

# REDEEMER BIBLE CHURCH CONSTITUTION

## **Article I - Name**

The name of this church shall be Redeemer Bible Church, Inc. This church shall enjoy the benefits of a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation as recognized by the federal government unless said government would require this church to violate Scriptural teachings or principles in belief or practice in order to maintain this status. In such a case, this church will sacrifice 501(c)(3) status before disobeying the Scriptures.

## **Article II - Object**

The purpose of this church shall be to magnify and enjoy our glorious God together through the gospel of Jesus Christ by making new disciples of Christ, by helping one another to become more like Christ, and by worshipping and serving God, all out of love for him and one another.

## **Article III - Government**

The government of this church shall involve elder (synonymous with "pastor" in this document) decision making and congregational affirmation. The church membership as a whole shall hold title to all properties. This church shall acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as its only Head and thus shall remain independent of official denominational alliances. Helping and receiving help from other churches of like faith and practice, however, will be encouraged in a spirit of interdependence.

## **Article IV - Membership**

- A. Members of this church shall be born-again persons who have proclaimed their faith in Christ through baptism and who shall submit to the Charter documents (Statement of Faith and Constitution) of this church.
- B. The Procedure for Membership
  1. All prospective members shall
    - a. read and study the Charter documents. This may be done through a prospective members' class if the elders so decide.
    - b. fill out an application form and be announced by name to the congregation.
    - c. meet with and be interviewed by two elders, who may invite other members to attend the meeting.
    - d. be presented to the congregation and sign the membership roll.
  2. This procedure shall cover a minimum of three weeks. Objections may be voiced to the elders by any member during this time period.
- C. Letters directly transferring membership to other churches shall not be granted.
- D. Inactive Membership

1. Those who temporarily live away from this community but desire to hold their membership with this church. This intent must be presented in writing to the elders for approval.
2. Previously active members who have been absent from the services of the church for a period of six months. Such individuals will remain as inactive members while the elders seek them out to assess the situation and attempt to restore them to active membership.
3. Inactive members shall not have the right to vote or to hold office in the church.
4. Inactive members who wish to be reinstated to full membership must apply to the elders for approval.

E. Removal from Membership

1. Those who wish to be removed from church membership must directly communicate with the elders to express this request and explain their reasons for this request.
2. Those who have stopped attending the services of the church will be sought out by elders to encourage them to begin attending again or to find out the reasons they wish to leave the church. If repeated attempts to communicate with such individuals meet with no results, the elders may decide as a group to remove them from the church membership.
3. Those who leave this church body to become members of another church will be removed from church membership.
4. Those who have passed through all the steps of the church restoration/discipline process in refusal to repent of their sin(s) will be removed from church membership. A stated intention of an individual to remove himself or herself from church membership while he or she is in the church restoration/discipline process will be considered a final refusal to repent from the church's perspective. The situation will be reported to the church congregation so as to conclude the church discipline process as described below.
5. Those members who are removed from the membership roll shall be notified in writing by the elders.

- F. All active members over the age of 16 years who are not involved in the church restoration/discipline process will be eligible to participate in congregational votes of affirmation.

**Article V – Leadership and Other Official Roles**

A. General organization

1. The elders are the decision-making body of the church and will present decisions to the church members for affirmation on certain matters as designated in this document.
2. The elders are responsible for the selection of new elders and deacons. This responsibility includes assessing a candidate's qualifications, training

him concerning the role of the office, and presenting him to the congregation for affirmation.

3. Elder and deacon selections will be affirmed by eligible members of the congregation by written ballot at a Congregational Meeting.
    - a. Eligible members must evaluate the candidates on the basis of the Scriptural qualifications for the office, not on the basis of personal preferences. If a member of the congregation has questions about a candidate's qualifications, the member bears the responsibility to seek out the candidate and discuss the matter. If the member's concerns are not resolved, he or she should discuss those concerns with one or more elders.
    - b. The elders will forego the appointment of any potential elder or deacon who is not supported by a 2/3 supermajority in a congregational vote of affirmation.
  4. The elders and deacons shall each elect their own chairman and secretary.
  5. The elders and deacons shall each meet monthly at a time and place of their discretion.
  6. The elders will constitute the directors of this corporation as recognized by federal, state, and local governments. If there are less than three elders, one or more members in good standing may be selected and supported by a majority in a congregational vote of affirmation as directors of this corporation.
- B. Elders (Pastors)
1. Qualifications
    - a. Elders must be male.
    - b. Elders must meet the Scriptural qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:6-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3.
    - c. Elders must have been active members of the church for at least six months, with the exception of new church-employed elders.
  2. Classification
    - a. One or more of the elders will be employed by the church as finances allow and specific needs require. Church-employed elders will naturally devote more time to and bear more specific responsibilities in the pastoral ministry of the church than elders who are not so employed.
    - b. The terms elder, overseer, and pastor are used interchangeably in Scripture (Ac 20:28; 1 Pt 5:1-2), and will be used in this church to refer to both church-employed elders and non-church-employed elders. All elders will share the same general responsibilities of the office and will share equal authority.
  3. The lead elder
    - a. Calling the lead elder
      - A candidate for the position of lead elder shall speak at a minimum of four services. His wife (if he is married) and

- family (if he has children) must accompany him to at least two of these services.
- He and his family shall meet with the elders.
  - A question-and-answer session with the congregation will be part of the candidating process.
  - After the candidating process is completed, the elders will determine whether or not to recommend the individual to the congregation for affirmation.
  - The elders will forego the appointment of any candidate who is not supported by a 3/4 supermajority in a congregational vote of affirmation.
- b. Responsibilities of the lead elder
- The lead elder will bear the chief responsibility of preaching the Word and leading in the administration of the ordinances of the church.
  - The lead elder will provide direction, instruction, and training for the entire group of elders as a “first among equals.”
  - The lead elder will provide direction and accountability for all the paid employees of the church.
4. Other church-employed elders
- a. The elders may decide to add other elders to the paid church staff to oversee specific ministry areas as such needs arise and finances allow. This decision must be supported by a majority in a congregational vote of affirmation.
  - b. Candidates for church-employed elder positions must be approved according to the same guidelines as the lead elder above with the exception that they need to speak at only one church service instead of four.
  - c. The elders may decide to begin financially compensating a current elder of Redeemer Bible Church. This decision must be supported by a majority in a congregational vote of affirmation.
5. Responsibilities
- a. The elders are to shepherd the flock of God, particularly through the teaching of God’s Word. They will oversee the affairs and spiritual life of the church body. They will set an example in their personal lives and public relationships for the church to follow.
  - b. In addition to selecting new elders and deacons, the elders shall comprise a search committee for seeking and examining prospective paid church staff and other officers.
  - c. The elders will seek to be aware of and sensitive to the thoughts of other church members regarding their decisions, and they will keep the congregation informed and involved in church matters to the degree that is appropriate.
6. Decision making

- a. The elders will seek to act in a spirit of unanimity in all their decisions and will not proceed with any decision in which more than 1/4 of the elders dissent.
- b. All elders will have one equal vote in all decisions except in specific matters in which, because of personal interests, they should not be included in the vote.

### C. Deacons

#### 1. Qualifications

- a. Deacons must be male.
- b. Deacons must meet the Scriptural qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- c. Deacons must have been active members of the church for at least six months.

#### 2. Responsibilities

- a. In general the deacons will enable the elders to devote themselves to the spiritual shepherding and oversight of the church by focusing their own attention on many of the physical aspects of church life. Their work will be done under the oversight of the elders.
- b. The deacons will devote attention and care to the physical site where the church meets, to other property belonging to the church, to the financial affairs of the church including the budget, and to the benevolent ministry of the church.
- c. The deacons will function as the trustees of the church in all legal transactions.
- d. The deacons will provide direction for the church treasurer, church clerk, and ushers.
- e. The deacons will assist in the preparation and carrying out of the church ordinances—baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- f. The deacons will assist in the physical and logistical needs related to church services, meetings, and fellowships.

#### 3. Decision making

- a. The deacons will make decisions regarding matters delegated to them by the elders.
- b. The deacons' decisions will be subject to the review of the elders.
- c. Like the elders, the deacons will seek to act in a spirit of unity, but a 2/3 vote is all that is required for a matter to be decided.

### D. Other Church Staff

1. The elders may decide that additional paid church staff members such as an administrative assistant or facilities manager are necessary. This decision must be supported by a majority in a congregational vote of affirmation.
2. The elders will select a person to fill the proposed role on the basis of skill, giftedness, spiritual maturity, and Christian reputation.
3. All persons employed by the church must already be or must become active members of the church at the time of hire.

### E. Dismissal of Church Leaders or Officers

1. Dismissal of elders or deacons
  - a. The elders may decide to dismiss any elder or deacon who no longer meets the Scriptural qualifications for his office or who fails to faithfully carry out the duties of his office. An elder who is under question in the matter will not have a vote.
  - b. If the elders decide to dismiss an elder or deacon, they will present their decision and the reason for it to the congregation for a vote of affirmation. If a majority affirms this decision, the elders may dismiss the elder or deacon.
  - c. If less than a majority affirms this decision, the matter will return to the elders. The elders may still determine to dismiss the elder or deacon if 2/3 of the elders who are not under question in the matter support this decision.
  - d. The dismissal of an elder or deacon may require the church restoration/discipline process as outlined below if sin is the cause for dismissal. This process will not be necessary if the elder or deacon repents of the sin.
2. Dismissal of church-employed elders
  - a. The procedure for dismissal of church-employed elders will follow the guidelines detailed above regarding the dismissal of an elder or deacon.
  - b. If a church-employed elder is dismissed, his services will be terminated immediately.
  - c. Removed
3. Other officers or paid church staff may be dismissed from their roles by the decision of the elders.

#### **Article VI - Church Restoration/Discipline**

##### A. Preamble

To maintain the peace and purity of the church and to reclaim erring members, Scripture directs the confrontation of persons living in unrepentant sin by restricting active participation and membership in the local church. The restoration/discipline process shall be imposed whenever there is uncorrected, deliberate sin, whether it be in doctrine or in practice (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Timothy 2:16-21).

##### B. Procedure

1. Reasonable efforts shall be made by those who have first-hand knowledge of the doctrinal error or sin to correct the offender and encourage him or her to practice the truth and cease from sin (Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3; Galatians 6:1).
2. If private reproof fails, the matter shall be brought to the offender by one or two additional witnesses to offer reproof and spiritual counsel (Matthew 18:16; Deut. 19:15).
3. After reasonable attempts toward restoration have failed, the charges shall be officially submitted to the elders for further investigation and/or attempts at reconciliation. No action calling for suspension or dismissal of

membership shall be taken against any person until such member be informed and the charge cited; and the member shall be given an opportunity to appear at a meeting of the elders.

4. If the matter is not reconciled to the satisfaction of the elders, the matter will then be taken to the congregation in order for the congregation as a whole to exhort the erring member to repent.
5. If the sinning member refuses the reproof of the congregation within a designated time period, the offender shall be excluded from membership in the church and from any roles in the church which he or she has filled.
6. The congregation will regard the excluded person as an unbeliever based on his or her lack of repentance and thus will seek to call the person to come to Christ in faith and repentance in any ongoing interactions.

#### C. Principles

1. The purpose of the restoration/discipline process is to patiently, lovingly, and gently, but firmly, bring restoration to the member involved (Matthew 18:17; 1 Timothy 5:20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:20; Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15). All matters of discipline shall be conducted in the spirit and letter of the Scriptures.
2. Should discipline occur and restoration of fellowship and membership be desired, a written request of those desires will be sent to the elders, at which time a decision of possible reinstatement of fellowship and membership will be made.
3. Members of this church agree to submit themselves to this restoration/discipline process and to approve of statements to the congregation regarding the matter and ultimate dismissal from membership should they refuse to repent. Members therefore agree not to pursue charges or suits in any court against this church for carrying out this process as delineated in this section.

### **Article VII - Meetings**

#### A. The following shall be regular fellowship and worship services:

1. A Sunday service for worship, instruction, and fellowship.
2. A midweek community group meeting for prayer, Bible study, and/or fellowship.
3. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least bi-monthly.
4. Special services such as a Bible or missionary conference may be held with outside speakers at the discretion of the elders.
5. Other regular or semi-regular services may be established by the elders.

#### B. Congregational Meetings:

1. A congregational meeting shall be held annually, within the final two months of each year to determine financial and budget affairs for the following year. Times will be determined by the elders.

2. Other congregational meetings may be called by the elders.
3. The moderator will be designated by the elders.
4. A congregational vote of affirmation will require the participation of at least 1/3 of the eligible members.
  - a. The elders will announce the decisions they are asking the congregation to affirm at least two weeks prior to the vote of affirmation. The decisions will be posted in writing and announced verbally in at least two services prior to the vote.
  - b. The members of the church are expected to discuss any questions or concerns they have with the elders' decisions during the two-week period leading up to the vote of affirmation. The actual vote of affirmation should not be the first time a member makes his or her questions or concerns known to the elders.
  - c. Members of the church are expected to set aside personal preferences in their vote of affirmation. They should be able to present Biblically-based reasons for their dissent from the elders should they choose not to affirm the elders' decision(s).
  - d. The elders' decision will be restated at the congregational meeting and time for final discussion on the matters will be given.
  - e. Forms will be printed for each eligible member with their names on the form. They will sign and date the form once they have marked their response to the elders' decisions.
  - f. Eligible members who will be absent from the congregational meeting may fill out a form in the two weeks prior to the meeting in the presence of three church members, who will act as witnesses.
  - g. Elders will reconvene after the vote of affirmation to discuss the results of the vote and determine whether or not to finalize the decision.
    - Except as delineated otherwise in this constitution, the elders may finalize their decisions with the support of the majority of the members participating in the vote of affirmation.
    - If less than the required amount of support in a vote of affirmation is received, the elders may decide to present their decision to the congregation again after further discussion, teaching, and prayer.
5. Business meetings will be open to nonmembers unless otherwise designated by the elders.

#### A. Ordination

1. Redeemer Bible Church has authority as a local church body to ordain elders.



2. A candidate seeking ordination in this church shall approach the elders for permission to be considered for ordination. The elders shall decide whether to grant permission based on the character and maturity (according to the qualifications set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), spiritual gifts, and biblical and theological knowledge of the candidate.
  - a. his character and maturity in accordance with the qualifications set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9
  - b. his spiritual giftedness
  - c. his calling to the role of an elder
  - d. his biblical and theological knowledge
  - e. his commitment to orthodox biblical teaching
3. The ordination board shall consist of the elders and any other ordained men as desired by the candidate with the approval of the elders.
4. Upon recommendation of the elders for the ordination of a man, a date shall be set for an ordination service. This service shall include prayer for the candidate by the elders and members of the church and ordination of the man to the role of an elder.
5. Upon completion of said service, the candidate shall be considered officially an ordained minister and is entitled to all legal rights and privileges granted thereby

#### **Article VIII - Finances**

- A. The church is supported by voluntary contributions from its members, who shall give according to their abilities and according to the dictates of their own consciences.
- B. Outstanding indebtedness for fixed assets shall not exceed two and one-half times the annual income. A decision by the elders to incur greater indebtedness must be affirmed by a 3/4 supermajority in a congregational vote of affirmation.
- C. Records of all financial transactions shall be kept by the church treasurer, who shall submit a monthly financial report to the elders and deacons. To keep the church financial records and dealings transparent and available to all members, this monthly report shall be posted publicly.
- D. The annual budget as presented by the elders at the annual Financial Congregational Meeting, must be supported by a majority in a congregational vote of affirmation.
- E. Removed
- F. Removed
- G. Removed
- H. The church will operate financially in accordance with the Financial Policies. These policies must be supported by a majority in a congregational vote of affirmation. The Financial Policies may be amended as the church grows and

ministry needs and focuses change. Amendments must also be supported by a majority in a congregational vote of affirmation.

- I. All expenses that do not fall within the budget and are in excess of the disbursement limits set in the Financial Policies must be presented by the elders to the congregation and supported by a majority in a congregational vote of affirmation.

### **Article IX - Ordinances**

#### A. Water Baptism

1. Only those who are professing their faith in Jesus Christ will be baptized.
2. Immersion will be the mode of baptism, as it appears to be the practice of the New Testament Christians and the early Church and best symbolizes the full meaning of baptism.
3. A rare exception to baptism by immersion may take place in the case of an individual who wishes to be baptized but for reason of sickness or infirmity is disabled from being immersed in water.

#### B. The Lord's Supper

1. Participation in the Lord's Supper is for those who have professed faith in Christ and who are walking in fellowship with him.
2. Neither denominational affiliation nor church membership is required to participate in the Lord's Supper.

### **Article X – On Marriage, Singleness, and Sexual Purity**

- A. We believe that God created humanity, male and female, to bear His image in the earth (Gen. 1:26). We believe that men and women are created as spiritual equals, yet designed in complementary order to assume God-given roles in the home, the church and society (Gen. 1:26-27; Gen. 2:18; Gal. 3:28).
- B. We believe that God has designed the marriage relationship to portray the profound mystery of Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:31-32), to produce godly offspring (Gen. 1:28), to provide helpful companionship (Gen. 2:18), and to promote sexual purity and fulfillment (1 Cor. 7:2-5). We believe that marriage is designed by God to join one man and one woman in a lifetime covenant of love (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:3-9; 1 Cor. 7:10-11).
- C. We believe that God gives some individuals the gift of celibacy in order that they may serve Him without the cares of a spouse or family (Matt. 19:11-12; 1 Cor. 7:8). We believe that remaining single is a godly choice and carries with it the opportunity and responsibility to maintain sexual purity as prescribed by the Scriptures (1 Cor. 7:6-9).
- D. We believe that God forbids intimate sexual activity outside of marriage. We believe any form of adultery, fornication, incest, polygamy, homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4). Aside from the case of an abnormal genital birth defect, we believe that attempts to alter one's sex by surgery or appearance reflect a heart that does not submit to God's good and

sovereign right to determine our sex, so such attempts are disapproved of and forbidden by God (Gen. 1.27; Jer. 1.5; 1 Cor. 6.9).

#### **Article XI - Dissolution of the Corporation**

In the event of the dissolution of the Redeemer Bible Church as a non-profit corporation, the assets of the corporation shall be first and foremost offered to be returned to Heritage Bible Church (Greer, SC) if it is in existence or, if Heritage Bible Church is not in existence and/or refuses such grant: given and paid over to a non-profit corporation of like faith and practice. Said corporation shall be determined by a majority vote of the members of the corporation present at a previously announced business meeting for said dissolution.

- A. Notice of dissolution shall be sent, in writing, to each member at least fifteen days prior to the scheduled meeting, and public notice shall be given at least forty-five days prior to the meeting.
- B. All recommendations for recipients of the corporation assets will be placed, in writing, by a member of the corporation to the elders and deacons no less than thirty days prior to the dissolution meeting. No other recommendations shall be considered.
- C. It shall be the duty of the elders and deacons to examine all recommendations submitted and to make recommendations to the congregation concerning the distribution of the church assets.
- D. Said recommendation shall be made available, in writing, to the congregation fifteen days prior to the dissolution meeting.
- E. If Heritage Bible Church (as stated above) chooses not to assume ownership of the corporation, then the decision as to the recipient(s) of the assets of the corporation shall be the mutual consent of the majority of the members present at the dissolution meeting.
- F. The deacons, in the stead of the members of the corporation, shall assume the responsibility of all dissolution proceedings, and shall seek and obtain legal assistance to complete said proceedings.

#### **Article XII - Amendments**

- A. As a working, flexible document, this constitution may be amended, altered, or revised by recommendation of the elders with the support of a 2/3 supermajority in a congregational vote of affirmation.
- B. Care shall be taken to maintain the spirit, intention, and doctrinal basis of the original constitution.