

## **CONSTITUTION**

### ***ARTICLE I – Name***

**Cornerstone Independent Baptist Church**

### ***ARTICLE II – Purpose***

To win the lost to Jesus Christ; to preach and teach the Word of God; to proclaim the Gospel (I Corinthians 15:3-8) to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8); to administer the ordinances (believer's baptism and believer's communion) of the New Testament; to promote Christian concern, fellowship and the spiritual growth of its members.

To edify Christians and strengthen them in the faith that they "may know" that they have eternal life who believe on the name of the Son of God. (I John 5:11-13)

### ***ARTICLE III – Statement of Faith***

We believe in the plenary, verbal, Divine inspiration of the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible (from Genesis to Revelation) in the original languages. (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)

We believe in God's promise to preserve His Word. The Bible says, "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever." (Psalm 119:152) Also, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." (Psalm 12:6-7)

We believe that the King James Version (or Authorized Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorized Version and say, "This is the WORD OF GOD!"

We believe that there is one God, a living intelligent Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, eternally expressing Himself through three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:26, Matthew 3:16-17, I John 5:7)

We believe that the material universe, including man, came into being by the direct creation of God, and not by evolution (not even theistic evolution). (Genesis 1, II Peter 3:5-7)

We believe that man was created sinless (Genesis 1:31) but voluntarily sinned (Romans 5:12-21, Genesis 3:1-7) and that because of this fall, all men are now sinners by birth and destined for hell (Romans 6:23, Romans 5:19) with no "spark of Divinity" and must be born from above to be fit for fellowship with God. (John 3:3-6)

We further believe that the unsaved will spend eternity in torment in a literal hell. (Revelation 20:14-15)

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost of the virgin Mary. (Matthew 1:20)

We believe that salvation of the sinner is wholly of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 4:4-5), and made possible alone through the vicarious death of Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary (Isaiah 53:3-4, 10-11, Luke 22:19-20), and that there is salvation in none other (Acts 4:12) and that all that is necessary for salvation is an acceptance by faith of His infinite work. (John 1:12, 3:16)

We believe that justification includes pardon from sin (Romans 8:1, 5:9, 8:30-34), the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23, 5:10), and a perfect standing before God (Jude 24-25, Romans 5:11), and that a born again believer cannot ever lose his salvation. (John 10:28-29, I John 5:11-13)

We believe in the sanctity of the home as instituted by God in the garden of Eden (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:21-25), consisting of marriage between one man and one woman (Hebrews 13:4, I Corinthians 7:1-5), united by love and Christian Faith, and that this marriage bond is intended by God to be a lifelong commitment that man should not put asunder (Matthew 19:3-9, Mark 10:1-12; Ephesians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:18-20; Titus 2:1-8, I Peter 3:1-7). According to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:31-33, there is no scriptural ground for allowing divorce (I Corinthians 7:10-16, 27). Moreover, children are to be desired from this union of husband and wife and brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Genesis 3:20; 9:1; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 22:6).

We believe all forms of sexual impurity (including sodomy, homosexuality, pornography, and effeminacy) are an abomination to God (Romans 1:18-32; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Leviticus 18:22-30); and that by recognition and repentance of these sins, salvation of the lost is still possible (John 7:8-11).

We believe that the local church is a congregation of immersed believers (Acts 10:46-47, Romans 6:3-6, I Peter 3:21) associated by covenant of faith and fellowship in the Gospel (Romans 12, Hebrews 10:23-25); that the local church has the absolute right of self-government (Matthew 18:18-20) and is answerable only to God, her Administrator, and the Lord Jesus Christ, her Head (Ephesians 5:23-24); that in all matters of membership, policy, discipline, and benevolence the will of the local church is sovereign. (Matthew 18:18-19)

We believe that there are only two church ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water. (Romans 6:3-6, Acts 8:36-39, Colossians 2:12, I Peter 3:18-21) We believe that participation in the Lord's Supper is symbolic of the Lord's vicarious death and is to be shared in only with true believers. (I Corinthians 11:23-24, Luke 22:19-20)

We believe that the gift of tongues was the miraculous ability to speak in foreign, knowable, human, understandable languages. (Acts 2:4-11) We believe this gift ceased before the full Scriptures were completed. (I Corinthians 13:8) We are not a Charismatic church.

We believe in the personal, visible, premillennial return of our Lord for His church (I Thessalonians 4:13-18), which event will initiate the great seven year tribulation (the culmination of human government divorced from God), (II Thessalonians 2:7-12, Matthew 24, Revelation 19:17-21) which had its origin at Babel. (Genesis 11:1-9) At this time, the Lord Himself shall return in glory to judge the living nations. (Matthew 25:31-46, Joel 3) The end of the tribulation will be immediately followed by the thousand year reign of our Lord Jesus

Christ on earth from Jerusalem. (Revelation 20:2-6) At the end of which time Satan will be loosed to show man's preference for evil. (Revelation 20:7-8, John 3:19) This brief period of Satanic freedom is to be quickly followed by the Great White Throne Judgment.

#### ***ARTICLE IV – Church Covenant***

The church covenant which binds every member of this church shall be as follows: Having been led by the Holy Spirit to accept the Lord Jesus as our Savior and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage therefore by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in the knowledge of the scriptures; to promote its growth and spirituality; to sustain its worship services, ordinances (believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper), discipline and doctrine.

To give God preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the financial support of the local church and its missionary endeavors; to seek the salvation of all and particularly of our kindred and acquaintances; to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to make available local Christian schooling, and to encourage the pursuit of Christian Education.

To encourage believers to marry only other believers; to live a consistent Christian testimony in the world; to repudiate and stand against the sins of our modern world, including divorce, sodomy, homosexuality, pornography, effeminacy, sins of the flesh, etc.; to avoid all gossiping, tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love and to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, mindful of how willingly Jesus forgives us.

#### ***ARTICLE V – Membership***

A. To become a member a person must:

1. Be born again and give testimony to that effect to a trained deacon or one of the church pastors.
2. Be baptized by immersion (after conversion).
3. Agree and have a life that is consistent with the Statement of Faith.
4. Agree and have a life consistent with the Church Covenant
5. The above qualifications are the only restrictions for membership. There is no minimum age.

B. The deacons or a pastor will then present him to the church for membership.

C. The person satisfying the above qualifications must then be voted on by the congregation at the next regular business meeting. They will then be a church member. To become a voting member, a person must be:

1. Voted on as a church member.

2. At least 23 years of age.
  3. Present at least one previous business meeting.
- D. In the Lord's work, the primary responsibility of this church is to the local area, and the primary responsibility of each member is to this church. It is our conviction that each member should support his church as the Lord has prospered him according to Bible principles. (Hebrews 7:1-10, Malachi 3:8-10, I Corinthians 9:11,13,14, Matthew 23:23, I Corinthians 16:2, II Corinthians 8:1-5, 9:7)
- E. To maintain a regenerate church membership, it is necessary to practice discipline. The church must guard the door with wise and biblical standards for membership, and it must provide a path out for those who refuse to be faithful. Otherwise, it soon becomes a lethargic, powerless mixed multitude rather than the spiritual house of living stones and serving priests that we see in 1 Peter 2:5.

According to Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Hebrews 10:25, God requires that church members be faithful to the services, **and that is what our church requires**. The church's job is to build up and protect the members (Eph. 4:11-16), but this is not possible if the members aren't faithful. The church is a body and each member have an important part in the body (1 Cor. 12:27), and it is impossible to carry on the Lord's business unless the members are present. Therefore, members must faithfully attend the services, including the mid-week prayer meetings, revival meetings, Bible conferences, and any other required functions.

If a member ceases to be faithful, the church leaders or those appointed by the leaders will meet with the individual and try to restore them. Each case is dealt with individually, and the leaders will consider such things as the person's health, age, distance from the church building, and family situation (for example, a young person with unbelieving parents or a wife with an unbelieving husband). Exceptions are made for those who are truly unable to attend all of the services. The leaders will try to determine the state of the individual's spiritual life and whether or not their heart is right in this matter. The church leaders want to see whether the individual desires to be faithful but is hindered in some justifiable way or whether the individual simply refuses to be faithful. The process of dealing with those who aren't completely faithful will take as long as the leaders deem necessary.

If an individual continues to be unfaithful without a proper excuse in a willful manner, the church leaders will continue to try to restore the individual to faithfulness according to Matthew 18:15-18. If that is unsuccessful, he or she will be brought before the church and removed from the membership. That means they cannot participate in the Lord's Supper, ministries, or church business. The individual is welcome to re-apply for membership when they meet the biblical standards of church members in Acts 2:41-42 and 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10.

- F. Cause for dismissal:
1. Moving out of the area.
  2. Inexcusable absence from the regular services.
  3. Public conduct which brings dishonor to the Lord and the church.
  4. Conduct which would intentionally harm another Christian. (Proverbs 6:16-19, Proverbs 16:28, 17:9, Romans 16:17-18, James 3:5-8)

5. Behavior contrary to the Statement of Faith and the Church Covenant.

### ***ARTICLE VI – Church Discipline***

The pastor (pastors) and deacons shall constitute the discipline committee of the church. They shall proceed with regard for the rights of the individual (Matthew 18:15-17, I Timothy 4:12) and the peace and spiritual prosperity of the church. (1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 6-7, 9-13, I Corinthians 6:1-5) Unrepented sin and actions contrary to the Statement of Faith and the Church Covenant, which through public knowledge is detrimental to the church's testimony, shall be the subject of church discipline.

### ***ARTICLE VII – Officers***

- A. The two Biblical offices of the church are pastor and deacon. From the deacons all the major offices of the church will be filled. The responsibilities of each office shall be set forth by the pastor.
- B. Any deacon, if reelected, may succeed himself for a maximum of two successive terms. Deacons shall be elected for a two-year term whose elections will be staggered for the sake of continuity.
- C. Calling of pastor. (Titus 1:6-9, I Timothy 3:1-7) A pulpit committee will be made up of the deacons and the administrative staff to seek out and recommend a candidate for the office of pastor. They shall also procure pulpit fill while the church is without a pastor. One deacon shall moderate until a new pastor is voted in.
- D. A pastor may be called by a 3/4 majority vote at any regular or called business meeting when announcement of a meeting for this purpose has been made in a previous Sunday morning service.
- E. The church shall not call a pastoral candidate until they have heard him preach the three services of one Sunday for which he shall be paid commensurate with the expenses entailed and services rendered. The candidate must be voted on by the church before a second candidate is called.
- F. Duties of pastor. The pastor shall assume the oversight of church life. The pastor shall have both the responsibility and authority to make certain that the doctrine, sermons, and messages are consistent with the doctrinal statement as written, Article III. He may call the deacons or the church together for special meetings to transact the business of the church. The pastor shall be notified in advance of all meetings. He shall moderate all meetings of the church.

The pastor shall continue in office until he resigns, is dismissed, or called to be with the Lord. The pastor may be dismissed by a 2/3 majority vote of those present voting at any business meeting of the church where his dismissal has been announced as one of the purposes of the meeting. Said announcement to have been made at two consecutive regular Sunday morning services.

Any pastor so dismissed shall be entitled to and shall receive one month's salary and other benefits from time of termination of his services which shall become effective at the end of the business meeting.

- G. Qualifications of deacons. (1 Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:1-4) Deacons must have an exemplary Christian testimony and conscientiously strive to live a Christian life so as not to be a stumbling block. He must be a soul winner (active in the church visitation program), be separated in accordance with the stand of the church, be faithful in attendance, and loyal.
- H. Election of deacons. To do this, we simply return to the selection of the first "deacons" in Acts 6. The process was very simple in the early church. It should remain just as simple in the church of today. The church shall out men of good report and men filled with the Holy Ghost and wisdom.

A written form will be prepared. The form will be entitled "Nomination of Deacons." The form shall have the number lines that correspond with the number of men needed. During the nomination service, the forms shall be distributed to every member of voting age present in the congregation. The members shall be asked to fill in both blanks with the name of a man they recommend as a deacon. Once the forms have been filled out and collected, the names of each man should be listed on a separate piece of paper. That list can be added to as ballots are reviewed. Each time a man's name is repeated on the following ballots, a mark can be made by that particular man's name. After all ballots are reviewed, the desired number of men receiving the most votes by the congregation should then be presented to the pastor.

After the list is submitted to the pastor, he will carefully review the list of names submitted. **There are times when a pastor may be aware of something in a person's life that would disqualify him from being a deacon, or the pastor may consider him yet a novice and prefer that he mature before being appointed as a deacon. This is simply a safeguard for the church and for the men being considered.** Once the pastor has approved the list of men, all deemed qualified shall meet with the pastor to ascertain if they are willing to consider the office of deacon. After the qualifications and duties are explained to them, we will set a time to have a special ordination service for the laying on of hands by the pastor and other ordained men, setting them apart for the ministry of deacon (see Acts 6:6).

- I. Duties of deacons. The pastor shall call the deacons together as necessary. Since the business of these meetings will include material assistance and spiritual guidance to individuals in trouble or in need, it shall be confidential (not being discussed with anyone outside of the deacons and the pastor).

It shall be the duty of the deacons to assist the pastor, visit the sick, seek out those who need material assistance (giving preference to the brethren) and lead in laboring for the Lord in the church.

- J. The trustees shall sign legal papers and act, only under orders of the church, as legal trustees of the property.
- K. Duties of secretary. The secretary is appointed by the pastor. The secretary shall keep a complete record of all official acts of the church, make a report of the same at each regular business meeting, and keep a complete and accurate registry of all members.

- L. Duties of the treasurer. The treasurer is appointed by the pastor. He shall be made familiar with all financial activities of the church. He shall work with the pastor and business manager in the oversight of budgets and the usage of monies.
- M. Duties of the business manager. It shall be the duty of the business manager to oversee the receiving and counting of all money and keep an accurate record of the same. He shall write orders on the treasurer for all current and necessary expenses. He shall work with the pastor in managing the financial activities of the church.
- N. All church staff (assistant pastors and other administrators) shall be selected by the pastor and voted on by the membership. Maintenance men, and secretaries shall be selected by the pastor and administrators. All church staff must be members of this local church and will operate within the authority granted to them by the pastor and are answerable only to the pastor.

### ***ARTICLE VIII – Business Meetings (effective upon becoming autonomous)***

- A. The church shall conduct quarterly business meetings. Any motion not specifically covered in this constitution must receive a clear 2/3 majority to be passed (two thirds of the members present voting). All business meetings of the church shall be governed loosely by "Roberts Rules of Order." However, "Roberts Rules of Order" shall not take precedence over the constitution.
- B. Special business meetings may be called by the pastor or deacons; or if these refuse, the secretary on the written request of at least 25 percent of the qualified voters.
- C. A quorum will consist of the members present for a business meeting which has been announced from the pulpit one Sunday or 50 percent of the voting members for a meeting that has been called without one week's notification.

### ***ARTICLE IX – Eligible Voters (effective upon becoming autonomous)***

Any regular church member in good standing, 23 years of age or older, shall be qualified to vote on church business after they have attended one scheduled business meeting.

### ***ARTICLE X – Amendments (effective upon becoming autonomous)***

This constitution may be amended at any regular or called business meeting of the church. Any amendment must be consistent with Article III and must receive a clear 3/4 majority of the votes. No amendments may be made while the church is without a pastor and through the first 6 months of a new pastor's term.

### ***ARTICLE XI – Dissolution***

In the event of dissolution of this organization, no residual asset thereof shall go to or for the benefit of any individual or individuals; but, in the event of dissolution of this organization, the residual assets shall only go to:

- A. An organization which has been determined to be exempt from Federal Income Tax as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, 1943, or to the Federal, State, or local government; and, furthermore,
- B. It must be an organization adhering to the following religious standards, namely: an Independent fundamental Baptist church, or churches, or organizations selected by the congregation at the time of dissolution and having like faith and order as our church.