

# **FAITH BIBLE CHURCH**

## **DOCTRINAL STATEMENT, GOVERNMENT AND BYLAWS**

**ADOPTED: MARCH 20, 1994  
AMENDED: MAY 2003**

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### Preamble

Faith Bible Church, a nondenominational, evangelical church, is established to the glory of God to carry out the God-ordained responsibilities of the local church.

#### **Purpose:**

We believe the purpose of the church is to glorify God. The mission of the church for the accomplishment of this purpose is outlined in Matthew 28:16-20: Make Disciples. The making of a disciple is a twofold process. First, a person must come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Second, the believer must be instructed and nurtured in the faith. The means of accomplishing this task is our Philosophy of Ministry.

#### **Philosophy of Ministry:**

##### **1. Upreach to God**

Jesus summarized all the Law and Prophets by saying that you should love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30). As the Westminster Confession states, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." Therefore, above all we are to be a worshiping community that proclaims the excellencies of His name (1 Peter 2:9). We are committed to worshiping God in Spirit and Truth. We want to be known as a family of believers who love and worship our Lord for He alone is worthy of our deepest affection and praise.

##### **2. Inreach to the Body**

The church is "the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15); therefore, Faith Bible Church is committed to standing for and teaching Biblical truths "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

Jesus gave a new commandment, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). God has made us for relationship with Himself and each other. Strong relationships with one another are essential for the effective ministry of the body of Christ. At Faith Bible Church we are committed to caring for and ministering to one another (Philippians 2:3-4). We also strongly encourage each believer to know his spiritual gift(s) and how God can best use him in the church and to be actively looking for ways to minister.

##### **3. Outreach to the World**

The third part of our philosophy concerns our commitment to proclaim the glorious gospel of God's saving grace. We have been commissioned by our Lord to share His gospel not only with our community but also with every nation. Our church supports many missionaries around the world.

## Article I Name

The name of this church shall be Faith Bible Church of the city of Edmond, state of Oklahoma, an Oklahoma not for profit corporation having its principal place of worship at 600 N. Coltrane, Edmond, Oklahoma.

## Article II Doctrine

### Section 1 - The Importance of Doctrine

This church shall function as an independent; evangelical church committed to the Biblical truths recorded in God's inerrant and final revelation – the Holy Scriptures.

All elders must agree with the Doctrinal Statement.

Anyone who holds opposing views to the Doctrinal Statement shall refrain from teaching their views.

### Section 2 - Doctrinal Statement

**The Holy Scriptures** It is no accident that “Bible” is in the name of our church. We teach that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original writings, that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and life, and that the Bible is the only written revelation of God to man (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:21; Psalm 119:89; John 10:35).

**The Godhead** We teach there is one God eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient manifesting Himself in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit; one in nature, equal in attributes, power and glory (Deut 6:4; Matt 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; 10:30; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 13:14; Heb 1:1-3; Rev 1:4-6).

**Jesus Christ** We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is God incarnate, very God and very man, that He was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and offered Himself on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice, suffering the full penalty for sinners (Isa 7:14; 9:6; 53:6; Matt 1:16; 20:28; John 1:14, 17; Rom 3:25; 5:8; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 4:4; 1 Tim 1:15; 2:5-6; Heb 10:12; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18). He was raised bodily on the third day and ascended to the right hand of the Father, there to intercede for us as our Advocate and High Priest (Acts 1:9-11; Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 15:1-8; Heb 4:14-15; 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2; Rev 1:18).

**The Holy Spirit** We teach that certain well-defined ministries are committed to the Holy Spirit. He restrains evil in the world (2 Thess 2:6-7). He convicts, converts and regenerates sinners (John 16:8-10; 2 Cor 3:6). He indwells, seals, anoints, illuminates and teaches all true believers in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:19-20; Eph 1:13-14; 2 Cor 1:21-22; 1 John 2:27). He baptizes each believer, at the time of conversion, uniting the believer to Christ in His body (1 Cor 12:13). The Holy Spirit is the source of all power, acceptable worship and service in the Christian life. Each believer is responsible to yield control of his life to the Holy Spirit for guidance and power for holy living and service (Rom 8:9-16; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Gal 5:16, 22-23; Eph 5:18).

**Man** We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27). Man was created as an innocent being, free from sin (Gen 2:16-17). In consequence of Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will of God, man lost his innocence, became subject to both imputed and inherent sin, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, and became subject to the wrath of God, justly condemned in His sight, wholly unable to save himself. Apart from God's salvation man is eternally lost (Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:36; Rom 3:9-18, 23; 6:23; 5:10-12; Eph 2:1-3; James 2:10; 1 John 1:8).

**Salvation** We teach that salvation is wholly of God by sovereign grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and entirely apart from any ordinance, ritual, human merit or works. Salvation is the free gift of God, and once it is received it cannot by any means be lost. The Christian is secure in Christ forever (John 1:12-13; 3:36; 5:24; 6:37; 10:27-30; Acts 4:12; Rom 4:4-5; 5:1; 6:23; 8:1 10:9-13; 1 Cor 15:1-4; Eph 2:8-9; 4:30; 2 Tim 1:12; Titus 3:5; Heb 9:22; 13:5; 1 Pet 1:5, 18-19; 1 John 5:13; Jude 24).

**The Assembly** We teach that the universal Church consists of all true believers in the Lord Jesus from Pentecost to the Rapture. Each local assembly or church should be a miniature of the universal Church, expressing the great truths of the latter. The local assembly consists of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who meet regularly for teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer and evangelism. Christ is the head of the assembly, and He entrusts leadership to the elders, men who are recognized as Christ's undershepherds. Each assembly is also to have deacons to serve the practical needs of the assembly (Acts 2:42-47; Acts 6:3-6; 1 Cor 12:12-13, 27; Eph 1:22-23; 5:24-25, 30; 1 Thess 5:12-13; 1 Tim 3:13; Heb 13:17).

**Ordinances** We teach there are two Christian ordinances: water baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism (by immersion) is the testimony of a believer showing forth in solemn and beautiful emblem his faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, and his union and identification with Him in the death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 8:36-39; Rom 6:1-11). We teach and practice immersion as the mode of water baptism. We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Cor 11:28-32). We also believe that while Christ's flesh and blood is not present actually, the Lord's Supper is an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Cor 10:16; 11:23-26).

**Satan and Fallen Angels** We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator; involving numerous angels in his fall (Job 1:6-7; Isa 14:1; 12-17; Ezek 28:11-19; Rev 12:3-4), and introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Gen 3:1-15). We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Matt 4:1-11; 25:41), the prince of this world who was defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:20; Heb 2:14), and that he will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isa 14:12-17; Ezek 28:11-19; Rev 20:10).

**Spiritual Gifts** We teach that Christ gives to each believer, at conversion, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, some gift or gifts to equip him to serve the Lord and edify other believers. Gifts are given by a sovereign act of God's Spirit and not in response to the desires or prayers of men (1 Pet 4:10). It is essential that every believer discovers, develops and employs his spiritual gift or gifts for the edification of the Body and accomplishment of the work of Christ in the world. While we recognize that the existence and exercise of certain spiritual gifts is a debated and

divisive issue in the Christian community today, we teach that there were two kinds of spiritual gifts: temporary/foundational confirming gifts and permanent, edifying gifts. The permanent, edifying gifts listed in Scripture are: teaching, helps, administration, service, exhortation, giving, showing mercy, leadership, evangelism and pastor-teacher. The temporary gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 and Ephesians 2:20 were foundational and gradually ceased when the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. We teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today, but that God does hear and answer prayer on the part of every believer, and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:7-11; 13:8-13; 14:22; 2 Cor 12:6-10, 12; Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11-12; Heb 2:3-4; James 5:13-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 John 5:14-15).

**Last Things** We teach the following future events: the personal, imminent return of the Lord Jesus to rapture the Church, the tribulation period, the second coming of Christ, the millennial reign of Christ, the judgment of the lost, and the eternal state. We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Jer 30:7; Dan 12:1-3; Matt 24:15-31; 25:31; John 14:1-3; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 2 Thess 2:1-12; Rev 19:11-16; 20:1-7; 11-15; Rev 21-22).

### **Section 3 - Amendments to the Doctrinal Statement**

Amendments to the doctrinal statement should be rare and undertaken only with deliberate and extended consideration. A proposed amendment must be first approved by the elders. It then must then be posted and made available to the congregation in written form at least four weeks prior to a business meeting where the amendment is presented to the congregation for discussion and feed back. The elders must then re-approve the amendment along with any modifications resulting from the congregational input. The final amendment must be made available to the congregation.

## **Article III Government**

### **Section 1 - Authority and Responsibility**

The ultimate authority for the operation of this church resides in the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. For purposes of carrying out our Lord's will in the life of this church, the congregation and leadership shall have the responsibilities as outlined in this Constitution.

### **Section 2 - Form of Church Government**

Faith Bible Church practices the form of church government known as federal, presbyterian or elder rule. Simply stated, we believe that God raises up men who are Scripturally qualified to be elders and overseers of the local church (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), and that these God-ordained men are the spiritual leaders of the church. We believe that the terms elder, overseer and shepherd (pastor) are synonymous (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Peter 5:1-2). Therefore, we do not recognize a separate office of pastor, but rather the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. We do recognize the office of deacon. Deacons are men who are assigned by the elders to exercise leadership and humble service in various areas of need within the church body.

### **Section 3 – Congregation**

## **A. Congregational Association**

The congregation of the church is the collective body of all who regularly fellowship at Faith Bible Church. A directory of those who regularly fellowship at the church will be maintained by the elders. All those listed in the directory are members of Faith Bible Church.

## **B. Responsibility**

- 1. The Congregation and Decision-Making:** Since the elders are responsible to guide, oversee and manage the flock (see section 4,A,5), the congregation does not vote or make the final decisions on issues in the church. However, this does not mean that the congregation is uninvolved or has no input in decisions. The elders are not to act in an authoritarian manner; thus, input, feedback and counsel from the congregation is needed, encouraged and welcomed. Before the elders make any major decision, they will always solicit feedback and input from the congregation.
- 2. The Congregation and Body Life:** The primary responsibilities of the members of the congregation concerning the life of the church are to exercise their spiritual gifts, endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit, attend meetings faithfully, pursue personal holiness, give of the financial means, love one another and practice mutual help, exhortation and edification.
- 3. The Congregation and the Elders:** The members of the congregation are to appreciate the elders (1 Thessalonians 5:12), esteem them very highly in love (1 Thessalonians 5:13), obey and submit to them (Hebrews 13:17), compensate them financially when needed (1 Timothy 5:17-18), hold them accountable (1 Timothy 5:19-25) and pray for them (Hebrews 13:18).

## **C. Church Discipline**

### **General Statement**

Adult members of Faith Bible Church, as defined in this constitution, are subject to discipline by the church. While we recognize that all believers are weak in ourselves and that we all struggle with sin to some degree, we teach that serious, flagrant, unrepentant sin that negatively affects the body must be dealt with to maintain the witness of the church.

### **Practical Steps**

The basic steps for church discipline are outlined in Matthew 18:15-20.

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| Step #1 | The person with knowledge of the sin is to go to the sinning Christian in private and lovingly confront him or her about the sin, seeking repentance. If the individual repents, there is no need for anyone else to know.  |
| Step #2 | If the individual refuses to respond to this initial contact, the person who initiated contact is to take one or two witnesses for a follow-up meeting. Again, the matter is to be handled in a spirit of love, seeking restoration of the sinning believer. If the individual repents, there is no need for anyone else to know. |

Step #3 If the individual refuses to repent, the Senior Pastor should be informed. The elders should set-up a meeting with the individual where they too lovingly call on the person to repent. During this stage the elders should be patient and give the person ample opportunity to respond. The goal is repentance and restoration not retribution.

Step #4 If there is still no repentance, and the elders determine that the sin is seriously affecting the unity and/or witness of the church, the elders will send a letter to the sinning Christian indicating that at an appointed Sunday evening service the matter will be reported to the church for the purpose of mobilizing the entire body towards his or her restoration.

If there is no repentance reported, an additional letter should be sent indicating that at an appointed Sunday evening service, the individual will be dismissed from the fellowship.

If repentance occurs, the senior-pastor is to be notified immediately. If there is no report of repentance, the senior-pastor will read a statement from the elders at the appointed Sunday evening service withdrawing fellowship from the individual.

If at any time during this process, up to 3 days before the final report to the church, the sinning Christian withdraws membership and regular attendance from Faith Bible Church in writing to the senior pastor, the elders will end the discipline process at that point. However, the individual cannot be reinstated as a member or regular attender without meeting with the elders and showing evidence of repentance.

## **Restoration and Repentance**

With dismissal from the fellowship, the church should continue to pray for repentance and restoration. If at any time, the individual should indicate repentance, the senior-pastor should be notified, and he should inform the chairman of the elders so the case may come before the elders. Upon satisfactory approval by the elders, the person will be restored to fellowship, membership, and regular attendance at a Sunday evening service.

## **Section 4 – Leadership**

### **A. Elders/Overseers/Pastors**

- 1. Qualifications:** This church shall appoint as elders those selected through the process outlined in Section 4,A,3 of this Article, male members of the church, who are in full agreement with the Doctrinal Statement, who meet the Biblical qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, and who have been known by the congregation and elders for a substantial time to demonstrate shepherding, ruling and guarding qualities.

2. **Tenure:** Elders are appointed to serve for a term of three years. After a one year break from service, an elder is eligible to be reappointed to the eldership. An exception to this rule is the pastor-teacher who serves the church full-time and is therefore a permanent elder and does not rotate off the elder board as long as he is employed by the church. When needed to balance elder rotation an elder may be appointed for a term of one or two years or extended to four years.
  
3. **Selection (Process for Appointing Elders)**
  - Step #1** Adults who regularly fellowship at Faith Bible Church should always be prayerfully considering the men God is raising up to serve as elders. The qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 should be prayerfully considered. In March each year, the elders will remind the congregation to identify the men they believe God has raised up as elders.
  - Step #2** On or before the first Sunday in April each year, each adult member of the church should submit a list of the men he/she believes God has raised up to shepherd the flock. The list should be signed and placed in the offering slot. Members are encouraged to interview each prospective elder concerning his views on various doctrinal, theological and practical matters.
  - Step #3** The feedback from the congregation will be collated by the elders with each elder receiving a copy of the results.
  - Step #4** By the first Sunday in May each year, after considering the counsel from the congregation and their own judgment, the elders will interview each prospective elder, and then nominate the men they believe the Spirit of God has selected to serve in the eldership.
  - Step #5** The list of prospective elders will be posted openly in the church for two weeks so that any Biblical questions concerning their qualifications can be brought to the attention of the elders.
  - Step #6** If no Scripturally disqualifying objections are raised during the two-week period, the candidates will be ordained as elders by the existing eldership in May or June during a Sunday Morning Service of the church. New elders will assume office when they are ordained. Outgoing elders will give up their office at the same time.
  
4. **Termination:** An elder will be removed from office during his time of service if 1) he is judged guilty of serious sin by the other elders (1 Timothy 5:19-21), 2) if he is found to be unqualified according to Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7), 3) if he disagrees with any aspect of the doctrinal statement or 4) if he consistently neglects his duties as an elder.
  
5. **Functions:** Elders are not to serve under compulsion, for financial gain or in an authoritarian fashion (1 Peter 5:1-3). Elders are to oversee, guide, lead and guard the flock. They are also to teach the Word of God (Acts 6:3-4; 1 Timothy 5:17), exhort and refute (Titus 1:9), protect from false teaching (Acts 20:28-32), determine church policy and doctrine (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23), oversee the finances (Acts 11:27-30), appoint elders and deacons (1 Timothy 4:14), shepherd the flock (1 Peter 5:2), provide an example for all (1 Peter 5:3), pray for the members of the assembly (Acts 6:4; James 5:13-15), and lead the assembly in unity (1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 1:27).
  
6. **Decision Making:** The elders are not to operate by majority rule or majority vote. The elders are to have the mind of Christ and be guided by the same Spirit; therefore,

all of their decisions must be by unanimous consent. Unity and harmony in the church at large begins with the elders. In areas of potential conflict of interest, an elder will not participate.

- 7. Chairman of the Board of Elders:** At the first meeting of the new Board the elders shall elect one of the elders to be the Chairman of the Board. The Chairman shall have no more or no less authority than any of the other elders, except he shall be responsible for calling meetings and establishing the agenda and appointing committee members with the consent of the elders. The Chairman shall have signature authority for the church as designated by the elders. The Pastor-teacher shall not be the Chairman of the elder board.

## **B. Pastor-teacher**

- 1. Position:** Elder and deacon are the only offices of this church; therefore, we do not recognize a separate office of pastor, but rather the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. However, the Pastor-teacher of the church shall be an elder of the church as long as he is Biblically qualified. The pastor-teacher shall serve as one of the elders and shall have no more or no less authority than any other elder and shall not act alone in matters of exercising authority belonging to the elder board.
- 2. Call and Dismissal:** The pastor-teacher shall be appointed by the elders of the church with extensive input, feedback and counsel from the congregation. The Pastor-teacher shall continue in his function as a pastor and in his office as an elder as long as he is Biblically qualified and as long as both the Pastor-teacher and the elders are agreed to continue the relationship.
- 3. Responsibility:** The primary responsibilities of the pastor-teacher shall be to devote himself to the study and exposition of the Word of God and to exercise pastoral oversight as any other elder of the church. He shall have other duties as specified by his Position Statement in the Bylaws.

## **C. Other Pastors**

- 1. Position:** The elders may call other pastors to the church as the church has the need and the resources. Generally these men will meet the biblical qualifications for elders as well as being gifted as teachers or skilled in a particular ministry.
- 2. Call or Dismissal:** They shall be appointed by the elders with input and feedback from the congregation, especially those who will serve with the pastor or directly benefit from his ministry. He shall continue in his function as a pastor as long as he is Biblically qualified and as long as both the pastor and the elders are agreed to continue the relationship.
- 3. Responsibility:** The pastor's responsibility shall be specified in his position statement as an attachment to the Bylaws.

## **D. Other Staff**

The elders may hire or contact for other workers in ministry or other functions as the church has needs and resources. The elders will establish Position Statements for all such workers as an attachment to the Bylaws.

## **E. Deacons**

- 1. Qualifications:** Deacons must be male members of the congregation who meet the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- 2. Positions:** Service positions requiring capable spiritual leadership shall be established by the elders as the need for such positions becomes apparent.
- 3. Selection:** The elders of the church are charged with the responsibility of appointing and dismissing deacons.
- 4. Tenure:** The tenure of the deacons will be reviewed by the elders annually.
- 5. Responsibility:** The deacons shall be responsible to the elders and shall meet with the elders for the purpose of reporting on the progress of their ministry and direction in areas requested on an as needed basis.

## **F. Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be appointed by and be accountable to the elders for an indefinite term. The Treasurer will normally meet the qualifications of a deacon. The Treasurer shall manage the receipt of all funds, the payment of all disbursements and all investments. Subject to the approval of the elders, the Treasurer shall establish written policies for the management of his office and appoint workers. The Treasurer will make certain that all receipt and disbursement of funds are handled honestly, legally and above reproach. The Treasurer's office will operate as openly as possible while respecting the privacy of individual donors. The Treasurer will advise the elders on staff compensation, property acquisition and development, long term financing and other economic matters. The Treasurer shall submit an annual budget proposal to the elders. The Treasurer shall have signature authority for the church as designated by the elders.

## **4.G Secretary**

The Secretary shall be appointed by the elders for an indefinite term. The Secretary will normally meet the qualifications of a deacon. The Secretary shall be the official recorder and custodian of the minutes of elder and congregational meetings.

## **Section 5 - Amendments to the Preamble, Name and Government Sections**

A. Amendments to Government are to be undertaken only with deliberate and extended consideration. A proposed amendment must be first approved by the elders. It then must then be posted and made available to the congregation in written form at least four weeks prior to a business meeting where the amendment is presented to the congregation for discussion and feedback. The elders must then re-approve the amendment along with any modifications resulting from the congregational input. The final amendment must be made available to the congregation.

B. The above procedure will also be used to amend the Preamble or Name sections of this Constitution.”

## **Article IV Bylaws**

### **Section 1 - Policies**

The elders will establish official written Policies including Position Statements for personnel for the efficient management of the church. The Policies are considered as part of these Bylaws and will be added or amended according to Section 4 below. Since policies are not of general interest, they will be published separately and will not be widely distributed. However, they will be open to any member of the congregation.

## **Section 2 - Committees**

The elders shall establish committees and appoint committee members on an as needed basis.

## **Section 3 - Meetings**

The elders of the church shall conduct quarterly business meetings of the church. Other meetings of the church will be called by the elders on an as needed basis. Elder meetings shall be regularly scheduled. Special meetings may be called as needed.

## **Section 4 - Amendments to Bylaws**

The elders may amend the Bylaws at any regularly scheduled meeting.