

THE CONSTITUTION OF CLEBURNE BIBLE CHURCH

PREAMBLE

Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27).

We, as individual believers, constitute His body, the church, have indeed become members of the body (Ephesians 5:30) to be used by the Lord for His honor and glory, we resolve that all functions of this corporate body shall be dedicated to serving the Lord Jesus Christ and to fulfilling the ministry of reconciliation committed to us, that God through Christ reconciled the world to Himself, (II Corinthians 5:18-19).

Therefore, we adopt this Constitution, thus establishing statutes for the orderly conduct of the functions of congregational business and activity (I Corinthians 14:40).

ARTICLE ONE: PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH

- 1.1 To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ at home and abroad (Acts 1:8).
- 1.2 To provide the opportunity for worship, fellowship, instruction, service, and prayer (Acts 2:42).
- 1.3 To provide the ordinances of baptism and communion (Acts 2:42).

ARTICLE TWO: CHURCH GOVERNMENT

- 2.1 Spiritual leadership: the church acknowledges the Lord Jesus as its Head; the Holy Spirit as its Source of power, its Convictor and indwelling Director; and the Holy Scriptures as the infallible guide in matters of faith, church order and discipline.
- 2.2 Affiliation: Cleburne Bible Church is not affiliated with any denomination but is part of the invisible Church composed of believers in Jesus Christ.
- 2.3 Authority: the government of Cleburne Bible Church is the responsibility of a plurality of elders. The men God places in this office are charged with the task of governing and administering the church according to the Holy Scriptures and the provisions of the organizational articles.
- 2.4 Policy issues shall be determined by action of the Elder Board.

ARTICLE THREE: CHURCH DOCTRINE

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 this article, to be essential to sound faith and fruitful practice, and therefore, foundational for Christian fellowship in the Cleburne Bible Church.

- 3.1 We believe literally in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as inspired of God, inerrant in the original writings, and are the supreme and final authority in faith and life (II Timothy 3:6 and II Peter 1:21).
- 3.2 We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19 and II Corinthians 13:14) (Father—Ephesians 4:5; Son—Hebrews 1:8; Holy Spirit—John 14:16, 17).¹

- 3.3 We believe Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, was born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:20-21, I Timothy 2:5,6).
- 3.4 We believe the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as our substitutionary sacrifice according to the scriptures, and all who receive Him by faith alone are justified on the basis of His shed blood (I Corinthians 15:3-4, Colossians 1:14, Ephesians 1:4-9, Romans 5:8-10, II Corinthians 5:21, I Timothy 1:15).
- 3.5 We believe in the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, His bodily ascension into heaven, and His present ministry as High Priest and Advocate for us (Hebrews 9:24, Hebrews 10:20-21, I Timothy 2:5-6, I John 2:1, I Corinthians 15:1-4, Hebrews 7:25, Acts 1:9-11).
- 3.6 We believe the Holy Spirit exists eternally with the Father and the Son; His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. During this present age He convicts men (John 16:8); regenerates the believing sinner (Titus 3:5), places believers into the body of Christ by His baptism (I Corinthians 12:13), and indwells (I Corinthians 6:19) and seals (Ephesians 4:30) every believer. He fills (Ephesians 5:18), guides (Romans 8:14), instructs (John 16:12-15), and empowers the believer for godly living and service.
- 3.7 We believe angels were all originally created holy; but, under the leadership of Satan, some angels now exist in a fallen state (Jude 1:6).
- 3.8 We believe that the first man, Adam, created in the image of God, sinned. Man thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God. Consequently, all human beings are born with the sinful nature (Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12, Genesis 1:26-27, Psalms 51:5).
- 3.9 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). 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 clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to sin (Romans 13:13-14, Galatians 5:13, Titus 2:11-15).
- 3.10 We believe that believers in Christ are sanctified positionally at the moment a person trusts Christ for salvation (I Corinthians 5:11, 1:2 and Hebrews 10:10,14); and progressively by obeying the Word and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit (Psalm 119:11, Ephesians 5:25-26, John 17:17, Galatians 5:16, Romans 8:4) and ultimately when the believer comes into the actual presence of the Lord (I Corinthians 15:51-58, I John 3:2, I Peter 1:4-6, Jude 24-25).
- 3.11 We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, which is His Body, the Church (Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:1-16, Colossians 1:15-18, Romans 4 & 5, I Corinthians 12:12-27).
- 3.12 We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of all His gifts and that He has given each believer at least one spiritual gift to be exercised to edify the whole body of Christ. We believe that the revelatory sign gifts ceased with the apostolic age (I Corinthians 12:4-11, 13:8, II Corinthians 12:12, Ephesians 4:7-12, Hebrews 2:3,4). We believe that God, in accord with His own will, does hear and answer the prayer of faith for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7, James 5:14,15, I John 5:14, 15).
- 3.13 We believe water Baptism and Lord's Table are the two ordinances of the church and are for all born-again believers:
- 3.13.1 The ordinance of Baptism is for those who have personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Baptism is an outward manifestation and testimony of the spiritual change that occurred in the believer's life when he accepted Jesus Christ as His personal Savior. Our mode of Baptism is immersion because it more closely typifies the believer's relationship with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 28:19, Acts 8:36-38).
- 3.13.2 The Lord's Table will be observed regularly. It is symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and is open to all Christians who are walking in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 3.14 We believe in the imminent, personal, and pre-tribulational return of Christ to rapture His church (I Thessalonians 1:8-10, 4:14-18, 5:9), and the pre-millennial return of Christ to the earth with His church to redeem Israel (II Thessalonians 2:1-3).

ARTICLE FOUR: CHURCH OFFICERS

4.1 The Head of the Church

4.1.1 Jesus Christ is recognized as the Head of the church in accordance with New Testament Scriptures (Eph. 5:23; Col 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27).

4.1.2 He is not only the Head of the Universal Body (Eph. 1:23), but the local church is also described as His Body (I Cor. 12:27), and thus He is Head of it. He is the Chief Shepherd.

4.2 The Elder Board

4.2.1 Position Objectives

4.2.1.1 Care for the congregation as a shepherd and overseer

4.2.1.2 Guard the purity of doctrine and life of the church

4.2.1.3 Discipline the church in accordance with the Word of God

4.2.1.4 Communicate the Lord's leading and vision for the church on a regular basis

4.2.2 Position Qualifications - the Biblical qualifications for elders are listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are as follows:

4.2.2.1 *Above reproach* - He has a life not open to censure, blameless. He is not sinless, but his conduct and character are not open to justified criticism.

4.2.2.2 *Husband of one wife*

4.2.2.2.1 He is a loyal, devoted husband and a model for others to follow, with the highest personal and moral character (I Pet. 3:7, Eph. 5:25).

4.2.2.2.2 He has been married only once; however, a man who has been widowed and remarried may be considered on a case by case basis.

4.2.2.3 *Temperate* - Originally it meant he was free from the influence of wine, and thus it signifies one who is clearheaded, sober, spiritually alert, self-controlled, stable, and able to exercise good judgment.

4.2.2.4 *Prudent* - He must be prudent, sober-minded, showing good judgment in all things: his speech, dress, conduct, etc. He must be earnest, evidencing by his walk and talk that Christianity is not just a pleasant pastime or frivolous trifle. The elder grapples with eternal issues and keeps watch over the souls of the flock. He must be diligent, persevering, and hard working in this ministry. He must have intense commitment to the Lord and an enthusiastic, spirited heart for His work.

4.2.2.5 *Respectable* - This refers to a life which is well ordered. The Elder Board is no place for the man whose life is a continual confusion of unaccomplished plans and unorganized activities. An elder must be respectable, honorable - displaying a life that is both internally and externally attractive.

4.2.2.6 *Hospitable* - The overseer's home should be open to the flock, to friends and to strangers. It should be like the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha in Bethany - a place where Jesus loved to be. The elder's home displays his accessibility and approachability. The open home also manifests a graciousness and a love for those who visit.

4.2.2.7 *Able to Teach* - Although he might not be exceptionally gifted in teaching the Word, he must be sufficiently skilled in handling the Word to be able to competently exhort (*parakalein*) believers and to effectively refute (*elegchein*) those who oppose sound doctrine without arguing and in a gentle way.

- 4.2.2.8 *Not Addicted to Wine* - He must not be one who "sits long beside his wine." This literal translation indicates that the overseer understands that "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). Any man who cannot control his own appetite is not worthy of a place of leadership in the church.
- 4.2.2.9 *Not Pugnacious* - The term (me plekton) is derived from a verb which means "to strike," and denotes a pugnacious, quick-tempered individual who is given to fighting or becomes physically violent when annoyed. He never lets his anger get out of control. He also is not guilty of verbal abuse of people.
- 4.2.2.10 *Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre or Covetous* - The thought is that the elder does not make his money in dishonest or disgraceful ways. He is also one who wages an unceasing battle to keep material things in their proper perspective. He must realize God provides everything he needs for life and godliness. He must be content and thankful. He should be characterized by storing up treasures in Heaven.
- 4.2.2.11 *Gentle* - He is patient, kind, reasonable, mild, fair and equitable not pushy, overbearing, or quick tempered.
- 4.2.2.12 *Non-contentious* - He is one who seeks peace and avoids quarrels and arguments. He is yielding, not contentious, particularly over matters of little consequence.
- 4.2.2.13 *One Who Manages His Own Household Well* - The elder must demonstrate a capacity for leadership by accepting and discharging the responsibilities God has given him for his own home. The term used here for rule (proistamenon) means to "be at the head of, rule, direct, manage" (Arndt & Gingrich Greek Lexicon). The way in which a man controls his home reveals his capacity for leadership and government. This ability is most obvious when there are children in the home. If a man does not have the administrative ability to make a home function smoothly, he does not have the administrative ability to oversee a church. An elder must be able to control his children with dignity. His children must be faithful, dependable, reliable, trustworthy...(Tit. 1:6). Titus amplifies this with two negatives. The elder's children must not be accused of unrestrained, unbridled, loose, immoral, over-indulgent, or excessive behavior, squandering away of one's life. The elder's children must not be accused of being undisciplined, disobedient, and rebellious. The elder's children should not be spoiled but rather should be brought under subjection to their parents.
- 4.2.2.14 *Not A Novice* - The term "novice" means "newly planted" in a literal sense and is used figuratively here to describe a person who is "newly planted in the Christian faith, newly converted" according to Arndt & Gingrich. Therefore, the overseer must not be a new convert. Maturity in the faith is essential for one who serves as an elder. A man may be old in years and yet not be qualified for spiritual oversight because of lack of time and experience in the Word of God and in the Christian life. The danger is that a neophyte's sudden elevation to a position of leadership could cause him to be inflated with pride, which, as the Scripture so clearly teaches, results in destruction. The elder, then, must evidence spiritual maturity ...cf. Heb. 5:11-14.
- 4.2.2.15 *A Good Reputation* - He must have a good report of them who are outside the church, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. The elder must have a good testimony in the community. The world should know that he is a man of Christian character and integrity. This refers, as do all the other qualifications, to his life since the time of his conversion. He must be characterized by a wise walk and gracious talk as described in Col. 4:5-6. His must match his profession. He might be persecuted or falsely accused because of his commitment to Christ, but he should not be subject to reproach or fall into disgrace because

of any ungodliness in his character ...cf. 1 Pet. 2:11-12.

4.2.2.16 *Not Self-willed* - The elder must not be one who is stubborn, self-centered, or intolerant of others and their opinions or one who is insistent on his own way.

4.2.2.17 *Not Quick-tempered* - The elder must manifest a slowness to wrath, a slowness to speak, and a quickness to forgive. One who serves in a leadership capacity cannot afford to be quick-tempered.

4.2.2.18 *Loving What Is Good* - One who would serve in a leadership capacity in the church must abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good (Rom. 12:9).

4.2.2.19 *Just* - This speaks of the fact that the elder is righteous in his walk with God, keeping His commands. He is also fair and impartial in his relationships with other men.

4.2.2.20 *Devout* - This speaks of practical holiness. The elder lives a life pleasing to God and seeks to stay undefiled by sin. He seeks purity and the very highest moral integrity.

4.2.2.21 *Self-controlled* - This speaks of one who is self-disciplined, is able to control and restrain his natural appetites. He also abstains from all indulgence and he has every aspect of life under control.

4.2.3 Stewardship and Accountability

4.2.3.1 The Elder Board is accountable to Jesus Christ and each other.

4.2.3.2 Christ calls the Elder Board to be stewards of the church – loving, wise, sacrificing and prayerful.

4.2.4 Tenure

4.2.4.1 The honor of being called as an Elder is life-long in nature.

4.2.4.2 Active Service Rotation

4.2.4.2.1 Elders will function in active service on the Elder Board for three year terms.

4.2.4.2.2 A year's absence is required after serving two consecutive three year terms.

4.2.4.2.3 Returning to active service is subject to Elder Board approval (see 4.2.4.2.6).

4.2.4.2.4 No fewer than five and no more than ten elders are to serve at a time, including the Senior Pastor.

4.2.4.2.5 No more than 1/3 of the Elder Board shall be replaced in any year so that vision and continuity will be maintained on the Elder Board.

4.2.4.2.6 The Elder Board will be responsible for selecting additions and replacements to the Elder Board in accordance with current ministry needs.

4.2.4.2.7 The Elder Board will be allowed to temporarily operate short of its required complement of active elders (as per 4.2.4.2.4) or in the event that qualified elders cannot be obtained to meet the number. In this situation, the board will be allowed to suspend 4.2.4.2.2 and 4.2.4.2.5 to remedy the situation if possible. The congregation will be notified when such a condition exists and the board is in operation short of its constituted complement. The congregation will also be notified when the board has been returned to the normal complement of active elders.

4.2.4.3 An elder may be removed in the following circumstances:

4.2.4.3.1 Character disqualification.

4.2.4.3.2 Called by the Lord to serve elsewhere.

4.2.4.3.3 Voluntary self-removal.

4.2.5 Annual Evaluation Retreat - centered around the following in the context of biblical community:

4.2.5.1 Self-examination.

4.2.5.2 Confession of sin.

- 4.2.5.3 Sharing of the Lord's leading in each elder's life including current convictions and directions of the Spirit regarding the elder's life, family and future ministry.
- 4.2.5.4 Invitation of any voluntary and necessary support and accountability for the coming year.
- 4.2.6 Individual Evaluations
 - 4.2.6.1 Elders are evaluated at the end of their three year term individually by two members of the Elder Board.
 - 4.2.6.2 Questions are not judgmental but directed to help all understand where this brother is in his relationships regarding family life (wife & children), spiritual life (the Lord), ministry life (the Body).
 - 4.2.6.3 A decision by the Elder Board determines what is told to the person as to what God wants changed in his life, changes in ministry/responsibility, or in some rare case, asking an elder to step down. As a result he may receive suggestions, warnings, exhortations, commendations, etc.
- 4.2.7 Ministry of Shepherding the Flock - Tasks
 - 4.2.7.1 Prologue - An elder is expected to shepherd by modeling, demonstrating, contributing to, promoting, and participating in the vision and mission of the church.
 - 4.2.7.2 Approving the process of membership.
 - 4.2.7.3 Assisting the pastors and staff in counseling the needy, comforting the afflicted and visiting the sick.
 - 4.2.7.4 Being available (as appropriate) for a congregant's counseling issue as demand dictates.
 - 4.2.7.5 Being available (as appropriate) for hospital visitations, shut-in visits, etc. as the needs become known and disseminated.
- 4.2.8 Ministry of Overseeing the Flock - Tasks
 - 4.2.8.1 Prologue - the Elder Board is responsible for the overall theology, direction, discernment, discipline, vision, and values of the church. These responsibilities are the essence of the work and calling of the Elder Board and as such cannot be delegated.
 - 4.2.8.2 Guarding the church's doctrine through overseeing educational policy.
 - 4.2.8.3 Overseeing the church's ministries as follows:
 - 4.2.8.3.1 By regularly convening for prayer, brainstorming and evaluation.
 - 4.2.8.3.2 By evaluating the effectiveness of the church's programming against the mission statement.
 - 4.2.8.3.3 By reviewing the spiritual strategy for accomplishing the mission statement, including measurable goals, for the following fiscal year.
 - 4.2.8.3.4 Through annually reviewing and approving the church's budget so that the budget reflects the vision and values as discerned by the Elder Board regarding the mission of the church.
 - 4.2.8.3.5 By taking initiative in relationship with staff and ministry heads.
 - 4.2.8.4 Oversight voting process - elders have no individual governance authority but must act together as an Elder Board to discharge the governance responsibility of the church.
 - 4.2.8.4.1 A 2/3 majority vote required to pass most resolutions/motions.
 - 4.2.8.4.2 Unanimous vote only required for selected issues as determined by a 2/3 vote, prior to discussing the issue, by the Elder Board.
 - 4.2.8.4.3 The Senior Pastor is a voting member of the Elder Board excluding the issue of dismissal of the Senior Pastor.
 - 4.2.8.5 Engaging in church discipline as required
 - 4.2.8.5.1 Through discussions with church staff that have had interaction with members that may require church discipline.

4.2.8.5.2 By meeting with members of the church that will require church discipline and implementing such discipline as required.

4.2.8.6 Communicating to the Body

4.2.8.6.1 Provide State of the Church on an annual basis.

4.2.8.6.2 Communicate vision and direction on a monthly basis using the church newsletter, website or other media as necessary.

4.2.8.6.3 Communicate via Sunday morning service announcements regarding special needs and events on an as-needed basis.

4.2.8.7 Listening to the Body

4.2.8.7.1 Any person in the congregation may make a request of the chairman to be included in an Elder Board meeting agenda.

4.2.8.7.2 The purpose of this meeting is to provide an avenue for a person in the church to raise issues of concern or commendation.

4.3 Deacon

4.3.1 Position Objective - assist the elders in the ministry of the church as assigned by the Elder Board.

4.3.2 Position Qualifications - the biblical qualifications for deacons are listed in Acts 6:3, 5 and 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12 as follows:

4.3.2.1 Acts 6:3,5

4.3.2.1.1 They are Christians ("from among you").

4.3.2.1.2 They are of good reputation. They were well spoken of and in all probability had demonstrated a servant's heart.

4.3.2.1.3 They are full of the Holy Spirit.

4.3.2.1.4 They are full of wisdom.

4.3.2.1.5 They are full of faith.

4.3.2.1.6 Thus, they are individuals who may not necessarily have organizational experience or talent, but they have a good reputation as Christians and they are full in heart. They are so full in heart that they serve willingly when any need presents itself. They are individuals who do not need to be urged for they are ready.

4.3.2.2 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12

4.3.2.2.1 They are men of dignity. This word or a form of it is used in Philippians 4:8, I Timothy 3:8, 11, Titus 2:2, I Timothy 2:2, 3:4, and Titus 2:7. It is variously translated "honest" or "honorable." It speaks of the fact a deacon must be worthy of respect or honor. He is venerated for his high character. Thus, the deacon is not a second class Christian. The qualifications for this office are just as high as the elder's qualifications (note the term "likewise:" in verse 8). It is only the deacon's ministry that is different.

4.3.2.2.2 They are not to be double-tongued. The word is used only here in the New Testament. Some translate it "insincere," meaning they say one thing and mean another. Others see it as describing a person who says one thing with one person and another with another. The meaning is difficult. Undoubtedly a deacon should not be insincere or "two-faced." It may also be possible that it speaks of the fact he should not be a slanderer (note the parallel phrases in verse 11).

4.3.2.2.3 They are not to be addicted to much wine (cf. elder job description; different terms but same meaning).

4.3.2.2.4 They are not to be fond of sordid gain (cf. elder job description).

4.3.2.2.5 They are to hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. A mystery is a divine secret that unaided, a man can neither discover nor appreciate. In the context, the specific mystery Paul is referring to is the mystery or divine secret of Godliness (v. 16). That mystery revolves around the Incarnation - "God manifest in the flesh." A deacon is to hold to that truth with a clear conscience. The office of deacon is closely linked with the truth of the Incarnation, for it is in the Incarnation that we see the inner meaning of Godliness - selfless lowly service, not done for outward honor. Thus, the deacon holds to the divine secret of the faith - lowly service. Like Christ, who left the eternal glories of heaven to become a servant among men, the deacon ever strives to be a servant (Mark 10:43, 45). God has given him insight into the inner meaning of the faith and Godliness, and he holds to that by a life of selfless service.

4.3.2.2.6 They are to be tested. The word "tested" is the Greek word dokimazio, meaning to test with the idea of approval. The term is widely used in the New Testament, but some key usages are in I Corinthians 11:28, 16:3, and II Corinthians 8:22. A man is first to be examined, tested, and then only after others are convinced of his faithfulness is he to be appointed a deacon. The church is to be careful not to lay hands hastily on any man. The testing may include a formal examination, but it would seem more than that to point to the fact that a man, before being appointed as a deacon, should have demonstrated faithfulness in service and a life that is beyond reproach and blameless (cf "beyond reproach" - elder job description).

4.3.2.2.7 They are to be husbands of one wife (cf. elder job description).

4.3.2.2.8 They are to be good managers of their children and households (cf. elder job description).

4.3.3 Tenure

4.3.3.1 Active service – deacon service will be reviewed for renewal on an annual basis by the Elder Board.

4.3.3.2 A deacon may be removed in the following circumstances:

4.3.3.2.1 Character disqualification.

4.3.3.2.2 Called by the Lord to serve elsewhere.

4.3.3.2.3 Voluntary self-removal.

4.3.3.2.4 Elder Board action.

4.3.4 Authority - as specified by the Elder Board.

4.4 Deaconess

4.4.1 Position Objectives - assist the elders in the ministry of the church as assigned by the Elder Board.

4.4.2 Position Qualifications – as follows:

4.4.2.1 *Reverent*: same term as is used for the first qualification for deacons in verse I Timothy 3:8. They are to be women of dignity. This word or a form of it is used in Philippians 4:8, I Timothy 3:8, 11, Titus 2:2, I Timothy 2:2, 3:4, and Titus 2:7. It is variously translated "honest" or "honorable." It speaks of the fact a deaconess must be worthy of respect or honor. She is venerated for her high character. Thus, the deaconess is not a second class Christian.

4.4.2.2 *Not Slanders*: The term is used extensively in the NT to refer to Satan himself. Only three times, once each in I and II Timothy and Titus, the term is used of people. The verbal root means to accuse or falsely accuse. Thus, it refers to one who falsely accuses and divides people without any reason or who slanders others.

4.4.2.3 *Temperate*: same term is used in the qualifications for elder in 1 Timothy 3:2. Originally it meant a person was free from the influence of wine, and thus it signifies one who is clearheaded, sober, and spiritually alert, self-controlled and stable, able to exercise good judgment.

4.4.2.4 *Faithful in all things*: The term is used extensively throughout the New Testament. It speaks of someone who is trustworthy, dependable, someone in whom others can have full confidence. The term can also have an active sense in that it speaks of someone who is trusting, who has firmness in faith.

4.4.3 Tenure

4.4.3.1 Active service – deaconess service will be reviewed for renewal on an annual basis by the Elder Board.

4.4.3.2 A deaconess may be removed in the following circumstances:

4.4.3.2.1 Character disqualification.

4.4.3.2.2 Called by the Lord to serve elsewhere.

4.4.3.2.3 Voluntary self-removal.

4.4.3.2.4 Elder Board Action.

4.4.4 Authority - as specified by the Elder Board.

ARTICLE FIVE: PAID STAFF

5.1 All paid staff will be called by the Elder Board in consultation with the congregation as deemed necessary.

5.2 Their responsibilities will be listed in job descriptions furnished to them upon their call. The job descriptions will be reviewed by the Elder Board on an as-needed basis.

5.3 Dismissal shall be made by a vote of the Elder Board.

ARTICLE SIX: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Qualifications - the membership of the church shall consist of individuals who have:

6.1.1 Confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

6.1.2 Agreed to abide by the doctrinal statement contained herein in its entirety.

6.1.3 Agreed to live by membership covenant.

6.1.4 Agreed to be governed by these Articles.

6.1.5 Been approved for membership upon examination.

6.2 All believers desiring membership must go through a membership class and must be individually approved by those serving on the elder board.

6.3 Voting members: The voting members at congregational meetings shall be limited to those members who are 18 years of age or older and on the active church roll.

6.4 Baptism after membership: Every applicant for membership who has not had believer's baptism will be encouraged to receive the ordinance of water baptism.

- 6.5 Disciplinary termination: Any member who manifests behavior detrimental to the work and testimony of the church shall be asked by the elders to comply with Matthew 18:15-22 or I Corinthians 5. If, after due adherence to the above references, his detrimental behavior continues, the elders shall drop his name from the roll. No member shall be dropped from the roll before a visitation by representatives of the elders for the expressed purpose of explaining the reason(s) for this action.
- 6.6 Removal of inactive members: any member who ceases to participate in the life and ministry of the church as determined by the Elder Board shall be dropped from the roll. Indicators of active membership are attendance, monetary giving, service, and prayer for Cleburne Bible Church.

ARTICLE SEVEN: AMENDMENTS

- 7.1 Any proposed amendments to the Constitution must be:
- 7.1.1 In written form signed by at least twelve consenting church members.
 - 7.1.2 Submitted to a regularly convened Elder Board meeting by one of the consenting church members.
 - 7.1.3 Approved for further action by a majority vote of the Elder Board.
 - 7.1.4 Upon the approval of a proposed amendment the Elder Board will have three months to:
 - 7.1.4.1 Provide a copy of the proposed amendment by mail to all active church members.
 - 7.1.4.2 Conduct a church-wide question/answer meeting at a date/time determined by the Elder Board with at least two week's notice given to the active church members.
 - 7.1.4.3 One month after the question/answer meeting, ballots will be mailed to all active church members who will have two weeks to return their signed ballots.
 - 7.1.4.4 A two-thirds vote of the active church members is required to ratify the proposed amendment.

ARTICLE EIGHT: FINANCIAL PROCESS

The financial practices and policies of the church shall be overseen on an on-going basis by a team of Deacons and / or Elders elected by the Elder Board. The Elder Board's responsibilities are outlined in section 4.2.8.3.4 of the Constitution.

ARTICLE NINE: CHURCH NAME

- 9.1 This local body is currently named Cleburne Bible Church.
- 9.2 The church name is not permanent in nature and may be changed by action of the Elder Board.

ARTICLE TEN: DISSOLUTION

- 10.1 The dissolution of Cleburne Bible Church will be determined by action of the Elder Board.
- 10.2 Upon the decision to dissolve, two independent fiduciary parties will be secured to handle any and all details of the dissolution process.
- 10.3 No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director or officer of the corporation or to any private individual.
- 10.4 No donor, member, director, or officer of the corporation, or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporation assets.
- 10.5 Upon dissolution, any remaining assets after debt retirement of the corporation must be donated to Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas.

Amendment to the Cleburne Bible Church Constitution

Concerning Authority in Cleburne Bible Church

- 11 The Elder Board of this Church shall have final authority in all matters of church governance, as set forth and described in the Constitution.

Concerning Membership

- 12 The membership of this Church shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the tenets of the Church Constitution, and who offer evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are living in accord with their affirmations and this Constitution and Bylaws, and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Concerning Cleburne Bible Church Statement of Faith

- 13 Cleburne Bible Church statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Cleburne Bible Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elder Board is the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Concerning The Sanctity of Life

- 14 We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139.)

Concerning Employment

- 15 Violation of the organization's statement of faith constitutes good cause to terminate employment.
- 15.1 We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Cleburne Bible Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the members of Cleburne Bible Church and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Cleburne Bible Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)

Concerning Marriage

- 16 Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, Cleburne Bible Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the pastors and staff of Cleburne Bible Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of Cleburne Bible Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.
- 16.1 We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

- 16.2 We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.
- 16.3 We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)
- 16.4 We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.)
- 16.5 We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Cleburne Bible Church.

Concerning Church Facility Usage

Purpose Statement

- 17 The church’s facilities were provided through God’s benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of church members. The church desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.
- 17.1 But facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the church’s faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the church’s constitution and bylaws. Nor may church facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the church’s faith or moral teachings. The Elder Board is the final decision-maker concerning use of church facilities.
- 17.2 This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two important reasons. First, the church may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or beliefs that are contrary to its faith. Allowing its facilities to be used for purposes that contradict the church’s beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity, and would be a grave violation of the church’s faith and religious practice. (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Thess 5:22.)
- 17.3 Second, it is very important that the church present a consistent message to the community, and that the church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Allowing facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to the church’s faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that the church strives to promote. It could also cause confusion and scandal to church members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our facilities, the church agrees with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using its facilities.

- 17.4 Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate, or engage in practices that contradict the church's faith use any church facility. Nor may church facilities be used in any way that contradicts the church's faith. This policy applies to all church facilities, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the church's sanctuary, because the church sees all of its property as holy and set apart to worship God. (Col 3:17.)

Approved Users and Priority of Use

- 18 The official designee must approve all uses of church facilities. Generally, priority shall be given to church members, their immediate families, and organized groups that are part of the ministry, organization, or sponsored activities of the church. Church facilities and equipment will be made available to non-members or outside groups meeting the following qualifications:
- 18.1 Groups or persons requesting facility use must affirm that their beliefs and practices and planned uses of the facilities are consistent with the church's faith and practice.
- 18.2 The group or person seeking facility use must submit a signed "Church Facility Reservation Request and Agreement" form.
- 18.3 The group or person seeking facility use must be willing to take responsibility for the facilities and equipment used and must agree to abide by the church's rules of conduct for facility use, as stated in the Facility Usage Policy and as described in any additional instructions by church staff.