

Constitution of Columbia Bible Church

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ARTICLE I – Purpose

Columbia Bible Church (CBC) is organized for exclusively religious purposes (including charitable purposes common to a pastoral church ministry as defined by Scripture). Our commission is summarized as follows: “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20).

CBC seeks to live out this commission by focusing our efforts in the following areas:

Ministry to God – in relationship to God, the church’s purpose is to worship Him. Worship is a direct expression of our ultimate purpose for living; to glorify God and fully enjoy Him forever (Colossians 3:16 Ephesians 1:12,5:16-19).

Ministry to Believers –in relationship to God’s people, the church’s purpose is to nurture and build them up to maturity in the faith (Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:12-13).

Ministry to the World – in relationship to the lost, the church’s purpose is to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19) by sharing and living the Gospel.

ARTICLE II – Doctrinal Statement of Faith

The doctrinal statement of faith of CBC is that which is attached to this document.

ARTICLE III – Members of the Local Body

Being a Member

Members of CBC are those who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, who have been baptized, and who are committed to the care for one another according to 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. Those members shall seek to exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all the church body while they submit to the shepherding leadership of the elders.

Church Discipline

a. The threefold purpose of church discipline is

to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6),

to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and

to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

b. Members of this church who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by

the Board of Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, with the goal of restoration, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18.

c. The elders in the exercise of their discretion may also proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline (informing the congregation at a regularly-scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance) or to the fourth stage of church discipline, (i.e. the dismissal from the fellowship and/or membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred:

1. Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public, i.e. openly and to the offense of the whole Church (1 Corinthians 5:1-5);
2. Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed unbiblical by the elders, then has chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the elders (Romans 16:17); or
3. Where the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11).

Meetings

Congregational Meetings will be held at least once per calendar year. Members of the body will consider reports of the affairs of the church, consider affirmation of the appointment of elders and Deacons and recommendations of other business brought before the congregation as determined by the elders. These meetings shall be called by the Chairman of the Elder Board or by any two elders. Notice of these meeting will be given from the pulpit and published in the bulletin on the two prior successive Sundays.

ARTICLE IV – Elders

Authority of Elders

All the activities and affairs of CBC shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Elders who are responsible for shepherding and having oversight of the flock. The Board shall have the following powers in addition to the other powers enumerated by this constitution:

- a. To select and remove all the officers, agents, pastors, staff, and employees of CBC, and to prescribe such duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, with law, and to fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- b. To make such disbursements from the funds and properties of CBC as are required to fulfill its purposes; generally to conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of CBC and to make such rules and regulations consistent with the Scriptures as they may deem best.

Accountability of Elders

Each elder will be subject to an annual review of his shepherding responsibilities conducted by the Elder Board. In the event of a disagreement among Elder Board regarding a specific elder, that elder will remove himself, after he has given his input on the matter, from any decisions regarding his future role as an Elder.

Decisions of the Board of Elders

Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration by unanimous vote in a spirit of humility, with each elder regarding one another before himself.

Number of Elders

The authorized number of elders on the Board shall remain open without restriction. However, there shall at all times be a minimum of two elders.

Qualifications of Elders

The elders shall be men possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He shall be:

- a. Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7)
- b. Husband of one wife; a one-woman man (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- c. Temperate, sober, vigilant (1 Timothy 3:2)
- d. Sober-minded, prudent (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- e. Of good behavior; orderly, respectable (1 Timothy 3:2)
- f. Given to hospitality (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- g. Apt to teach; able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- h. Not given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- i. Not violent; not pugnacious (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- j. Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle (1 Timothy 3:3)
- k. Not a brawler; uncontentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- l. Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy of base gain (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)

- m. Rules well his own house; his children are faithful, not accused of rebellion to God (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6)
- n. Not a novice; not a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6)
- o. Has a good report or reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7)
- p. Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)
- q. A lover of good men and things (Titus 1:8)
- r. Just, fair (Titus 1:8)
- s. Holy, devout (Titus 1:8)
- t. Self-controlled (Titus 1:8)

In addition he must have the time and availability to fulfill his role as Elder

Selection of Elders

A nomination for an elder candidate will be chosen from men known over a long period of service. His biblical qualifications and heart attitudes will be confirmed by the elders over a period of two years of faithful Christian living. If unanimously agreed upon by the elder Board following extensive prayer and examination, the candidate will be presented to the congregation. The congregation will be notified of the nomination in preparation for a four week period of affirmation. The elder Board will review all comments received during the affirmation period and will prayerfully consider them. If concerns are raised, the elders will determine whether to ask the nominee to step down from the nominating process until it is determined that the concerns have been addressed and resolved in a spirit of unity. If the nominee is unanimously approved by the Elder Board he will be installed as an elder. A congregational meeting will be called to announce the results of this selection process. The length of the term for a serving elder is indefinite with annual congregational affirmation.

Resignations of Elders

Any elder may resign effective upon giving written notice to the Chairman of the Board.

Sabbaticals

Any elder may take a sabbatical for a specified length of time upon giving written notice to the Chairman of the Board and receiving approval from the Elder Board.

Removal of Elders

Any elder may be removed from office at any 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.

An elder confronting another elder regarding sin will follow the model of Matthew 18:15-18. Any member who has an accusation against an elder shall bring it to the board with the understanding that the Elder Board will only receive an accusation against an elder on the basis of two or more witnesses (I Timothy 5:19) and will again follow the model of Matthew 18:15-18.

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 at a regularly-scheduled worship service as prescribed in 1 Timothy 5:20.

Elder Meetings

The Elder Board will formally meet at least monthly at a mutually agreed upon location. Meetings are to be called by the Chairman of the Elder Board or by any two elders.

Rights of Inspection

Every elder shall have the right at any reasonable time to inspect and copy all books, records, and documents of every kind and to inspect the physical properties of CBC for a purpose reasonably related to such person's interest as an elder.

Fees and Compensation

Elders (as such) shall not receive any stated or fixed salary for their services. However, nothing precludes any elders from serving Columbia Bible Church in any other capacity and receiving compensation. Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from CBC shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation. A paid Pastor/Elder will be subordinate to the elders regarding his compensation.

ARTICLE V – The Pastor

(Elder with the primary teaching responsibility, thus considered especially worthy of double honor- 1 Timothy 5:17)

Selection

The Pastor shall be selected by the Elder Board and affirmed by the members of the church. Each pastoral candidate will be a man known for faithful Christian living over a period of several years. The candidate will be presented by the Elder Board to the congregation following extensive prayer, examination and unanimous conclusion. The congregation will be notified of the candidacy in preparation for a period of affirmation. The Elder Board will review

all comments received during the affirmation period and will prayerfully consider them. If concerns are raised, the elders will determine whether to remove the candidate from the candidate process or work through the concerns with the candidate and the congregation in a spirit of unity. If the candidate is unanimously approved by the Elder Board, he will be installed as the Pastor. A congregational meeting will be called to announce the results of this selection process.

He shall remain on staff an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations: In accordance with Article IV – Elders, the elders may dismiss the Pastor upon written notice, allowing up to 90 days severance. The Pastor must give two month's notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a Pastor's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the Pastor and the elders by mutual agreement provide otherwise.

Duties

The role of the Pastor exists for the service of the church body. He shall assist in public and regular services of the church and shall assist the elders in general oversight of the spiritual welfare of the church. His teaching shall be in agreement with the church doctrinal statement. He will function in the role of shared leadership with the rest of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE VI – Deacons

Qualifications and Responsibilities

Deacons shall be men possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. A deacon shall be a man of dignity, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not fond of sordid gain, holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, first tested and found above reproach. Deacons shall serve a defined role for a defined period, both as set forth by the elders upon nomination. The deacons shall assist the elders in the shepherding of the saints and perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders.

Selection of Deacons

A nomination for a deacon candidate will follow the same process as for an Elder. Each deacon nominee will be a man known over a long period of service. His Biblical qualifications and heart attitudes will be confirmed over a period of two years of faithful Christian living. The candidate will be presented by the Elder Board to the congregation following extensive prayer and examination. The congregation will be notified of the nomination in preparation for a four week period of affirmation. The Elder Board will review all concerns received during the affirmation period and will prayerfully consider them. If concerns are raised, the elders will determine whether to remove the candidate from the process or to work through the concerns with the nominee and the congregation in a spirit of unity. If the nominee is unanimously approved by the Elder Board, he will be installed as a deacon. A congregational meeting will be called to conclude this selection process.

ARTICLE VII – Officers

Designation of Officers

The officers of CBC shall be the Chairman of the Elder Board, Secretary, and Treasurer. Each officer shall hold his office until he shall resign or be removed, or until his successor shall be appointed.

The Chairman

The Chairman shall be an elder and shall, subject to the control of the Board of Elders, have general supervision, direction, and control of the activities and officers of CBC. He shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Elders, which are to be conducted according to the scriptural principles such as set forth in Philippians 2:2-8. He shall be an ex officio member of standing committees, if any, and shall have powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Elders or the Constitution. The Chairman shall serve for a period of one year and shall appoint his successor. The Chairman shall not be a paid staff member.

Secretary

The Secretary shall be an elder and shall keep a book of minutes at the principal office or such other place as the Board of Elders may order, of all meetings of the members, the Board and its committees, with the time and place of holding, whether regular or special, and if special, how authorized, the notice thereof given, the names of those present at the meetings, the board and committees' meetings, and their proceedings. The Secretary shall keep the original and a copy of CBC's articles and constitution, as amended to date. The Secretary shall give notice of all meetings of the Board and any committees. The Secretary shall keep a church membership register, showing the names of the members and their addresses. He shall also have such other powers and perform such other duties as prescribed by the board.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be an elder and shall ensure the stewardship of the physical and financial resources of CBC. He may also hold the office of Secretary. The Treasurer shall “take precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (2 Corinthians 8:20-21). He shall select and oversee a finance committee, three people or more, “men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom” (Acts 6:3) to implement and accomplish this responsibility. He shall oversee adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of CBC. The books of account shall at all reasonable times be open to inspection by any Elder. The Treasurer shall deposit all monies and other valuables in the name and to the credit of CBC as designated by the Board of Elders. He shall disburse the funds of CBC as may be ordered by the Board of Elders, shall render to the Chairman and the Elders, whenever they request it, an account of all the transactions and of the financial condition of CBC, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Elders. He shall ensure an annual independent audit has taken place, and he will

make the financial reports available at each regular Board meeting and at the annual meeting of members.

ARTICLE VIII – Settlement of Disputes

In any dispute arising between church members, elders, or staff pertaining to any matter of spiritual teaching or practices, church finances, or title to property purchased with church contributions, the dispute shall be resolved by the Board of Elders of the church. A decision shall be reached after prayerful consideration, in a spirit of humility, with each elder regarding one another before himself (Philippians 2:1-5) and striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3).

ARTICLE IX – Receipt, Investment, and Disbursement of Funds

Columbia Bible Church shall receive all monies or other properties transferred to it for the purposes for which it was formed. However, nothing contained herein shall require the Board of Elders to accept or receive any money or property of any kind if it shall determine in its discretion that receipt of such money or property is contrary to the expressed purposes of CBC.

ARTICLE X – Records and Reports

Columbia Bible Church shall maintain adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties. All such books, records, and accounts shall be kept at its principal place of business as fixed by the Board of Elders from time to time. The fiscal year of CBC shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December in each year.

ARTICLE XI – Dissolution

Upon dissolution of Columbia Bible Church, the Board of Elders shall cause the assets to be distributed to another church with purposes similar to that of CBC. No elder individually or collectively shall profit from the dissolution of the church.

ARTICLE XII – Other Provisions

Amendments

This Constitution may be amended and new and additional Bylaws may be made by the Board of Elders in the exercise of the power granted to the Board of Elders in this Constitution. The congregation will be informed of any changes at the following Sunday worship service.

Record of Amendments

Whenever an amendment is adopted, it shall be copied in the book of minutes with the original Constitution, in the appropriate place. If any Bylaw is repealed, the fact of repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted or written assent was filed shall be stated in the book.

Instruments in Writing

All checks, drafts, demands for money, notes and all written contracts of CBC shall be signed by an officer or agent, as the Board of Elders may from time to time designate.