

## **OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE INVINCIBILITY OF THE CHURCH**

“On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 16:18, 19

Based on this initial and foundational statement by Christ on the church and in response to the current evaluations and predictions about the local church, we declare the following:

### **“On this rock”**

Because Christ promised that the church will be built **On a Divine Foundation,**

We declare our confidence that the church’s stability is dependent on Christ, and therefore the church should not, need not, and indeed cannot be built on any other foundation than Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). We declare this in light of the unending and natural attempts to build churches on personalities or programs.

### **“I will build”**

Because Christ promised that the church will be built **By a Divine Builder,**

We declare our confidence that the church’s success is ultimately not dependent on the efforts of men but the work of Jesus Christ. We declare this in light of the predictions by some that the church is in desperate times and dependent on men and methods for survival.

### **“My church”**

Because Christ promised that the church will be built **As a Divine Possession,**

We declare our confidence that the church as Christ’s possession was paid for by Him (Acts 20:28) and is always the focus of His interest (John 3:16; 14:1; Hebrews 4:14–19; 7:25). We declare this reminding ourselves that we are accountable to Him as stewards, and we are ultimately seeking to hear Him say “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:14–30).

### **“And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it”**

Because Christ promised that the church will be built **With a Divine Promise,**

We declare our confidence that the church will face tremendous opposition from Satan, his principalities and powers (Ephesians 6:12), and his world system (John 16:11; 1 John 5:19). We also declare our confidence that these forces will never overwhelm the church. We declare this in light of the reality that our culture is increasingly under the sway of the evil one (1 John 5:19), distracting many from our confidence in Christ, which causes us to live in fear of moving into enemy territory.

**“And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”**

Because Christ promised that the church will be built **For a Divine Task,**

We declare our confidence that the communication of truth to people is the primary focus of ministry, namely the truth that reveals what is needed for entrance or exclusion to the kingdom of Heaven. We declare this in light of two trends: increasing focus on social rather than spiritual needs of people and increasing focus on conversation rather than conversion, trends that distract us from our primary task of proclaiming eternal destiny truth.

These declarations of confidence in the invincibility of the church of Jesus Christ are made by the messengers of the churches in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting for our 75th Annual Conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, June 26–29, 2007.