

## **OUR CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S DESIGN— SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH**

WHEREAS we live in a day of great confusion as to the roles of pastors, deacons, and church members; and

Because the model of the New Testament pastor/shepherd is being jettisoned by some local churches, having been replaced by the "Pastor as Chief Executive Officer" of the "business" (i.e., local church); and

Because modern gospel ministry led by "the church CEO" alters and degrades the New Testament model of the office of pastor, the office of deacon, and even the role of church congregations; and

Since great vacillation, debate, and conflict is occurring within our churches as to the place and role of leadership in the local church, the role of deacons, and various boards within the church;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, 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, recommit ourselves to the ultimate authority in every church, Jesus Christ, and His Word (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:19–22; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17); and

We teach and practice congregational autonomy with pastors who give spiritual leadership to the assembly of believers (1 Peter 5:1–4) and deacons who give spiritual service within the assembly of believers (1 Timothy 3:8–13; Acts 6:1–7; Philippians 1:1); and

We urge pastors, deacons, and congregations to reacquaint themselves with the New Testament's teaching of regular Baptist polity; and

We renew our focus on men of God in local church office who meet the exacting standards of godly character and spiritual maturity (1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9); and

We recognize the office of pastor/teacher as the very gift of Christ to the local church, these men of God being placed by Christ to equip the saints so that together they will do the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:7–16); and

We follow the command of the restored shepherd Peter, that pastors serve God and the flock of God not as CEOs but as shepherds, doing so following the example of the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1–4), that deacons fulfill their office in service to God and the church, and that church congregations receive this service as from God and submit to those who lead the church, our pastors (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

Passed June 28, 2007  
GARBC Annual Conference  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania