

Constitution

Calvary Bible Church

Calvary Bible Church is an institution free from any denominational control. Her members, aware of the prevailing apostasy in denominations, have separated themselves therefrom, in the spirit of II Corinthians 6:14-18. Calvary Bible Church would be a church after the New Testament pattern, being made up of a group of witnesses. Emphasis is placed upon the scriptural thought of "the fellowship of believers" rather than upon the importance of membership. Free of the sectarian spirit, we would remember that there is but one body, the Body of Christ, in which Body all believers are members. This church is established to preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus and to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints".

Article 1. Name

The name of this Church shall be "*Calvary Bible Church*".

Article 2. Purpose

The purpose of Calvary Bible Church shall be the salvation of souls; the edification of the saints through the teaching of God's Word; the world wide proclamation of God's saving grace, in keeping with Christ's great commission; the defense of the "faith once delivered to the Saints"; and cooperation with such Christian activities as function in harmony with God's Holy Word.

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

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. (Deuteronomy 6:4; II Corinthians 13:14)

3. **The Person and Work of 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 the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (John 1:1, 2, 14; Luke 1:35)

 - b. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His 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; I Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:3-5)

c. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to 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 7:25; 9:24; Romans 8:34; I 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; II Corinthians 3:6; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13,14)

b. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who guides 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; I 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; I Peter 1:18-19)

7. The Eternal 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; 8:38, 39; I Corinthians 1:4-8; I 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; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

8. The Two Natures of the Believer: We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provisions 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; Gal. 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10; I Peter 1:14-16; I 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 Saviour and Lord and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded by God. (II Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2, 14:13; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11; II 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, II 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 of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of 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. (I Corinthians 12:4-11; II Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; I Corinthians 13:8)

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; I 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; I Corinthians 12:12, 14; II 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; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11)

13. Baptism:

a. We believe immersion to be the New Testament form of baptism to be administered upon the personal acceptance and public confession of Christ as Saviour. Baptism in our church, therefore, shall be administered by immersion only. We believe Christ Himself established and commended the ordinance to symbolize the believer's death to the old life of sin and his spiritual resurrection to the new life in Christ. (Acts 2:41; 8:12; 9:18; 10:47-48; Rom 6:3-6)

b. We believe that neither water baptism nor any particular form of its administration is required for membership in the Body of Christ. Therefore, for believers who have already been baptized and apply for membership, the mode of baptism shall be a matter of conscience between them and the Lord.

14. Dispensationalism: We believe in the dispensational view of Bible Interpretation but reject the extreme teaching known as "Hyper-Dispensationalism" such as that teaching which opposes either the Lord's table or water baptism as a Scriptural means of testimony for the Church in this Age. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:8; I Corinthians 11:23-26)

15. 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 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12, 17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10)

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

17. 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 26:46; 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; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; I 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 of 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; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 20:11-15)

Article 4. Membership

§1. Any person who has accepted Christ as a personal Savior, who gives assurance of a desire to live a consistent Christian life; who has received or gives assurance of willingness to receive, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; and who gives assurance of a willingness to abide by the constitution and accepts the doctrinal statement of this Church, shall be eligible for membership.

§2. Persons can be received into the membership only upon confession of faith, or restatement of faith, conditioned upon an examination satisfactory to the Session.

§3. Members are expected conscientiously to strive to live according to light revealed to them by the Holy Spirit through God's Word, and wholeheartedly to support the services and activities of the church as God may reveal His will to them.

§4. The Session shall revise the membership rolls of the Church once a year, at which time inactive members shall be notified before being removed from membership. Further, the Session may at any time, for what it deems good cause, upon notice to the member concerned and after opportunity for hearing, drop any person from the membership rolls.

§5. We extend the privileges of "associate membership" to those who are away from home and who are temporarily located in the Columbus area. Such persons must be members of sister fundamental churches and must meet the same requirements of membership as are demanded of our regular members; i.e., make satisfactory statement of faith before the Session and Congregation and answer such constitutional questions as may be propounded by Pastor and Session. Such membership entitles "associate members" to all the privileges of work and worship in the Church, including the right to vote in congregational business meetings (excepting only the right to hold office on official boards of the Church). Such members shall be subject to the same discipline and regulations as regular members. Upon removal from the Columbus area associate members shall be automatically dropped from the associate membership roll. Upon written request to the Session associate membership may be changed to regular membership at any time, in which case the home church of the individual involved shall be notified so that duplication of membership may be avoided. In every case where an associate member is received into Calvary Bible Church, the home church of the individual involved shall be notified and explanation given that such associate membership does not dissolve the membership bond in the home church.

Article 5. Government

§1. The government of the church is vested in its voting membership. Each member having reached the age of 14 is entitled to vote in congregational business meetings.

§2. The Session as the executive body of the Congregation, is charged with the government and spiritual nurture thereof. The Session shall designate annually three of its members to act as trustees of the corporation for the exclusive purpose of signing legal papers, documents, etc., in the name of the church.

§3. The trustees of the Congregation, assisting the Session, shall be charged with the supervision and care of the physical properties of the church. They shall provide for necessary repairs, decorations and improvements of both the church property and the parsonage.

§4. Any member of the Session may be removed from office at any time by majority vote of the Congregation, taken at any called Congregational meeting as provided by Article 8, §3.

§5. Members of the Session shall be elected following a Sunday morning service of worship, during the month of March. No person shall be considered elected who fails to receive a majority of all votes cast. Nominations for Elder must be made following the Sunday morning service of worship, preceding such election, and shall be by a nominating committee appointed by the Session, with the opportunity for additional nominations by the congregation.

§6. The nominating committee shall thoroughly investigate the qualifications of every man nominated for office of elder. The proposed candidates shall be examined by the Session as to their agreement with the doctrinal statement and the standards that may be established by the church or the Session. No candidate shall be considered for the office of elder who cannot answer in the affirmative the following questions:

a. Have you publicly confessed Christ as personal Savior and experienced the new birth set forth in John 3:3-6?

b. Are you in hearty agreement with the doctrinal statement of this Church and with its constitution?

c. Are you living a dedicated, prayerful Christian life, especially as regards loyal observance of the moral precepts taught in the Word of God for believers, including: (a) separation from the world in the spirit of I John 2:15-17, James 4:4 and Titus 2:11-15; (b) freedom from membership in oathbound religious or secret social organizations or entangling alliances with unbelievers, and (c) willingness to put out of your life any sin which the Holy Spirit may reveal to you.

Article 6. Pastors and Officers

§1. There shall be elected as officers of the Church four or more Elders, and, annually, one or more Trustees, and Secretary. In addition the Session shall appoint annually the financial officers of the Church, consisting of a Church Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary. A Finance Committee, composed of these financial officers, plus two additional members of the Church, shall be appointed annually by the Session. The Pastors, Elders, Trustees and Congregational Officers, together with the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall constitute the Officers of the Church.

§2. Terms of office for Elders shall be not less than three years and not more than four years. An Elder, upon completion of one full term in office, shall not be eligible for re-election to the office of Elder during the year immediately following the expiration of his term. Any vacancy may be filled by the vote of the congregation, acting in accordance with Article 5, Sections 5 and 6.

§3. The Board of Trustees of the Congregation shall consist of three or more elected members plus one appointed member from the Session together with the Building Superintendent, also appointed by the Session, the latter two to be ex-officio members, without voting privileges. One or more Trustees shall be

elected at the annual congregational business meeting, nominations to be made either from the floor or by the Session. Trustees shall serve for terms of three years, but after serving one full term, Trustees shall not be eligible for re-election until the lapse of one year.

§4. A pastor's services may be terminated at any time by majority vote of the Congregation, after a fair and impartial hearing under the supervision of the Session, at a meeting called in accordance with Article 8, §3.

§5. All officers shall serve until their successors take office except in cases of discipline.

§6. A Pastor or any Assistant or Associate Pastor may be called upon a majority vote of the Congregation, after recommendation by the Session or by a committee appointed by the Session and Congregation. Pastors shall serve until their pastorates are terminated by death, resignation, or by vote of the congregation. Pastors shall give a minimum of thirty days notice before termination of their services. The Session shall have the sole discretion regarding the terms of the resignation and/or termination and shall present the same to the Congregation. The salary involved shall continue for thirty days.

§7.(a) All regular Sunday School teachers, officers of adult classes, congregational officers, choir directors, youth counselors and the director and superintendents of departments of the Daily Vacation Bible School shall be members of Calvary Bible Church.

(b) The nominating committees of all classes, from intermediate through adult departments, shall counsel with the moderator or clerk of the Session before submitting reports to their classes.

(c) Organized Sunday School classes shall elect officers to take office during the month of October.

(d) All youth groups shall elect officers to take office in the Fall, at or about the time of the beginning of the Fall/Winter program.

Article 7. Duties of Pastors and Officers

§1. The pastors shall have general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services and administration of the sacraments of the Church; shall be ex-officio members of all committee meetings connected with the Church or any of its organizations; and one shall act as Moderator in other meetings of the Session and Church unless otherwise directed by this Constitution or ordered by vote of the Congregation. If at any time a pastor's personal belief, teaching and preaching shall not be in full accord with the doctrinal statement of the church, his services as Pastor shall be terminated as provided by Article 8, §3.

§2. The Session is charged with the government, spiritual nurture, and business administration of the Congregation. It belongs to the Session to judge the qualifications of Elders elected, and if approved, to ordain and install them in office; to decide upon the qualifications of applicants for membership in the Church, and to certify departing members to other congregations; to watch over the department of members of the Congregation; to counsel parents in training their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to administer the ordinances of the Lord's house, and to judicially enforce His laws governing the lives of His people; to devise and direct ways and means of leading the people to honor the Lord with their substance, to determine the uses to be made of the Church edifice or attached buildings. The Session shall have the care of the finances of the Church and shall oversee all the business affairs of the Congregation, preparing an annual budget for submission to the Congregation at its annual meeting. Furthermore, it belongs to the Session to exercise control over the Sunday School and supervise all other organizations and agencies of the Congregation; to direct the service of praise and other ordinances of worship; and to attend to all matters which, in its judgment, pertain to the spiritual welfare of the Congregation. The members of the

Session shall be expected to visit members of the Congregation, giving special attention to the sick and sorrowing.

§3. The Moderator of the Session shall preside at all business sessions except those which may pertain to the Moderator personally, at which times a Vice Moderator, named by the Session shall preside. The Congregational Secretary shall keep an accurate record of such meetings.

§4. The Church Treasurers and the Financial Secretary shall have charge of receiving and recording all money received by the church and Sunday School. The other members of the Finance Committee shall render assistance as needed in receiving and recording receipts. The Treasurers shall make all disbursements upon authorization of the Session. The Treasurers shall also make monthly written reports of receipts and disbursements to the Session and Annual Reports to the Congregation. The Treasurer shall have custody of all legal papers pertaining to the property and finances of the Church. The accounts shall be audited by the Session annually at the close of the church year. The financial records shall be available for inspection at all times by the Session. The treasurers shall furnish fidelity bonds in such amounts as determined by the Session, the cost of the same to be paid by the Church.

§5. The Session shall appoint annually the Director of the Columbus Bible Institute, said Institute being owned and administered by Calvary Bible Church. The Director shall have charge of the financial affairs of the Institute and shall submit an annual report of receipts and expenditures to the Congregational Meeting. This report shall be audited by the Session. The Director, under the Session's authority and with such enlisted help as he may need, shall be in charge of faculty appointments, the selection of courses of study and the administration of such other affairs as may properly come under the heading of The Columbus Bible Institute.

§6. Within one month after each annual Congregational Meeting the Pastor and Elders shall be required to affirm and sign the doctrinal statement of the Church, and their signature shall be filed with the Clerk of the Session.

Article 8. Meetings

§1. The fiscal year of the Church shall end on the thirty-first (31st) day of July in each year and the Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held during the month of July, the date to be determined by the Session and announced to the Congregation from the pulpit on two Sundays preceding the meeting.

§2. At the Annual Congregational meeting the minutes of the preceding annual meeting shall be read. The Church Treasurer shall present his financial report and reports shall be presented by the various organizations of the Church and Sunday School. Such other business as may be necessary shall be transacted.

§3. Called meetings of the Congregation may be held at the discretion of the Session or upon the written request of ten percent of the members of the Church. Notice shall be given as provided for in Article 8, §1. No business other than that announced in the notice shall be considered at such called meetings.

§4. A majority vote of the voting members present at any constitutionally called Congregational business meeting shall be required for the election of officers or to render final decisions in any matter under consideration, except amendments to this Constitution.

Article 9. Ordination

When, in the judgment of the Session, a man in this membership is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the Session to call and conduct a council for ordination, provided such authority is granted by the vote of the Church. The ordaining council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service. The following shall not be ordained to the ministry: those who have not served six months as Pastor, Associate Pastor or in definite Christian work in such manner as to convey reasonable evidence of God's call to the ministry; those who are addicted to the use of intoxicating liquors, drugs, or tobacco in any form; or those who belong to secret societies, or who bring disrepute upon their ministry through worldly practices and associations. (Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 6:14-18; James 4:4; I John 2:15)

It shall be within the province of the Session to discipline, even to revoke the ordination credentials of any minister ordained under this Constitution, if the said minister is found guilty of any of the above practices after an impartial trial conducted in the spirit of I Corinthians 13. The minister under trial shall have the privilege of appealing his case to the Congregation within thirty days after decision of the Session.

Article 10. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at any regular or called Congregational meeting, provided the proposed amendment has been printed and distributed to the Congregation at each regular Church service for the two Sundays preceding said meeting.

Amendment #1. Christian Day School

§1. The Northside Christian School is owned and administered by Calvary Bible Church. Its ministry is primarily to its own membership and adherents, but it will minister to others who agree to abide by the rules and policies of the Northside Christian School as outlined in the Parent's Handbook.

§2. As a ministry of the Calvary Bible Church, Northside Christian School functions under the authority of the Session of the Church.

§3. The Session shall appoint a school committee consisting of four or more members of Calvary Bible Church. Each member of the Committee shall be appointed to a three year term of service. Upon completion of a full term in office, the committee member shall not be eligible for reappointment to the School Committee during the year immediately following the expiration of his or her term. It is recommended that at least one member of the School Committee, but not more than two, also be a member of the Session and serve as a liaison between the Session and the Committee.

§4. The School Committee is given the responsibility by the Session for admission and retention of students and is responsible for the oversight of the school operations. The hiring and dismissal of all employees of the school are subject to the approval of the Session.

§5. The Northside Christian School Committee shall prepare an annual budget for submission, on the approval of the Session, to the congregation of Calvary Bible Church for its approval at the Annual Congregational meeting. The Session, through the School Committee, will oversee the administration of the school budget approved at the Annual Congregational meeting.

A Statement of the Missionary Policy of Calvary Bible Church

I. Prospective missionary candidates should be able to give full assent to the statement of faith contained in the church constitution.

II. Such missionary candidates should hold sympathetically and without mental reserve the position of Calvary Bible Church with respect to complete separation from apostasy and entanglements therewith. Those who could go as easily under the old-time denominational mission boards or under boards connected in any way with the National Association of Evangelicals or with new evangelicalism, could hardly qualify as taking the position of Calvary Bible Church in matters of Biblical separation. The Session shall take into consideration the work and testimony of the individual in his or her home church as an indication of the candidate toward Scriptural separation. In turn, the candidate should remember that Calvary Bible Church is an independent, non-denominational Bible believing church and that service

rendered within this context of mutual understanding will result in a strong, united testimony of both church and missionary.

III. It shall be expected therefore, that our prospective missionaries, desiring the prayerful and financial support of Calvary Bible Church, should seek to go to the fields of their call under such boards or missionary agencies as are in essential accord with our Statement of Faith. They should be agencies free from all connections or co-operation with the World Council of Churches, The National Council of Churches, the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association, The Evangelical Foreign Missions Association and the National Association of Evangelicals, or such other organizations as may work in harmony with any of these groups.

IV. If at any time one of our missionaries on the field finds that he or she cannot fully affirm and support the missionary policy of Calvary Bible Church as above defined, then the missionary should promptly notify the home church of such change of mind or heart. Whereupon the Session and congregation of the home church shall decide whether support should be terminated within thirty days or, preferably, at some time during the next furlough period.

V. The Session would recommend to the congregation that when and if it should become necessary to terminate the support of a missionary, members of the congregation make it a matter of prayerful cooperation to uphold the decision of their Session and church and direct their support to such of our missionaries or agencies as stand shoulder to shoulder with us in missionary testimony. Such cooperation would be in the spirit of Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable to you".

Our Church Covenant

We, the members of Calvary Bible Church do covenant together, God helping us, that as strangers and pilgrims we will abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; that we will put away from us all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us; that as we will do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith; that we will remember them which have the rule over us, who speak unto us the Word of God; and that we will give as God hath prospered us; not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.

