

# THE LOCAL CHURCH I: ORGANIZATION PHIL. 1:1

## London Baptist Confession of 1644

A CONFESSION OF FAITH of seven congregations or churches of Christ in London, which are commonly, but unjustly, called Anabaptists; published for the vindication of the truth and information of the ignorant; likewise for the taking off those aspersions which are frequently, both in pulpit and print, unjustly cast upon them. Printed in London, Anno 1646.

### XLVII

And although the particular congregation **be distinct and several bodies**, every one **a compact and knit city in itself; yet** are they all to walk by one and the same Rule, and by all means convenient to have the counsel and help one of another in all needful affairs of the church, **as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their only Head.**

### Early Baptist brethren confessed:

- **An emphasis on the autonomy of the local church**
- **The headship of Christ & authority of the New Testament**
- **Voluntary association for various reasons**
- **One body – the universal church!**

1 The Church's one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord,  
She is His new creation  
By water and the Word.  
From heaven He came and sought her  
To be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her  
And for her life He died.

2 She is from every nation,  
Yet one o'er all the earth;  
Her charter of salvation,  
One Lord, one faith, one birth;  
One holy Name she blesses,  
Partakes one Holy Food,  
And to one Hope she presses,  
With every grace endued.

3 The Church shall never perish!  
Her dear Lord to defend,  
To guide, sustain, and cherish,  
Is with her to the end:  
Though there be those who hate her,  
And false sons in her pale,  
Against or foe or traitor  
She ever shall prevail.

4 Though with a scornful wonder  
Men see her sore oppressed,  
By schisms rent asunder,  
By heresies distressed:  
Yet saints their watch are keeping,  
Their cry goes up, "How long?"  
And soon the night of weeping  
Shall be the morn of song!

5 'Mid toil and tribulation,  
And tumult of her war,  
She waits the consummation  
Of peace forevermore;  
Till, with the vision glorious,  
Her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great Church victorious  
Shall be the Church at rest.

6 Yet she on earth hath union  
With God the Three in One,  
And mystic sweet communion  
With those whose rest is won,  
With all her sons and daughters  
Who, by the Master's Hand  
Led through the deathly waters,  
Repose in Eden land.

7 O happy ones and holy!  
Lord, give us grace that we  
Like them, the meek and lowly,  
On high may dwell with Thee:  
There, past the border mountains,  
Where in sweet vales the Bride  
With Thee by living fountains  
Forever shall abide! Amen

**How** are we to organize a local, NT Baptist church?

**Many** (most?) churches are organized by tradition(s) and therefore not questionable.

**Many** (most) other churches are organized by / in reaction

The answer seems obvious: All local, NT Baptist churches should be organized upon &/ from revelation  
→ Biblical authority and NT priority