



OUR CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

*What We Believe
and Practice*

“But all things must be done properly
and in an orderly manner.”

1 Corinthians 14:40

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Date approved by Elder or Provisional Board _____

Date approved by Congregation _____

CORNERSTONE BIBLE CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – NAME

This church will be known as **"Cornerstone Bible Church."**

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Cornerstone Bible Church exists to reach the lost with the gospel of Christ, to aid in the maturity and development of the followers of Jesus Christ, and to train leaders who will guide the church as they follow Christ Jesus.

We believe that the purpose of this local church is to worship, honor, and glorify God through obedience to His Word. This obedience is demonstrated by proclaiming the gospel of Christ Jesus to the entire world, by teaching His Word, by seeking Him through earnest prayer, by equipping the saints to live, serve, and fellowship in the power and unity of the Holy Spirit, and by keeping the ordinances. (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8, 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25; 14:26; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:24-28; 1 Timothy 4:11. Also cf. Article VI, Church Covenant*)

ARTICLE III – AUTHORITY AND OVERSIGHT

This church recognizes Christ as its Head and the Scriptures¹ as its only authority (*Colossians 1:18; 2 Timothy 3:16*). Under that authority, the oversight of this church is vested in a body of elders who operate in concert with the deacons and the membership subject to the approval of Biblical Ministries Worldwide (BMW) until separately incorporated and released. (*cf. Bylaws, Article 1*).

ARTICLE IV – ORGANIZATION AND ASSOCIATION

This church is initially established as a ministry of *Biblical Ministries Worldwide* in Lawrenceville, Georgia, a Utah, nonprofit, corporation. At such time as is deemed advisable by mutual consent of BMW and the eldership and membership of this church, we shall be separately incorporated and released. At this time all property, buildings, and

¹ Throughout this document the terms "Scripture" and "Scriptures" refer to the 66 books of the Holy Bible. Cf. Article 5, Section 1

equipment shall be transferred into this church and all previous controls and provisions from BMW will be ended. However, it will be our desire to continue to gratefully serve in fellowship with Biblical Ministries Worldwide and its various mission projects. In addition, we may also associate with other like-minded ministries as the Lord directs. (cf. Article V, Section 16)

ARTICLE V – STATEMENT OF FAITH²

PREAMBLE

The teaching of **Cornerstone Bible Church** is based on the Bible. Our Statement of Faith reflects those doctrines that the elders and membership consider essential to understanding, teaching, and practicing God's Word and is based on an interpretation of the Scripture that is:

1. *Normal* - understanding the words of Scripture in their common usage unless otherwise indicated by the context.
2. *Literal* - understanding the meaning of Scripture in its ordinary sense unless the context requires a figurative interpretation.
3. *Grammatical* - using the recognized rules of grammar to interpret the text.
4. *Historical* - understanding the words of Scripture in the context of the times in which they were written.
5. *Dispensational* - observing divinely determined stewardships which define man's responsibility in successive ages. (cf. Sec. 11)
6. *Systematic* - categorizing and comparing the teaching of any portion of the Word of God with the whole of Scripture. God cannot contradict Himself.

As members of **Cornerstone Bible Church**, we believe and affirm that this Statement of Faith reflects the truth of God's Word.

SECTION 1: THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, consisting of 66 books which constitute the Old and New Testaments, the Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, the complete and unalterable special revelation of God and our final authority. As stated in the preamble, we

² A helpful booklet entitled "Our Doctrinal Statement: Examined, Defined and Explained" is available upon request.

believe in the normal, literal, grammatical, historical, and systematic interpretation of the Scripture and in a dispensational understanding of God's progressive revelation. (*Matthew 5:18; John 16:12, 13; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21*)

SECTION 2: THE GODHEAD

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – co-eternal in being, co-identical in essence, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (*Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

We believe God is spirit, from everlasting to everlasting the same, the direct creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. (*John 4:24; Luke 24:39; Psalm 90:2; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Isaiah 44:24; Revelation 19:6; 1 John 3:20; Psalm 147:5; Psalm 139:7-10; Jeremiah 23:24; John 1:3; Exodus 20:8-11; Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16, 17*)

SECTION 3: THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and that He lived a sinless life. He came in order to reveal God and redeem sinful man. (*Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 2, 14, 18*)

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice in providing an unlimited atonement for the sins of the whole world, and that our justification is verified by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (*Romans 3:24, 25; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2:24; 1 John 2:2*)

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (*Acts 1:9, 10; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; 1 John 2:1, 2*)

SECTION 4: THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the person of the Godhead Who in this present age convicts the world of sin,

righteousness, and judgment; Who regenerates and baptizes into the body of Christ those who believe; and Who indwells and seals them unto the day of redemption. (*John 16:8-11; Roman: 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Ephesians 1:13, 14*)

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Teacher Who guides believers into all truth. It is the privilege of believers to be filled with and their duty to walk in the Holy Spirit. (*John 16:13; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27*)

SECTION 5: THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God. In Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature; and became alienated from God. Therefore, man is totally depraved and apart from God is unable to remedy his lost condition. (*Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 3:22, 23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12*)

SECTION 6: SALVATION AND SECURITY

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice for all people. All who trust Him are saved by His grace through faith solely on the ground of His shed blood and not our works. They are then "accepted in the beloved," kept by God's power and thus secured in Christ forever. (*John 1:12; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38, 39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:5, 18, 19*)

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures,³ with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. (*Romans 6:13; 8:12, 13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9*)

We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (*Romans 13:13, 14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15; 1 Peter 2:13-20*)

³ The term "nature(s)" in this section refers to an inherent disposition of a person which affects the conduct and character of that person.

SECTION 7: THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church, which began with the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, is the Body and Bride of Christ. It is the spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of the present age. (*Acts 2:1-13, 47; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 11:2*)

We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (*Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11*)

SECTION 8: ORDINANCES

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ established two ordinances for the Church in this present age. These are believer's water baptism, practiced by immersion, and the Lord's Supper, observed obediently as a memorial of His death. These ordinances are not a means of saving grace. (*1 Corinthians 11:23-34; Acts 8:12, 35-39; 10:47, 48; 1 Corinthians 1:14*)

SECTION 9: MISSIONS

We believe that it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Gospel; making disciples from among all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20*)

SECTION 10: THE MINISTRY AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ gives the Church evangelists and pastor-teachers. These gifted men are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. (*Ephesians 4:7-14*)

We believe that the Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts upon believers for Christian service and for the edification of the Church. (*Romans 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 1 Peter 4:10, 11*)

We believe that the Church Age was initiated through the ministry of the apostles and prophets accompanied by sign gifts to confirm their message. These sign gifts gradually ceased by the time of the completion of the New Testament. (*1 Corinthians 12:28-31; 13:8-10; 14:1-28; 2 Cor. 12:12; Ephesians 2:19-22; Hebrews 2:3, 4*)

We believe that God hears and answers prayer in accord with His own will for healing of the sick and afflicted.

(John 14:13, 14; 15:7; 1 John 5:14, 15)

SECTION 11: DISPENSATIONALISM

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their normal, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations which define man's responsibility in successive ages. A dispensation is not a way of salvation, but a divinely ordered stewardship by which God directs man according to His purpose. *(John 1:17; 1 Corinthians 9:17; 2 Corinthians 3:9-18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10; 3:2-10; Colossians 1:24, 25; Hebrews 7:19; Revelation 20:2-6)*

We believe that salvation is always by grace through faith regardless of the dispensation in which the believer may have lived. God's purpose of salvation by grace through faith alone has always been based upon the substitutionary atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross. *(Ephesians 2:8-10; Hebrews 11:6; 1 Peter 1:10-12)*

SECTION 12: THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN

We believe that Satan is a created being, the author of sin, the tempter in the fall, the declared enemy of God and man, and the "god of this world". He shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. *(Job 1:6, 7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10)*

SECTION 13: THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

We believe in the "Blessed Hope," the personal, imminent, pretribulational and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones. We believe that at the end of the seven-year tribulation He will return to earth with the saints in power and glory to reign for a thousand years in a literal earthly kingdom. *(Zechariah 14:4-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:9; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)*

SECTION 14: THE ETERNAL STATE

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. *(Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25, 26; Revelation 20:5, 6, 12, 13)*

We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit,

soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (*Luke 23:43; Revelation 20:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17*)

We believe that the souls of unbelievers are, at death, absent from the body and in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment. (*Luke 16:19-26; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6, 7; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 20:11-15*)

SECTION 15: CREATION

We believe that the triune God, by a free act and for His own glory, without the use of existing materials or secondary causes, brought into being – immediately and instantaneously in six literal days by the word of His mouth – the whole universe. (*Genesis 1:1-27; Exodus 20:8-11; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 104:25,26; Isaiah 40:21-31; John 1:1-5; Colossians 1:16, 17*)

SECTION 16: BIBLICAL SEPARATION AND UNITY

We believe that the saved should be separated unto the Lord Jesus Christ, necessitating holy living in all personal and ecclesiastical associations and relationships.

It is the believer's responsibility to endeavor to maintain the unity of the faith while separating from apostasy and from those who have deviated from biblical doctrine and behavior. Every proposed alliance must be considered in the light of our commitment to biblical separation. (*Romans 12:1, 2; 14:13; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; Titus 2:14; James 4:4, 5; 1 Peter 2:9-11; 1 John 2:15-17; Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:7-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 4:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 3:11-14; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 9-11*)

SECTION 17: MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

We believe that marriage and family are sacred institutions ordained by the Lord God Himself from the very beginning of human history. Marriage is exclusively between one man and one woman. Any other definition of marriage is contrary to the clear teachings of the Holy Bible and hence against the expressed will of God. Sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between a man and a woman within the love and bonds of marriage.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents. (*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:20b-24; Psalms 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 6:20-22; 13:24; 22:6,15; 29:15,17; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7*)

ARTICLE VI – CHURCH COVENANT

As those redeemed unto God by the precious blood of Christ, it is our desire to live in a manner befitting our relationship with Christ, being obedient to the Word, to diligently seek to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (*II Peter 3:18*) and to “walk by the Spirit of God,” enabled by His power to manifest the fruit of His work in us. (*Galatians 5:16, 22-23*) Accepting the totality of Scripture as our basis for faith and practice, we desire to live according to its teachings. The following specific goals are stated as representing that desire:

SECTION 1 – SEPARATION UNTO GOD

We purpose to “abstain from all fleshly lusts” (*1 Peter 2:11*), being “not conformed to this world” (*Romans 12:2*), and to “yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” (*Romans 6:13*)

SECTION 2 – LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

We purpose to love one another, “without hypocrisy” (*Romans 12:9*), to help one another when needed, and to “pray for all saints.” (*Ephesians 6:18*) We shall endeavor by all means to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (*Ephesians 4:3*), refraining from “all bitterness and wrath and clamor and evil speaking.” (*Ephesians 4:31*)

SECTION 3 – COMMITMENT TO OUR MINISTRY

We purpose to support this church faithfully in all its ministries, attending its services, diligently exercising our individual gifts of

the Spirit on its behalf, and contributing both bountifully and cheerfully to its expenses and ministries “as the Lord hath prospered.” (*1 Corinthians 16:2*)

SECTION 4 – TEACHING OF SOUND DOCTRINE

We purpose that we shall “earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (*Jude 3*), “speaking the truth in love.” (*Ephesians 4:15*) The essentials of the Christian faith we believe to be embodied in our Statement of Faith, and we shall therefore strive to defend and propagate these truths, both vigorously and graciously.

SECTION 5 – REACHING THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

We purpose to witness to the lost in both deed and word, seeking to win them to saving faith in Christ and then to bring them into the fellowship of a local church. We purpose also to give our earnest support to home and foreign missions, seeking to do all we can, as the Lord enables, to get the Gospel out to all men. (*Acts 1:8*)

ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

SECTION 1

Articles III-VII of this Constitution shall not be changed in their essence or meaning at any time in the future by any amendment to this Constitution. This Constitution may be otherwise amended by the action of the membership assembled in congregational meetings for such purposes.

SECTION 2

Any proposed amendment must be publicized to the congregation at least **thirty days** prior to the meeting at which action is taken.

SECTION 3

Amendments to this Constitution shall require a **three-fourths** majority vote of members present at a congregational business meeting.

CORNERSTONE BIBLE CHURCH

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I – GOVERNMENT

This church recognizes Christ as its Head and the Scriptures as its only authority (Colossians 1:18; 2 Timothy 3:16). Under that authority, the oversight of this church is vested in a body of elders who operate in concert with the deacons and membership subject to the approval of Biblical Ministries Worldwide (BMW) until separately incorporated and released.

A. Church Leadership

1. Elders

a) Qualifications

An elder must meet the standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9; be an active member of this church; believe in, support, and agree to abide by its Constitution (including the *Statement of Faith and Covenant*); *Bylaws, Our Biblical Commitments to One Another* and written policies.

b) Appointment

The elders will identify qualified candidates to serve as elders. Church members may also submit names of candidates. The elders will evaluate each candidate to see that he meets the standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and to seek evidence of the Lord's calling to the office. The elders will present candidates before the membership, which will be given 30 days to show cause why any of the prospective elders would not be qualified to serve. After considering any such membership input, the elders will present the names of candidates to the membership for approval. For approval of a candidate, at least two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast must be in the affirmative at a duly-called meeting.

c) Authority and Responsibilities

(1) The elders shall be the executive body of the membership in its dealings with the pastor, deacons,

and all outside organizations. They shall exercise supervision over the general work of the church and organizations within the church. When the church is incorporated separately, the elders shall serve as the corporation's directors.

(2) The elders shall not arrange to borrow, purchase, sell, or transfer any property or real estate involving the church without specific authority from the membership in a duly-called meeting. In addition, until the church is incorporated separately, the BMW field leadership or administration must be contacted for approval on any actions involving property or loans.

(3) All financial expenditures shall be decided by the elders within the limits provided by these *Bylaws*.

(4) Along with the pastor, elders shall serve as spiritual advisors to the church. They shall serve as a pulpit committee or appoint others to serve with them in the event the church is without a pastor. They shall conduct business, plan and execute the spiritual business and ministry of the church, examine all applicants for membership and make recommendations to the membership, and administer all discipline. Elders shall be responsible with the pastor for the spiritual welfare of the church, assist in administering the ordinances of the church, visit the sick and those who are bereaved, and endeavor to remedy any spiritual weakness in the lives of the members. Each elder shall personally accept the responsibility to maintain the spirituality of the church and guard against corruption by sin or false doctrine.

(5) Elders shall be responsible to nominate qualified men to serve as deacons, and to oversee the ministry of the deacons.

d) Term of Service

(1) The elder term of service shall be five years beginning in January, with no mandatory hiatus as long as he has been re-elected according to constitution.

(2) Evaluation

An annual self evaluation of each elder shall be presented to the board in January.

(3) Removal of an Elder

Any elder may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the Board if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), after thorough corroborating investigation by the elders, in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19. When an elder is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke, and notice shall be made before the church and the membership thereof at a regularly scheduled worship service as prescribed in 1 Timothy 5:20.

2. Pastor/Teacher

a) Necessity

This church shall engage the services of a pastor for the furtherance of this Gospel ministry as provided for in this *Constitution* and *Bylaws*.

b) Qualifications

(1) The pastor shall meet the qualifications of elders as defined above.

(2) The pastor shall be gifted as a pastor-teacher to equip and shepherd the saints and to administrate and serve in humility and harmony with the elders.

c) Authority and Responsibilities

The pastor's primary responsibility is to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry," mainly through the preaching and teaching of God's Word (Ephesians 4:11-12). This ministry of building up the saints may also include time spent with individuals in personal counseling and encouragement. He shall lead by example in seeking to win the lost to Christ through

personal witnessing. He shall serve as an elder, administer the ordinances, moderate all membership business meetings, and serve as an ex-officio member on all committees.

d) Calling a Pastor [*Note: this section is written with the new church plant in mind. As the church matures in having qualified elders it could become optional for the mandatory involvement of the BMW Field Leadership*]

In the event this church should need a pastor, a pastoral candidate shall be selected and screened by the elders (or members of the transitional government) and the Field Leadership of Biblical Ministries Worldwide before being presented to the membership for approval at a duly-called business meeting. A three-fourths majority vote of members present shall be required to call a pastor. If a two-thirds majority of the members vote in favor of a candidate, the elders and the Field Leadership of BMW shall determine the nature of the concerns of those voting against the candidate. In such cases after careful consideration of those concerns, the elders and the Field Leadership of BMW may still choose to extend a call to the candidate. In those situations the decision of the elders and Field Leadership will be final. [*In the case of a graduated church all references to the Field Leadership would be removed.*]

e) Dismissing a Pastor [*See note for the previous section.*]

Since the pastor is also an elder, any accusations, investigation or discipline of a pastor shall also refer to the above section I, A, 1, d.), (2). If at any time his personal conduct, beliefs, preaching, or teaching shall not be in full accord with the *Constitution* (including the Statement of Faith), and *Bylaws* his services as pastor shall be terminated in the following manner. Upon the recommendation of the elders and BMW Field Leadership at a duly-called business meeting, a simple majority vote of members present shall be required to dismiss a pastor. Thirty days' notice shall precede the effective date of dismissal or resignation, unless by mutual agreement of the elders and pastor.

f) **Disqualification**

In the event that the pastor has potentially disqualified himself, he may be suspended from his ministerial duties by immediate action of at least 50% of the elders or in the event the church retains a Transitional Governmental Structure, in consultation with the BMW Field Leadership while the situation is investigated. During this time his compensation will continue. (For guidelines in resolving such a conflict, see article IV, under Conflict Resolution.)

3. **Deacons**

a) **Responsibilities**

The deacons are responsible to assist the elders in the work of the ministry. Specific areas of service will be determined by the elders.

b) **Selection and Qualifications**

Deacons shall be nominated and elected from among the male members of this church, and shall meet the spiritual qualifications set forth in the Word of God (1 Timothy 3:8-13). A three-fourths majority vote of church members present shall be required to elect a deacon.

c) **Number and Term**

(1) The number of deacons to be elected shall be determined by the elders.

(2) The length of term shall be determined by the elders according to the need.

4. **Ancillary Officers** (Ancillary Officers may also be serving as an elder or deacon.)

a) **Clerk**

(1) A church Clerk shall be elected from the membership of this church for a one-year term.

(2) The Clerk shall keep an accurate record of all membership business meetings; of all church membership activity such as admissions, dismissals, deaths, baptisms, and ordination services; and of all correspondence and/or other such records as may pertain to this office. He/she shall also oversee the

custody of all such other documents as directed by the elders.

b) Treasurer

(1) The church Treasurer shall be elected from the membership of this church for a one-year term.

(2) The church Treasurer shall receive all funds and shall be responsible for the banking of such funds to the account of the church in a bank designated by the elders. He/she shall give to the elders each month, if desired, a financial report showing the true status of the various funds, prepare an accurate financial report for presentation at the annual meeting, and issue annual receipts of personal church financial contributions to those individuals desiring them.

(3) The Treasurer shall oversee the counting of all offerings wherein at least two individuals are required to tabulate the monies collected.

c) Special appointments

Special appointments may be made by the elders as the need arises.

B. Transitional Government

1. Transitional Government is a temporary provision for churches that do not yet possess enough scripturally qualified leaders to fill the governmental roles specified in these *Bylaws*. At the discretion of the missionary-pastor and in consultation with the Field Leadership of BMW, transitional government may be implemented any time there are not enough scripturally qualified leaders in the church.
2. The missionary pastor, in consultation with the Field Leadership of BMW, shall appoint a Provisional Elder Board to oversee the missionary-pastor in guiding the church and conducting church business. Biblically qualified men from outside the church may be appointed to serve on the Provisional Elder Board, if necessary.
3. The missionary-pastor, in conjunction with Field Leadership, may label the Transitional Government differently than "Provisional Elder Board." However, the stated goal of any Transitional Government is from the

outset of the church (a) to model mutual leadership accountability, (b) to submit to a plurality of Biblically qualified leadership, and (c) to provide for the congregation an outlet for missionary-pastor accountability. Any form of Transitional Government is by definition temporary and a step toward a fully functioning, internal Elder Board.

4. The missionary-pastor retains the right to appoint special advisory councils from within the congregation for, but not limited to, leadership development, ancillary oversight, managing day-to-day needs, and/or special ministries. Members of advisory councils are not necessarily required to meet the biblical qualifications of Elder or Deacon, but should be Spirit-filled individuals who have a good testimony in the congregation and community.
5. Any form of Transitional Government shall be dissolved immediately upon the creation of an Elder Board.

C. Church Leadership Meetings

1. Place and Time

- a.) Elders shall meet regularly to plan and execute the spiritual affairs of the church.
- b.) Deacons shall meet regularly to plan and execute the material affairs of the church as directed by the elders.
- c.) Meetings shall be held in such places, and at such times, as may be determined by the chairman of the elders or deacons. The chairman shall call a special meeting when requested to do so by any other elder or deacon.

2. Notice of Meetings

Elders and/or deacons shall be notified of a regular meeting not less than seven days prior to the meeting. A special meeting can be called if adequate notice is given to all members.

3. Quorum at Meetings

Elders are required to attend all regular meetings except for special circumstances in which case they may be excused by the chairman. A quorum for the transaction of business at all meetings of elders or deacons shall be at least 66% of the total number of elders or deacons.

4. **Actions without Meetings**

Any urgent action required or permitted to be taken by the elders shall have the verbal consent of all elders, and such action shall be formalized as soon as possible thereafter at a special meeting of the elders. At such time as this church retains a vocational pastor, the pastor may conduct the daily business of the church without input by the other elders. Guidelines and duties will be set forth in the pastor's job description.

5. **Decisions at Meetings**

After careful discussion, prayer, and submission to applicable biblical principles, the elders and/or deacons shall strive to reach consensus on all decisions. A 66% vote of the elders or deacons shall constitute a final decision. All disagreements of the elders or deacons are to be voiced during meetings, but once a decision is made, elders and deacons are to publicly support the decision of the majority. Minutes of all official meetings shall be kept with a copy given to the Clerk.

D. **Membership Business Meetings**

1. **Rule of Order**

Meetings will be conducted according to the principle of mutual respect and the spirit of humility required by Philippians 2:2-8. An elder policy will specify a rule of order for structuring the meetings. If such a policy is not in place, meeting order will follow *A Parliamentary Guide for Church Leaders*, by C. Barry McCarty or *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief, 2nd edition*.

2. **Notification**

Notice of any duly-called membership business meeting will be given at least two weeks prior to the meeting both from the pulpit on successive Sundays and by at least one notice prominently posted around the church building. During the notification process, the elders will provide sufficient information to the membership to allow them to make an informed decision on recommendations from the elders.

3. **Frequency of Meetings**

Membership meetings will be held to approve the annual budget and to provide an annual report to the membership. The elders may call other meetings at any time.

4. **Voting**

a) An affirmative vote by a simple majority is required for approval of a business item unless a larger majority is specified elsewhere in the *Constitution* or *Bylaws*.

b) Voting privileges (motions and voting) at business meetings shall be limited to members with good membership standing who are eighteen years of age or older.

c) A ballot vote may be requested by existing church leadership or by at least 33% of the members present in the meeting indicated by raising of hands.

5. **Quorum** – The active members present at a duly-called business meeting constitute a quorum. (See I., D., 2. Notification).

6. **New Business** – A member may submit new business items to any elder at any time for consideration, evaluation, and prayer by the elders. New business brought to the floor of a business meeting will likewise be referred to the elders.

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

The Bible is very clear that church membership is not a requirement for salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9). However, membership in a local church is Biblically important and beneficial – to the individual members as well as the local body. ⁴

A. **Qualifications** – Each person shall:

1. Express personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.
2. Give clear evidence of regeneration and demonstrate a sincere desire to live a godly, exemplary, separated, and obedient Christian life.

⁴ For further information on what the Bible says about local church membership, see the booklet *Why Join a Local Church?* and Article VI of our *Constitution, Church Covenant*.

3. Conform to the ordinance of believer's baptism.
4. Read and agree with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Our Biblical Commitments to One Another* of this church.
5. Agree to support this church by prayer, faithful attendance, and systematic giving as taught in the Word of God.

B. Procedure for Receiving Members

1. The candidate for membership shall submit to the pastor a signed membership application on the form provided by the church for this purpose.
2. After returning the signed membership application, the candidate will be given copies of the church's *Constitution, Bylaws, and Our Biblical Commitments to One Another*. After reading these documents, the candidate should indicate agreement by signing and returning the *Membership Agreement*.⁵
3. The candidate shall then be interviewed by the pastor and elders. Upon satisfactory examination the candidate shall be recommended to the members at a regular service.
4. If no member raises any concerns about the candidate during a two week waiting period, the individual shall become a member and the church shall be notified during the next worship service. If any concern is raised, the elders and pastor shall make a thorough investigation and decision. The decision of the elders and pastor shall be final.
5. Associate membership may be permitted to missionaries, students, or temporary residents, as approved by the elders.

C. Dissolution of Membership

1. By death.
2. By letter of recommendation to unite with another church. Any member uniting with another church thereby automatically ceases to be a member of this church – his

⁵ The Membership Agreement is different than the application. It specifically records the official agreement of the candidate to the Doctrines and Commitments of the church. This signed document must be kept on file as proof of their informed consent.

name shall be erased from the roll except when the elders approve associate membership.

3. By erasure.
 - a) A member may request to have his membership dissolved and his name dropped from the roll. This request must be in conjunction with our document entitled "*Our Biblical Commitments to One Another.*"
 - b) Any member not attending any of the meetings of the church for a period of six months, without reason, and otherwise inactive may be erased from the membership roll by the elders.
4. By exclusion. Any member who conducts himself in a manner which is deemed harmful to the interests and purposes of this church may be removed from membership, providing that disciplinary measures have first been taken and have failed to effect correction, and providing that such a member has been given opportunity to be heard at a meeting of the elders.

D. Discipline and Restoration of Members

This church actively practices church discipline according to the principles and commands of Scripture in general and Matthew 18 in particular. (For a detailed description of these practices, refer to the document "*Our Biblical Commitments to One Another.*")

E. Privileges and Responsibilities

1. Faithful attendance and participation in worship services and other church ministries;
2. Voting on pastors, elders, and deacons;
3. Voting on the annual budget of the church;
4. Voting on acquisition of real property and associated indebtedness;
5. Voting on the liquidation of all or substantially all of the church's assets;
6. Voting on amendments to the *Constitution* or *Bylaws*;
7. Voting on a merger or dissolution of the church;
8. Actively participating in any other major event or decision as designated by the elders.

ARTICLE III – FINANCES

A. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year will begin on January 1st and end on December 31st (or at the discretion of the individual church – it is required by the State that there be a specific statement of fiscal year dates.)

B. Budget

1. Budget Preparation and Approval

The elders will be responsible to prepare a church budget, including compensation and benefits to be paid to any church staff, for approval by the membership prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.

2. Budget Changes

The approved overall total of the budget, as presented to and approved by the membership, will be the ceiling on spending for that year.

a) The budget should include a contingency item which the elders may use at their discretion to meet unforeseen expenses by either adjusting existing budget subtotals or establishing additional budget categories.

b) With membership approval, the elders may adjust the overall budget.

C. Income

Normally, church funds will be provided by freewill gifts. Restricted and designated gifts will be handled according to a policy maintained by the elders. Other income may be received from elder-approved activities. The receiving and handling of monies will be according to procedures approved by the elders.

D. Spending Authority

1. During the Fiscal Year - The elders have the authority to spend funds up to the amount approved by the membership for the budget total. In the event that a new budget is not approved until after the new fiscal year begins, monthly spending in the new fiscal year may not exceed average monthly income in the previous fiscal year until the new budget is approved.

2. Year-End Surplus Funds - Funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year will be allocated by the elders.

E. Conflict of Interest

The elders shall endeavor to remain sensitive to potential conflicts of interest in all use of church resources. The elders shall determine whether a contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair, and reasonable to the church.

F. Reports and Reviews

The treasurer will make financial reports to the elders as requested and to the membership at least quarterly. An independent, qualified reviewing agency or individual shall examine the church financial records and money-handling procedures annually after the close of the fiscal year or more often if deemed necessary by the elders. (See the above conflict of interest statement.)

G. Contracts

The elders may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents of the church, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of any on behalf of the church. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances but in accord with practices defined within these *Bylaws*.

H. Endowments

The elders may establish on behalf of the church any endowments for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the church.

ARTICLE IV – CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Any claim or dispute arising between church members, pastors, staff, and/or the church shall be settled by mediation following Scriptural example. If the dispute remains between non-elders, the elders' decision shall be final. If, however, the dispute involves a pastor or elder and no resolution is reached, legally binding Christian arbitration will be employed by the elders using Biblical Ministries Worldwide representatives and/or IFCA International representatives following the guidelines described in the following article.

ARTICLE V – OUR COMMITMENTS TO ONE ANOTHER

Relationships in the church will be guided and governed by the biblical principles set forth in a document entitled *Our Biblical Commitments to One Another*, which is incorporated into these *Bylaws* by reference. This document establishes our commitments related to peacemaking and reconciliation, preserving marriages, protecting children, biblical counseling, confidentiality, accountability, and church discipline. These commitments shall apply both to members and to regular attenders of our church, and may be amended from time to time in the same way that these *Bylaws* may be amended.

ARTICLE VI – ORDINATION

This church shall have the authority to ordain to the gospel ministry those men who can give a satisfactory account as to their conversion, call to the ministry, and preparation. Those men who desire ordination may request that the church conduct an examination. This examination shall be in a public meeting and shall be conducted by the church elders or by a qualified group of ordained pastors assembled for this purpose.

ARTICLE VII – MERGER

The elders may call a special membership meeting for the purpose of merging this church with another church of like faith. Two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at the meeting must be in the affirmative to approve the merger.

ARTICLE VIII – DISSOLUTION

The elders may call a special membership meeting for the purpose of dissolving this church. Two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at the meeting must be in the affirmative to dissolve the church and to approve distribution of the church assets. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director, or officer of the corporation or any private individual; and no donor, member, director, officer of the corporation or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporation assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the corporation will be distributed to Biblical Ministries Worldwide of Lawrenceville, GA, if it then exists and is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes. Otherwise, upon dissolution any assets of the corporation will be distributed to IFCA

International of Grandville, MI, if then recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes. In either case, the request to the recipient of such funds would be that they be used to directly facilitate church planting efforts in the intermountain west area.

ARTICLE IX –AMENDMENTS TO THESE BYLAWS

Upon the recommendation of the elders, these *Bylaws* may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of church voting members present at any regular or special meeting called for that purpose.