

Constitution of Branson Bible Church

The following pages contain the CONSTITUTION OF THE BRANSON BIBLE CHURCH.

Article 1

Preamble

We, the members of Branson Bible Church, of Branson, Missouri, in Taney County, institute the following Constitution and Bylaws. Our desire is to promote the Work of Christ by establishing doctrinal standards and administrative guidelines to govern this independent local assembly.

Article II

Name

The name of this church shall be BRANSON BIBLE CHURCH, (hereafter referred to as the "local church"). It is organized and established under the laws of the state of Missouri as a non-profit corporation.

ARTICLE III, Section 1

The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures, consisting of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, are the verbally inspired Word of God. They are without error in the original manuscripts, infallible and God-breathed, and are the final authority for faith and life.

(II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13; Hebrews 4:12-13)

We teach the grammatical-historical-literal system of interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and accept the historical record of the Bible as accurate and authoritative. The complete revelation of God's Word was given in its entirety for our instruction.

(II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20-21; I Thessalonians 2:13; Psalm 19:7-9)

Article III, Section 2

The Godhead

The one eternal God exists in three persons— Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are all co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, and co-equal in power and glory, having the same attributes and perfections.

(Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16,17; 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14)

Article III, Section 3

God the Father

God the Father eternally exists (having no beginning and no ending of being). He creates, arranges and puts in place all things according to His own purpose and grace. As

the absolute ruler of all things, He is sovereign in creating and sustaining human destiny and redemption (freeing from the consequences of sin). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass, and continually directs and governs all creations and events. He does this while in no way being the author of sin. His Sovereignty does not remove the responsibility of men or angels for their choices. He has graciously chosen from all eternity those whom He would adopt to be His children. He saves from sin all who trust Jesus Christ.

(I Corinthians 8:6; Ps 103:19; Job 1:6; Romans 11:33; I Chronicles 29:11; John 8:38-44; James 1:13; I Peter 1:17-19; Ephesians 1:3-6; John 1:12)

ARTICLE III, Section 4

God the Son

The Lord Jesus Christ has existed from all eternity. He voluntarily became man, without ceasing to be God. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary that He might reveal God and redeem sinful humanity.

(John 1:1-2, 14,18; 8:56-59; 10:28-30; Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-35; Colossians 1:15)

Jesus' death on the cross is substitutionary (He died for us, in our place) and redemptive (He took our sins and the penalty for them upon Himself). Those who believe that Jesus died for them inherit eternal life. On the basis of our belief in the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins God declares us justified or righteous, not on the basis of what we are in ourselves but on the basis of what Jesus did on the cross. Our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead.

(Romans 3:24-25; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; I Peter 1:3-5; 2:24; Romans 5:12; II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9: 22-28)

The Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and is exalted at the right hand of God the Father. There He serves as our Great High Priest. He fulfills the ministry of representative, intercessor and advocate.

(Acts 1:9-10; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:22-23; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25; 9:24; I John 2:1-2)

We look for the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ at any time prior to the tribulation and millennium. When Christ comes for His Church He will catch up to Himself His redeemed ones, both those dead and alive. After the tribulation He will return to earth with His saints, to establish His thousand years, earthly kingdom.

(I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Zechariah 14:4-11; Jude 14-15; I Thessalonians 5:9 with Revelation 6:17; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:2-5)

Article III, Section 5

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is eternal, co-equal and co-existent with God the Father and God the Son, having all the attributes of the Godhead.

(Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; I Corinthians 12:4-6; II Corinthians 13:14; Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17)

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He brings new life to those who are spiritually dead and baptizes (or places) all believers into the one true Church, which is the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells (lives within) all believers permanently, immediately from the moment of salvation, and seals (guarantees and preserves) them unto the day of redemption. He gives spiritual gifts to all believers and fills (controls) those who are yielding to Him to give them power for Christian life and service.

(John 3:3-8; 14:16-17; 16:7-11; I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 4:30; I Corinthians 12:7-11; I Peter 4:10)

The Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the apostles and prophets into all the truth as they wrote God's revelation, the Bible. By extension He also guides believers today into God's truth, particularly as they study and meditate on His Word. Furthermore, He grants access to the Father through prayer.

(John 16:13; Ephesians 2:17,18; II Peter 1:20-21; I John 2:20,27)

Article III, Section 6

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

A spiritual gift is an ability given to every believer by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of serving others and building up the Church. All believers have at least one spiritual gift. The Holy Spirit is sovereign in His selection and distribution of these gifts for the believer.

(I Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:7-16; I Peter 4:10-11)

Some gifts, often identified as sign gifts, were given as signs to the nation of Israel in order to authenticate the message of the first century church. These gifts, such as tongues, miraculous healings and others, gradually ceased as the New Testament was completed and its authority was established.

(I Corinthians 1:22; 12:4-11; 13:8-12; 14:1-40; II Corinthians 12:12)

God still works miracles today when He chooses. He also hears and answers the earnest prayers of believers for the sick in accordance with His will.

(John 15:7; I John 5:14-15; James 5:14-18)

Article III, Section 7

Man

Man, created in the image and likeness of God, was without sin. However, Adam's original sin brought about spiritual death, which is separation from God. Since Adam was mankind's representative, the consequence of his sin, both physical and spiritual death, was passed on to the entire human race. After Adam's sin, all men have been born

with a sinful nature and choose to sin, with the only exception being the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only through believing in the Lord Jesus, whose death was a substitute for fallen man, that we can be saved from spiritual death and reconciled (restored) to fellowship with God.

(Genesis 1:26; 2:17; 3:1-24; Psalm 14:1-3; 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:3,16,36; Romans 3:10-18, 23-28; 6:23; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:22-28; I Peter 1:18-19)

Article III, Section 8

Salvation

Salvation, provided through Jesus Christ for all humanity, is totally a gift of God's grace through faith and not by any human works. God brought reconciliation (restored the broken relationship) between Himself and rebellious mankind through Christ's death on the cross. Faith that leads to salvation is from God and involves the following: first, a genuine change of mind and heart, leading to the acknowledgment of the fact that one is a sinner, condemned before God; second, an understanding that Jesus, as our substitute died for our sins; and finally, a trust in Jesus Christ alone to save from the penalty of sin.

(Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5-6; Romans 1:16; II Corinthians 5:21; Acts 17:30; 20:21; I Thessalonians 1:9; Romans 5:12; 10:9-10; John 3:16; 5:24)

Salvation includes regeneration (given new spiritual life), justification (declared judicially righteous), and adoption into God's family.

(John 1:12-13; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:5)

Faith in Christ that brings salvation will result in good works that reflect God's character.

(Ephesians 2:8-10; James 2:17,20,26; II Corinthians 13:5; II Timothy 1:9)

Article III, Section 9

Security of the Believer

Security: We believe that all the saved—those who have genuinely trusted in Jesus Christ— will be kept (preserved) by God and will be secure in their saving faith until that time when God chooses to take them to be with Him forever.

(John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-29; Romans 8:29-39; I Corinthians 1:4-8)

Assurance and Human Responsibility: Assurance is the knowledge and confidence that one's sins are forgiven and that eternal life is a present possession. We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word and the Holy Spirit. This assurance, however, is not an excuse for sin. God in His holiness cannot tolerate sin in His children, and in love He will correct them.

(Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15; Romans 8:6-13,16; I John 5:13; Hebrews 12:6)

Article III, Section 10

Sanctification

We believe that God, in the Scriptures, has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness. This includes salvation from the penalty of sin, and just as surely, the provision of sanctification (separation) from sin. Sanctification from sin affects the believer in two ways— positionally and practically.

Positional sanctification (i.e., justification) as a work of the Holy Spirit is complete and is without further growth. Practical sanctification (i.e., progressive sanctification) is a result of the work of the Spirit using the Word of God to provide the nourishment for growth in maturity in Christ. While practical sanctification is assured by the Word and the Spirit, it is imperfect in this life. There is some element of corruption in every part of the fallen nature, which is the source for the war between the flesh and the spirit. The maturing of believers is the result of obediently feeding on the Word, submitting to the Spirit of God, and fellowshiping with other believers for service and accountability.

(John 17:17; I Corinthians 1:30; Romans 6:19,22; Hebrews 10:25; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 1:3)

Article III, Section 11

Separation

All of the saved should live in a manner that brings glory and honor to their Savior and Lord. This includes separating from all apostasy, sinful practices, and inappropriate associations as commanded by God. Such separation should be done with a humble, gracious spirit.

(II Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11; II Corinthians 6:14-17)

Article III, Section 12

Sexual Purity

We uphold the sanctity of marriage as a God-ordained, special union between one man and one woman, where sexual relations are both honored and affirmed by God. The Bible teaches that all sexual unions outside of marriage, as thus defined, are sinful. Adultery, bestiality, bisexuality, fornication, homosexuality, incest, lesbianism, pornography, rape and all other sexual actions or relations outside of the marriage relationship between one man and one woman are perversions of human sexuality and are sinful. The Bible opposes sexual sin while demonstrating compassion for those ensnared by it. God forgives and heals all people who respond to His grace. As a local body of believers, we believe in being consistent when dealing with both heterosexual and homosexual offenses.

(Genesis 2:22-24; 19:4-13; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-32; 7:2; I Corinthians 5:1-2; 6:9-10; 7:1-14; I Thessalonians 4:3-7; Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:25-28)

Article III, Section 13

Personal Evangelism and Worldwide Missions

It is the privilege and obligation of those who have trusted Christ to witness by their life and speech to the truth of the Bible and to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind.

All believers, as led by the Holy Spirit, are personally responsible for evangelizing unbelievers.

Evangelism is further accomplished worldwide by sending missionaries directly from the local church or in cooperation with mission boards or other agencies.
(Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; John 17:18; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:19-20)

Article III, Section 14

The Church

The Church is the spiritual body and bride of Christ. He is its head and gives it life. The Church is composed of all born again believers from the day of Pentecost until it is caught up to heaven.

(Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Colossians 1:18)

The local churches are God's basic organizational plan for the training, worship, and ministry of those who have trusted in Christ.

(Matthew 28:18-20; John 17:18-20; Acts 1:8)

The local church is ruled by Jesus Christ as the head, through elders and deacons. These leaders are to be selected according to the standards expressed in the New Testament.

(Acts 6:2-4; 14:23; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)

We practice the ordinances of believers' water baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation and the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of Christ's death on the cross.

(Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; 10:47-48; I Corinthians 11:23-32)

Article III, Section 15

Satan

Satan, also called Lucifer, is one of a multitude of spiritual beings that God created known as angels. Satan led in warfare against God a third of the angels who fell from heaven with him and became demons or active agents in carrying out his unholy purposes. Others who fell were delivered into chains of darkness where they are being held until the judgment.

(Revelation 12:1-10; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19)

He became the author of sin in the world when he deceived Eve, which brought about Adam's willful sin. In the world today, he initiates false religious movements.

(Job 1:6-7; II Corinthians 11:13-15; I Timothy 4:1-3; II Corinthians 4:4; 11:3)

Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man, and will be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire.

(Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 4:2-11; John 12:31; Revelation 20:10)

Article III, Section 16

The Second Coming of Christ

Jesus Christ came to this earth for the first time when He was born in Bethlehem, died on the Cross, was buried, resurrected, and ascended into heaven, and is now at the right hand of the Father interceding for all believers.

Believers are waiting right now for the rapture of His Church which will occur prior to the seven year Great Tribulation, a time of severe judgment of the world. After this tribulation He will return to earth with His saints to establish His millennial kingdom, His 1000-year personal reign on earth.

(I Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; Zechariah 14:4-9; Revelation 3:10; 5:10; 6:16-17; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

Article III, Section 17

The Eternal State

All men will be bodily resurrected, believers in Jesus Christ to eternal life and unbelievers to judgment and everlasting punishment. At death the souls of those who have trusted Christ are absent from the body and present with the Lord. Soul and body will be reunited at the resurrection to be with the Lord forever.

(John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-6,12-13)

ARTICLE IV

Membership

- A. This Church will consist of all persons willing to give testimony of personal faith in Jesus Christ, of water baptism by immersion and of affirmation to the articles of this constitution.
- B. All applicants for membership will be interviewed by the Elders.
- C. All applicants deemed eligible by the elders will be confirmed by a vote of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the members of the church present.
- D. Termination of membership will be brought about by exclusion (see Article 8); or a letter of termination granted to members in good standing who request that their membership be dropped.
- E. Members should actively participate in the meetings of the church.
 1. Members who are inactive for a period of six months will be placed on an inactive membership list and will not retain the right to vote.
 2. Reinstatement of members to the active list is at the discretion of the elders.
 3. The inactive membership list will be regularly reviewed by the elders. Members inactive for one year may be removed from membership by the

elders. Those members who are physically unable to participate or attend will be retained in membership but lose their right to vote.

- F. Affiliate Membership is open to persons temporarily residing in the Branson area who wish to retain active church membership elsewhere because of special personal considerations. Their names will be removed from the membership roll when they leave the community. Affiliate members must meet the same spiritual and doctrinal requirements as active members and have the same right to vote and hold office.

Covenant of Membership

I have trusted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and have assurance of my salvation. I have read the constitution of the Branson Bible Church and I believe and accept its doctrines, standards and purposes. With the Lord's help I will endeavor to do the following:

- A. Attend regularly the services of my church,
- B. Pray for my fellow members, church leaders, church activities and the missionaries,
- C. Give to the Lord for the support of this church and its projects,
- D. Seek to be a blessing to others by using the spiritual gifts the Lord has given me,
- E. Guard my tongue from destructive criticism and gossip,
- F. Submit to the discipline of this church, and work for the good of all the members, thus pleasing the Head of the church, Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE V

Church Government

- A. The government of this church and all its auxiliary organizations will reside in the members of the church.
- B. Church business meetings will be held semiannually, as well as such special business meetings as the Elders consider necessary. Notice of all business meetings will be given public announcement in the church for two consecutive Sundays prior to such meetings.
- C. The Board of Elders will set the agenda and recommend courses of action for the congregational meetings.
- D. The senior pastor, or a designated elder, will act as moderator in all business meetings.
- E. Motions originating from the floor during congregational business meetings may be referred back to the Board of Elders for additional consideration at the discretion of the moderator.
- F. All business meetings of the church will be conducted properly and in an orderly manner.

ARTICLE VI

Officers of the Church

All officers named in this article will be members in good standing in this church.

Senior Pastor

- A. **Selection:** The Senior Pastor of the church will be a man chosen by the congregation for an indefinite period of service following a unanimous recommendation by the Board of Elders and confirmed at a specially called church business meeting. The elders may choose to appoint a Pulpit committee to assist them in the pastoral search. A majority of at least three fourths (3/4) of the voting members present will be necessary to elect.
- B. **Duties:**
 - 1. The Senior Pastor or Board of Elders will have oversight regarding pulpit supplies and special programs.
 - 2. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, boards and organizations of the church.
 - 3. The Senior Pastor will meet regularly with the Board of Elders and Board of Deacons. He will also meet with the Nominating Committee. Attendance at the meetings of the other boards and committees will be at the Pastor's discretion.
- C. **Resignation:** When the Senior Pastor submits his resignation from the pastorate, or if the relationship between pastor and congregation becomes detrimental to the welfare of the church, the relationship may be terminated in sixty days from the date of notice of intention or a shorter period if it is mutually agreed upon. The Board of Elders will be responsible to initiate this process. They will also have the authority to consider remuneration and pastoral duties through this period and make appropriate recommendations to the congregation.

Associate Pastor

- A. **Selection:** He will be chosen for an indefinite period by ballot upon recommendation of the Board of Elders in conjunction with the Senior Pastor. The elders may choose a Pulpit Committee to assist them in the pastoral search. After careful investigation and consideration the selection of an Associate Pastor will be voted upon at a specially called meeting (see Article 5, sub-point 2). Three fourths (3/4) of the voting members present will be necessary to elect.
- B. **Duties:** The Associate Pastor's duties will be directed by the Senior Pastor under the oversight of the Board of Elders.
- C. **Resignation:**
 - 1. When the Associate Pastor submits his resignation from the pastorate or the relationship between pastor and congregation becomes detrimental to the welfare of the church, the relationship may be terminated in sixty days from the date of notice of intention or a shorter period if it is mutually agreed upon.

2. The Board of Elders will be responsible to initiate this process. They will also have the authority to consider remuneration and pastoral duties through this period and make appropriate recommendations to the congregation.

Elders

A. Selection and Composition of the Board:

1. Spiritual leadership of the church resides within a plurality of Elders. The Elders will be comprised of the elected Elders, Senior Pastor and at the discretion of the Elders, the Associate Pastor(s). The qualifications for Elders are found in I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17 and Titus 1:5-9.
2. The church body will endeavor to have a minimum of three elected Elders for the first one hundred members. They will be elected at the annual meeting for a three-year term.
3. A quorum for the Elders shall be a majority of the Elders.
4. Each year the Elders will choose one elder to serve as their chairman.

B. Duties:

1. The board is responsible for setting a vision in accordance with God's will and providing general spiritual oversight of the assembly and its ministries.
2. The duties of the Elders will include the following:
 - a. Oversee the spiritual life of the church (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2; Hebrews 13:17)
 - b. Govern and administer (I Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17). This will include an annual selection of ministry leaders.
 - c. Guard sound doctrine (Titus 2:1-7)
 - d. Be responsible for discipline (I Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13)
 - e. Examine prospective church members
 - f. Establish church policy
 - g. Oversee the missions program of the church
 - h. Oversee all other matters pertaining to the operations of the church
 - i. Responsible to care for communion
 - j. Call a joint board meeting of Elders, Deacons and Pastoral staff to consider matters that are better served by such joint meetings.

Deacons

A. Selection:

1. The qualifications for Deacons are found in I Timothy 3:8-13.
2. There will be a minimum of three Deacons for the first one hundred members.
3. They will be elected at the annual meeting for a three-year term.
4. Each year the deacons will choose one Deacon to serve as their chairman.

B. Duties:

1. The Deacons will serve under the direction of the Elders.
2. They will manage the earthly affairs of the church and be responsible for compliance with any legal requirements of the state of Missouri for the holding of property.
3. They will assist the Elders in serving Communion.

Church Clerk

The Church Clerk will be elected at the annual meeting for a one-year term. His or her duties will be as follows:

- A. To keep an accurate record of the minutes of the regular and special business meetings of the church.
- B. To monitor membership records of the church.

Treasurer

The Treasurer will be elected at the annual meeting for a one year term. His or her duties will be as follows:

- A. To receive and disburse all funds of the church in accordance with the annual budget or as directed by Board of Elders.
- B. To keep a careful record of the financial transactions of the church and ensure that a current back-up copy is kept at a separate location.
- C. To give a financial report at the business meetings of the church.
- D. To provide for an audit of the church's financial records once each year under the direction of the Board of Elders.

Termination of Elected Positions

An elected official may be removed from office if he or she:

- A. Has become an offense to the testimony of the Church
- B. Fails to comply with the Church Covenant and Doctrinal Statement
- C. Holds to and propagates doctrines contrary to those set forth in the Statement of Faith, and/or
- D. Fails to adequately fulfill the duties of his office. These guidelines will also be applied to non-elected positions.

ARTICLE VII

Elections

- A. All church elections will be held each year in January at the annual congregational business meeting. The official church year will begin on January 1 and close on December 31.
- B. The voting age of the members of the church will be eighteen years of age.
- C. All officers of the church will be elected by ballot. With the exception of Elder and Deacon, offices will be held for one year, ending at the annual meeting. Pastors are to be elected as specified in Article VI.

- D. The Elders and Deacons will be elected every 3 years with terms so arranged that a majority will not go out of office at the same time.
- E. A Nominating Committee of three will be appointed by the Elders not less than 30 days before the election. These three, together with the Senior Pastor, will nominate candidates for the officers of the church found in Article VI.
- F. The report of the Nominating Committee will be presented to the church two Sundays prior to the election.
- G. Unexpired terms of office will be filled at the discretion of the Elders.

ARTICLE VIII

Discipline

A. Scriptural Basis

1. The discipline of the church is patterned after the Lord's example (Hebrews 12:6), the character of God (Hebrews 12:11; 1 Peter 1:16), and the examples and commands of Scripture (1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Matthew 18:17-18; Titus 3:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 5:20; Galatians 6:1).
2. Great care must be exercised in determining when church discipline is practiced. Some categories presented in Scripture include:
 - a. Difficulties between members (Matthew 18:15-17).
 - b. Divisiveness (Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:9-11).
 - c. Disorderly conduct (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15).
 - d. Sins of the type mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5 — immorality, covetousness, idolatry, abusive speech, drunkenness, and swindling.
 - e. False teaching of the fundamentals of the faith (1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:17-18; Philippians 3:2-3, 15-19; Romans 16:17-18).

B. Purpose

1. The purpose of church discipline is the restoration and building up of the sinning believer, and the purity of the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6-7).
2. It must be done in the spirit of humility, gentleness and patience, watching "... yourself, or you also may be tempted" (Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:24-25).
3. Those who walk disorderly are to be admonished, warned, and appealed to in love (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; Ephesians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:2).
4. A readiness to forgive must be present (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

C. Administration of Discipline. Church discipline is to be practiced according to the following steps:

1. Recognize the offense, making sure it is an offense that calls for discipline.
2. Seek private correction and/or reconciliation with the offender when the problem involves two believers. (Matthew 18:15) The one offended or the

one who recognizes the offense is to go privately and try to rectify the problem. If this fails, he is to take witnesses, preferably spiritual leaders. (Matthew 18:16).

3. Seek reconciliation through the spiritual leadership if the problem involves an offense that is against the whole body, or is a threat to its unity. Initiatory action should be taken by the elders of the church. If these first steps are not heeded, it constitutes a warning that further action will be taken and gives occasion for serious rebuke (Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14; Titus 2:15; 3:10).
4. If further action or exclusion is necessary, it is to be taken before the whole church (Matthew 18:17).

ARTICLE IX

Amendment Powers

The Constitution of this Church may be amended in the following steps:

- A. **Elder And Deacon Approval:** The proposed amendment(s) shall be submitted to the Elders and Deacons. At least thirty (30) days shall elapse between the proposal of the amendment(s) and the vote on the amendment(s) by the Elders and Deacons. The quorum of the Elders and Deacons shall be fifty-one percent (51%) and one hundred percent (100%) of the Elders and Deacons present must vote in favor of the proposed amendment(s) before being submitted to the Members of the congregation for their vote of approval or disapproval.
- B. **Congregational Approval:** Proposed amendment(s) approved by the Elders and Deacons shall be submitted to the Congregation for approval at a specially called Congregational Meeting. At least thirty (30) days shall elapse between the proposal of the amendment(s) to the Congregation and their vote on the amendment(s). A written copy of the amendment(s) shall be sent by mail or given in person to every member of the congregation in good standing. Members from the age of eighteen (18) years and upward shall be permitted to cast a ballot. Passage of the amendment(s) shall require a seventy-five percent (75%) majority voting in favor of the amendment(s) at the specially called Congregational Meeting. Absentee ballots may be obtained during the week prior to the Congregational Meeting.

ARTICLE X

Church Affiliations

We are an autonomous church that is free to fellowship with other churches of similar doctrine in ministering the gospel or cooperating in activities furthering the cause of Christ. We will seek to remain faithful to our constitution, while maintaining other associations such as an affiliation with IFCA International.

ARTICLE XI

Church Property

- A. The Board of Elders will have the authority to make recommendations to the Congregation concerning transfer, sale or purchase of property. The Congregation will then make the final determination.
- B. Upon the dissolution of Branson Bible Church, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all liabilities of the Church, the assets of Branson Bible Church, Inc. will be distributed to one or more organizations that are of similar biblical persuasion and that are qualified as an exempt organization(s) under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. No members individually or collectively will profit from the dissolution of the church. Such dissolution and distribution of assets will be carried out to completion by the current members of Branson Bible Church, Inc., at the time of dissolution.

ARTICLE XII

Power of Ordination

- A. When, in the judgment of the Board of Elders, a man in the membership of this church, or in special cases a non-member, is recognized as being called and equipped by God to minister His Word, it will be within the power of this church to authorize the Board of Elders to call and conduct a council for ordination.
- B. The council for ordination will consist of Senior and Associate Pastor, elders, and other qualified members of this church, along with pastors and representatives of other like-minded, doctrinally sound churches as desired.
- C. The ordination council will thoroughly examine the candidate as to his call to the ministry, biblical education, character, doctrinal beliefs, and demonstrated ability in Christian service.
- D. Upon the satisfactory completion of the examination and a two-thirds vote of the council, the church will authorize a public ordination service for the candidate.
- E. The Board of Elders will have the authority to conduct an examination of the person ordained under this constitution in the spirit of I Corinthians 13 and Galatians 6:1.
- F. Should it be discovered subsequently to the ordination that the minister has changed his theology to be in conflict to this constitution, or should it be determined that his lifestyle has cast a stain on his ordination, that minister may be disciplined or have his credentials revoked by the board of Elders if he is found guilty of doctrinal or moral deviation.