

CONGREGATIONAL PRINCIPLES.

The following are Congregational principles of church government as formulated in the report of the Committee on Manual to the National Council of the United States:

1. **THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL.**—The visible church universal is composed of those who, believing themselves to be born of the Spirit, publicly confess their faith in Christ as their Saviour and Lord. All Christians, being equally related to the Head of the Church, are equal in all rights and privileges, and should be in communion with one another.

2. **THE SEAT OF CHURCH POWER.**—Neither is a single universal church government claiming authority, nor one which is national, provincial, diocesan or synodical, warranted by the word of God; but only local congregations (*i.e.* churches) of believers. These particular churches have all needful power of self-government under Christ, but are to be in recognized communion and co-operation with each other; including all evangelical churches of whatever name, which will accept such fellowship.

3. **THE LOCAL CHURCH.**—Those believers who dwell together in one place become a church by their recognition of each other, and their mutual agreement to observe Christ's ordinances in one society. (Platform of 1865.)

4. **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCHES.**—But inasmuch as all evangelical churches should be in communion one with another, they should extend to each other the formal recognition of that fellowship, and manifest it by assisting each other with advice and necessary help, by consulting together in all matters of common concern, and by co-operating in work for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

5. **THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.**—Men who in the judgment of the churches are called of God to the ministry of the Word, are by these to be set apart to that service with prayer and laying on of hands. The apostolic injunction, "Lay hands suddenly on no man," requires that due examination be first made as to natural gifts, education, knowledge of the Scriptures, Christian experience, and the divine call to preach the Word. Nor is any man to be regarded as retaining fellowship as an ordained minister unless he remain in orderly connection with some body of churches capable of certifying their continued approval.

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