed away are truths of momentous

and eternal proportion and ought to be an occasion for giving great glory and praise to God.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

This pattern revealed at several places in the NT is that only those who give a believable profession of faith should be baptized. This view is often called "*believers' baptism*," since it holds that only those who have given reasonable evidence of believing in Christ should be baptized. This is because baptism, which is *a symbol of beginning the Christian life*, should only be given to those who have in fact begun the Christian life.

After Peter's sermon at Pentecost, we read, "*Those who received his word were baptized*" (Acts 2:41). (See also Acts 8:12, *when they believed*; Acts 10:44–46, 47–48, *when they received the Holy Spirit*.)

THE JOY OF BAPTISM

Baptism symbolizes regeneration or spiritual rebirth. In addition to the symbolism of baptism, we believe that God is delighted by obedience to Jesus Christ. There is the blessing of God's favor that comes with all obedience, as well as the joy that comes through public confession of one's faith, and the reassurance of having a clear physical picture of dying and rising with Christ and of washing away sins. Also, baptized believers are permitted and encouraged to partake of the Lord's Supper.

WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

While we recognize that Jesus commanded baptism (Matt 28:19), as did the apostles (Acts 2:38), we should not say that baptism is *necessary* for salvation.

To say that baptism or any other action is *necessary* for salvation is to say that we are not justified by faith alone, but by faith plus a certain “work,” the work of baptism (see Gal 5:1–12).

Baptism is not necessary for salvation. *But it is necessary if we are to be obedient to Christ, for he commanded baptism for all who believe in him.*

WHAT IF I'M YOUNG?

How old should children be before they are baptized? The most direct answer is that they should be old enough to give a believable profession of faith.

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

Do you know anyone who has been baptized as a believer? What was the effect of the baptism on their Christian life (if any)?

What aspects of the meaning of baptism have you come to appreciate more as a result of this lesson (if any)? What aspects of the meaning of baptism would you like to see taught more clearly in the church?

When baptisms occur in the church, are they a time of rejoicing and praise to God? What do you think is happening to the person being baptized at that moment (if anything)? What do you think should be happening?

LESSON 3: What is the Lord's Supper?

In this lesson, we'll learn about the Lord's Supper and seek to discover the biblical answers to the following questions:

- *What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper?*
- *How should it be observed?*

WHAT THE LORD'S SUPPER MEANS³

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. *Read Matt 26:26–29.* Paul adds the following sentences from the tradition he received: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." The meaning of the Lord's Supper is complex, rich and full. Several things are symbolized and affirmed in the Lord's Supper.

1. Christ's death. When we participate in the Lord's Supper, we *symbolize* the death of Christ because our actions give a picture of his death for us. When the bread is broken, it *symbolizes* the breaking of Christ's body on the cross; And when the cup is poured out, it *symbolized* the pouring out of Christ's blood for us on the cross.

³ Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999). This lesson outline contains content directly quoted or adapted from chapter 28 of Grudem.

This is why participating in the Lord's Supper is also a kind of *proclamation*: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you *proclaim the Lord's death* until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26).

2. Our participation in the benefits of Christ's death. Jesus commanded his disciples, "Take, eat; this is my body" (Matt 26:26). As we individually reach out and take the bread and wine for ourselves, each one of us is by that action proclaiming, "I am taking the benefits of Christ's death to myself."

When we do this, we give a symbol of the fact that we participate or share in the benefits earned for us by Jesus' death.

3. Spiritual nourishment. Just as ordinary food nourishes our physical bodies, so the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper give nourishment to us. But they also picture the fact that there is spiritual nourishment and refreshment that Christ is giving to our souls—indeed, the ceremony that Jesus instituted is in its very nature designed to teach us this.

Jesus said: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my

blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me" (John 6:53–57).

This spiritual nourishment, so necessary for our souls, is both symbolized and experienced in our participation in the Lord's Supper.

4. *The unity of believers.* When Christians participate in the Lord's Supper together, they also give a clear sign of their unity with one another. In fact, Paul says, "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10:17).

When we put these four things together, we begin to realize some of the rich meaning of the Lord's Supper. When I participate, I remember that he died for me; I participate in the benefits of his death; I receive spiritual nourishment; and I am united with all other believers who participate in this Supper. What great cause for thanksgiving and joy is to be found in this Supper of the Lord!

When we participate in the Lord's Supper, we should be reminded again and again of two affirmations that Christ is making to us:

Christ affirms his love for me. The fact that I am able to participate in the Lord's Supper—indeed, that Jesus invites me to come—is a vivid reminder and visual reassurance that Jesus Christ loves me, individually and personally. When I come to partake of the Lord's Supper, I thereby find reassurance again and again of Christ's personal love for me.

I affirm my faith in Christ. Finally, as I take the bread and cup for myself, by my actions I am proclaiming, "I need you and trust you, Lord Jesus, to forgive my sins and give life and health to my soul, for only by your broken body and shed blood can I be saved."

In fact, as I partake in the breaking of the bread when I eat it and the pouring of the cup when I drink from it, I proclaim again and again that my sins were part of the cause of Jesus' suffering and death. In this way, sorrow, joy, thanksgiving, and deep love for Christ are richly intermingled in the beauty of the Lord's Supper.

HOW IS CHRIST PRESENT IN THE SUPPER?

A symbolic presence of Christ. The bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ, and they give a visible sign of the fact that Christ himself is truly present.

A spiritual presence of Christ. In addition to the fact that the bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of

Christ, Christ is also *spiritually present* in a special way as we partake of the bread and wine. Indeed, Jesus promised to be present whenever believers worshiped (Matt 18:20). And if he is especially present when Christians gather to worship, then we would expect that he will be present in a special way in the Lord's Supper.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER?

Only those who believe in Christ should participate in it, because it is a sign of being a Christian and continuing in the Christian life.

*Those who believe in Christ and have testified to it by **believer's baptism** should participate.*

Paul warns that those who eat and drink unworthily face serious consequences: "For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died" (1 Cor 11:29–30).

A second qualification for participation is **self-examination**: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. *Let a man examine himself*, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning

the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself" (1 Cor 11:27–29).

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

What things symbolized by the Lord's Supper have received new emphasis in your thinking as a result of this lesson? Do you feel more eager to participate in the Lord's Supper now than before this lesson?

In what ways (if any) will you approach the Lord's Supper differently now? Which of the things symbolized in the Lord's Supper is most encouraging to your Christian life right now?

Are there any broken relationships that you need to make right before you come to the Lord's Supper again?

LESSON 4: Why Should I Become a Church Member?

We believe that one of God's primary means for growing up healthy Christians is through engagement with a local body of believers. We call this *covenant* membership.

WHY SHOULD I JOIN A CHURCH?⁴

We can understand the purposes of the church in terms of ministry to God, ministry to believers, and ministry to the world. These three purposes are displayed and put into action through a local church, and are the primary means of how you, as an individual, can minister to God, other believers, and the world.

1. Ministry to God: Worship. In relationship to God, the church's purpose is to worship him corporately. Paul directs the church at Colossae to "sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col 3:16). Worship in the church is not merely preparation for something else; it is in itself fulfilling the major purpose of the church with reference to its Lord.

⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999). This lesson outline contains content directly quoted or adapted from chapter 26 of Grudem.

2. Ministry to Believers: Nurture. According to Scripture, the church has an obligation to care for those who are already believers and build them up to maturity in the faith through the ministry of the Word, accountability, discipline, fellowship, and etc. Paul said that his own goal was not simply to bring people to initial saving faith but to “present every man [i.e., in the church] *mature in Christ*” (Col 1:28). And he told the church at Ephesus that God gave the church gifted persons “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to *mature manhood*, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:12–13).

3. Ministry to the World: Evangelism and Mercy. Jesus told his disciples that they should “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). This evangelistic work of declaring the gospel to the nations is the primary ministry that the church has toward the world. Yet accompanying the work of evangelism is also a ministry of mercy, a ministry that includes caring for the poor and needy in the name of the Lord (Gal 2:10). But such ministries of mercy to the world should never become a substitute for genuine evangelism or for other areas of ministry to God and to believers.

BECOMING A MEMBER

Covenant church membership is a wonderful privilege and a weighty responsibility. To communicate fully the privilege and responsibility of membership at First Baptist Church, we ask prospective new members to go through the following four steps.

1. Attend a Prospective New Member Class. Our prospective membership class is offered on various weekends of the year.

2. Interview with a Pastor. This is an opportunity for one of the elders to get to know you better, hear about your conversion, baptism and walk with Christ, as well as to answer any questions you may have about our church.

3. Sign the Church Covenant. New member candidates will be asked to introduce themselves to the church body at the next "New Member Sunday" and sign our church covenant.

4. Receive Congregational Affirmation. New member candidates will be presented to the congregation at the following members' meeting, at which time the congregation will be asked to officially vote to approve the candidates as members of First Baptist Church.

AT WHAT AGE CAN I JOIN FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH?

As with the age of baptism question we discussed in our lesson on baptism, because of the spiritual maturity and responsibilities expected of covenant members of First Baptist Church, the elders believe it to be wise to have younger believers wait until the age of sixteen before going through the membership process.

It is our hope and prayer that all young believers, once they turn sixteen years old, eagerly pursue covenant membership at First Baptist.

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

To which purpose of the church do you think you can most effectively contribute? Which purpose has God placed on your heart a strong desire to fulfill?

Does this allow you to neglect the other vital areas of ministry commanded for the church?

APPENDIX 1: Writing Your Testimony

- Remember to give God all the credit and glory for your salvation!
- Your testimony is a story of how God saved you through personal faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Focus briefly on the events that led up to your recognition of a need for a savior. Mention how you came to realize that you are a sinner in need of salvation (as we *all* are!!), and that Jesus is the only Savior of the world.
- Don't spend a lot of time on details of events in your life, but don't leave them out entirely. Put enough details in to make it personal, but keep the details centered around how you came to understand truth about the following: God, your own sin, Christ's saving death on the cross and his resurrection, and your resulting faith in Christ.
- Keep it *brief!* Read it over in a normal reading voice and time yourself. **It should be three minutes or less.**

- Keep in mind that there may be someone out there listening to you who has never trusted in Christ, and that God may use your testimony to help convert them and save them!
- **Four basic parts to testimony for baptism:**
 - Past life apart from Christ
 - How God led you to realize your need for a Savior (recognition of personal sins), and to realize that Jesus is your Savior
 - What you believe about Christ: that He died in your place for your sins, that He rose from the dead, and that He is now your Lord
 - Why you want to be baptized: as an act of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, who commands us to repent, believe, and be baptized (Mark 16:16)

APPENDIX 2: Church Covenant

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love;

To strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort;

To promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline;

To give it sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin;

To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances;

To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment;

To avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger;

To use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and alcohol and the spread of pornography and other practices which lead to moral and spiritual decay;

And to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love;

To remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech;

To be slow to take offense, and always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

FIRST DURHAM
YOUTH

