

# The Constitution of Battle Ground Bible Church

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## Article I - Name

The name of this body of believers shall be Battle Ground Bible Church, Inc.

## Article II - Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be to preach and teach the Word of God, to worship God, to observe the ordinances of baptism and communion, to develop the spiritual life of every believer, and to seek to win the lost to Christ, both at home and on foreign fields.

## Article III - Doctrine

### 1. The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally, inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; John 6:12-13).

### 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 nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Matthew 28:18-20; Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

### 3. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

- a. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin named Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (John 1:1,2,14; Luke 1:3; Galatians 4:4-5).
- b. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His shed blood and death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Romans 3:24,25; 1 Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5).
- c. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into 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; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1,2).

### 4. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

- a. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14).
- b. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who guides all believers into all truth; and, that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (John 16:13; 1 John 2:20,27; Ephesians 5:18).

## 5. The Total Depravity of Man

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

## 6. Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

## 7. The Security and Assurance of Believers

- a. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1,38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 1:5).
- b. 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).

## 8. The Two Natures of the Believer

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, 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 3:10; 1 Peter 1:14-15; 1 John 3:5-9).

## 9. Separation

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded of God (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

## 10. Missions

We believe that it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

## 11. The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts

- a. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and, that the gifts are for the purpose of perfecting the saints today; and, that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12).
- b. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15).

## 12. The Church

- a. We believe that the Church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2).
- b. 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).
- c. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Romans 16:1,4; 1 Corinthians 3:9,16; 5:4-7,13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- d. We recognize the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper as a scriptural means of testimony for the church in this age (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

## 13. Dispensationalism

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these - the age of law, the age of the Church, and the age of the millennial kingdom - are the subjects of detailed revelation in scripture (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).

## 14. The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and, that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-17; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

## 15. The Second Advent of Christ

We believe in that "Blessed Hope," the personal, imminent, pretribulation and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His Millennial Kingdom (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Revelation 3:10).

## 16. The Eternal State

- a. 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).
- b. 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 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- c. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, 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).

In subscribing to these articles of faith, we by no means set aside, or undervalue any of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; but we deem the knowledge, belief and acceptance of the truth as set forth in our Doctrinal Statement, to be essential to sound faith and fruitful practice, and therefore requisite for membership in Battle Ground Bible Church. In as much as this Doctrinal Statement is the fundamental interpretation of God's Word and forms the only basis of true fellowship, it shall be established as irrevocable in any part for the life of this body of believers.

#### **Article IV - Associations**

This church, recognizing Christ as its Head, shall not be subject to any other authority and having been started under the direction of the Indiana Bible Church Mission shall be associated with that organization for as long as deemed necessary by both bodies. This church may associate with IFCA International as long as that fellowship remains true to the Word of God and His purpose for the Church; but under no circumstances shall such association, or agreement, ever be construed as bringing this church under the authority of any person, group, or body, but is completely autonomous.

#### **Article V - Membership**

##### **Section 1. Charter Membership**

All those interested in becoming members following the adoption of this constitution shall be considered charter members of this church.

##### **Section 2. Reception of Members**

Those desiring membership shall make known their desire to the Pastor or Deacon board. The applicant shall be willing to meet with the Deacon board if requested. The applicant will be received by the recommendation of the Deacon board and with the following requirements:

1. Public confession of Jesus Christ as personal Savior.
2. Acceptance of the Doctrinal Statement of the church without mental reservation.
3. Sufficient interest manifested by attendance and cooperation.
4. Acceptance of the applicant by a majority of the church.
5. Be baptized by immersion. Applicant must be baptized as herein prescribed.

##### **Section 3. Discipline of Members**

The objective of church discipline is to lovingly cause a member to repent of sin and be restored to fellowship with God and the church. A member that manifests continual disobedience to the Word of God or comes into disharmony with the church doctrine as found in Article III, or displays attitudes that disturb the unity and peace of the church shall be subject to church discipline. The following is the process for church discipline:

#### A. Informal Discipline

Preceding formal church discipline, a witness to the sin will personally and privately encourage the member to repent. Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:2. Should the member not repent, the witness will take one or two other witnesses to encourage the member to repent. Matthew 18:16. Should the member still not repent, the witnesses will officially advise the Pastor and Deacons of the member's sin and refusal to repent. The Pastor and Deacons will investigate the situation. Matthew 18:17

#### B. Formal Discipline

If the Pastor and Deacons determine that the accusations of sin and failure to repent are true, they shall declare the member under discipline, notify the member of their action in writing, and advise the church membership of their action at a duly called Congregational Business Meeting. A member under discipline shall not hold voting rights, be entitled to hold elected office, affect a quorum, or be entitled to participate in church business meetings except as requested by the Pastor and Deacons. No member may withdraw from membership while under discipline. If reasonable efforts on the part of the church membership fail to bring the member to repentance, the church shall have final authority to remove the member from the membership at any duly called Congregational Business Meeting. Matthew 18:17b; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

#### C. Inactive Members

Members becoming delinquent shall be visited and if completely inactive for a period of 12 months may be dropped from the membership. The membership shall be reviewed annually by the Pastor and Deacon board.

#### Section 4. Voting

Every member of the church, 16 years old or older, has the right to one vote on any and all matters of church business brought before the congregation. The vote required (majority, 2/3, 3/4) for action on any matter of business shall refer to actual members voting and not to total membership.

### **Article VI - Officers**

All officers shall be elected from the voting membership by majority vote of the church membership, voting at a properly called congregational meeting. No member shall hold more than two church council offices at the same time. Neither shall any member be elected to the same office for more than three consecutive terms.

Any officer may feel free to resign by giving notice in writing to any member of the church council. Any vacancy may be filled by majority vote of the church council until the next annual elections. New offices may be created by the congregation as the need arises.

#### Section 1. Pastor (Elder)

- A. The pastor shall be chosen at a public meeting by a 3/4 majority vote of all voting members present and voting. His term of office will continue until resignation or dismissal. He shall meet the requirements of Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7.
- B. The duties of the pastor shall be to teach the Word of God and take spiritual oversight of the church. He shall administer the ordinances as observed by the church and ever seek to promote the cause of Christ in the community.

- C. The pastor may feel free to resign as led by the Holy Spirit. However, out of Christian courtesy at least a 30-day notice shall be given to the board of Deacons. The pastor may be dismissed by the same procedure as he is chosen and will be given a 30-day notice dismissal.

## Section 2. Deacons

The board of Deacons shall consist of a minimum of three members, as soon as qualified men are available; each elected by the congregation to a three year term; one going off the board each year unless re-elected. The deacons shall elect their own chairman and secretary. Each shall meet all the qualifications as required by 1Timothy 3:9-13. It shall be their duty to:

- A. Assist the pastor in the spiritual ministry of the church.
- B. Lead the congregation in the absence of a pastor.
- C. To serve as a pulpit committee in the selecting of a pastor.
- D. To give general guidance to the church as outlined in the constitution.

## Section 3. Trustees

The board of trustees shall consist of a minimum of four members chosen by majority vote of the congregation at the annual elections, as soon as qualified men are available. The terms of office shall be two years with two or more trustees being elected each year. They may elect their own chairman and secretary. The chairman shall preside at all meetings and the secretary shall keep records of all major decisions. The church treasurer shall act as their treasurer and be welcome to their meetings.

The board of trustees shall make decisions by majority vote and assume responsibility for improvements, maintenance and repair of church property defined as: land, buildings, vehicles, and all other physical equipment. However, it cannot obligate the church to any indebtedness without the approval of the majority of the church membership. No deacon shall be elected to the trustee board.

## Section 4. Clerk

The church clerk shall be elected to a one year term by the congregation at its annual elections. The church clerk shall keep minutes of all important decisions of the council or congregation to be kept on file as church property.

## Section 5. Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Financial Secretary

- A. The Treasurer shall be chosen by a committee comprised of 2 Deacons and 2 Trustees. The term shall continue until resignation or dismissal. The recommendation will be submitted to the congregation and subject to a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of the congregation for approval. The committee will review at least bi-annually the compensation of the Treasurer and make recommendations to the congregation if necessary.
- B. The Treasurer may feel free to resign as led by the Holy Spirit. However, out of Christian courtesy at least a 30-day notice shall be given to the board of Deacons/Trustees. The Treasurer may be dismissed by the same procedure as he is chosen and will be given a 30-day notice of dismissal.
- C. The offices of Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be elected by the congregation at the annual elections. Their duties are described under ARTICLE VIII. Part A. The term of office shall be two years.

## Section 6. Sunday School Officers

- A. The Officers of the Sunday School shall be: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Secretary. All offices shall be for the period of one year subject to re-election. The Sunday School shall have its own officers elected by majority vote at the annual elections. New offices may be created as needed for the growth of the Sunday School.
- B. Teachers shall be chosen by the Sunday School officers; the pastor and deacons being consulted before any decisions are made. Each teacher shall have a personal testimony of salvation and adhere to the doctrinal statement of the church.
- C. Committees may be elected by the Sunday School as found advisable for the operations and growth of the work.

## Section 7. Church Council

- A. The church council shall consist of the pastor, the deacon board, the trustee board, treasurer, assistant treasurer, clerk, financial secretary, Sunday School superintendent, youth director, music director, missions committee chairman, and head usher. The chairman and vice chairman shall be chosen by the church council. It shall be the duty of the chairman to preside at the meetings of the councils and at the annual meeting of the congregation. He shall also be responsible for the outworking of the decisions of the council. The vice chairman shall perform the duties of the chairman in his absence. New offices may be created as the need arises providing the office is approved by 3/4 of the church council.
- B. The council shall meet at least one (1) week prior to each congregational meeting.

### **Article VII - Congregational Meetings**

- A. There shall be an annual congregational meeting scheduled in February, at which time all officers shall report to the congregation. In addition to the annual meeting, there shall be three quarterly business meetings in order that the congregation will be kept aware of the work of the church.
- B. Officers, including Sunday School officers, will be elected at the annual elections scheduled in November coinciding with the fall quarterly business meeting. At this meeting new officers shall be chosen where terms have expired. Each member of the church, 16 years or older, shall have one vote. All terms of office begin and end January 1. Public announcements shall be made before all such meetings.
- C. Special meetings may be called by a majority of the church council or membership, to be announced in all the services two (2) Sundays prior to said meeting.

### **Article VIII - Finances**

- A. The finances of the church shall be the responsibility of the church finance committee consisting of the treasurer, assistant treasurer, and financial secretary. The financial secretary shall be responsible for the counting and recording of any and all offerings, leaving a permanent record at the church at all times. The treasurer shall be responsible for the depositing and disbursement of all funds. All disbursements shall be made by check or electronic payment. A financial report shall be presented to the church council during their scheduled meetings. The assistant treasurer shall assist the financial secretary or the treasurer in whatever way needed. The members of the finance committee shall be elected by the congregation at its annual elections to a term of two years.

- B. Accounting and reporting of the official funds of the church. i.e., general, deacon, building, etc., will be responsibility of the treasurer. New funds may be created changed, or discontinued after recommendations from any church committee have been made to and approved by congregation. Other accounts may be created within committees and classes only by approval of the trustee board. Committees and classes will be responsible to collect and account for monies, and report to the trustee board or finance committee as often as a report is requested. These committees and classes may elect their own treasurer.
- C. An auditing committee shall be appointed annually by the trustee board to audit the treasurer's books and any other accounts responsible to the trustee board or finance committee. The auditing committee shall report its findings at the annual congregational meeting.
- D. The church shall be supported entirely by freewill offerings.
- E. The fiscal year of this body of believers shall be from January 1-December 31.

#### **Article IX - Missions**

In accord with the purpose of this church, missions emphases shall be presented to the church as often as necessary. Mission support shall be given only to those missionaries and mission agencies that are in agreement with the doctrinal statement of this church. A majority vote of the congregation will determine those missionaries supported financially by this church. The missions committee shall be responsible for the mission conferences and mission awareness within the church. The missions committee chairman shall be elected by the congregation, and the committee members shall be chosen by the church counsel to assist. Prayer support shall be encouraged at all times for missionaries.

#### **Article X - Dissolution Clause**

All buildings, grounds, and assets shall remain in the possession of the membership of this church, however should the circumstances arise where the church dissolve or the membership with its leadership depart from the doctrinal statement or willfully violate this constitution, then all assets held shall become the property of an organization in total harmony with this doctrinal position and one recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as one organized exclusively for religious, charitable, literary or educational purposes, and it shall become the duty of the deacon board to carry through on this matter. In the event of dissolution, first consideration shall be given to the Midwest Church Extension whose assistance was helpful in the formation of the church.

#### **Article XI - Amendments**

The constitution may be amended by the following procedure:

- A. The proposed amendment shall be presented to the church council. If 2/3 of the council approve the amendment, it shall be brought to the congregation at a properly announced meeting.
- B. If 3/4 of all members present, 16 years and older, approve the amendment, it becomes an amendment in force in the constitution.

The adoption of the constitution by a majority of the congregation will make it effective immediately.

**Amendments:**

This printing incorporates all amendments through November 2009.

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