

## **The Nature and Importance of the New Testament Church**

WHEREAS Christ, through His Holy Spirit, has instituted local churches and has given instructions as to their organization and function; and

WHEREAS there is a contemporary, growing, and vocal criticism of the institution of the local church, resulting in the disenchantment of many believers with their own local church and producing proliferation of various Christian organizations having no relationship to local churches and, in some cases, antagonistic to them; and

WHEREAS a famous evangelist declared publicly that young people meeting in a nondenominational, ecumenical gathering had made an "end run around the church," thus discrediting by his remark a divinely established institution;

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the messengers of the churches of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, June 25–29, 1973, reiterate publicly our long-established and Scripturally- based convictions:

1. That a New Testament local church is an organized body of immersed believers meeting regularly in some geographic location for mutual edification, the observance of the ordinances, and the evangelization of the world;
2. That such a church has a stated membership and duly elected pastors and deacons and is not merely a chance, occasional, or unstructured group of Christians but rather a society that is ordered according to instructions given us in the New Testament;
3. That such churches are established by divine command as gathering places for true believers, that they are central in the spiritual work of Christ in this age, and that participation in small, informal group meetings, home Bible study gatherings, or home sessions around taped messages are no substitute for active participation in a Scripturally organized church.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we give hearty thanks to God for His wise provision of local churches so that His people can be nourished in the faith, encouraged by mutual fellowship, strengthened in their home life, and fortified for effective witness.

*Kansas City, Missouri*  
*June 25–29, 1973*