



## *By-Laws*

## **Church Covenant**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, the sinless angels, and this assembly, most joyfully 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 knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all gossip, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rule of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We, moreover, engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **Purpose of the Church**

- A. The ultimate purpose of the Inter-City Baptist Church is to glorify God. We believe this can best be accomplished through the literal interpretation of the sixty-six books of the Bible and the organization of the work of our church around the two-fold ministry of:
  - 1. The evangelization of non-Christian people to the fullest extent possible starting in our own homes and community and reaching to the uttermost part of the earth.
  - 2. The edification of Christians through the preaching and teaching of the Bible.
- B. The Inter-City Baptist Church is and must remain according to this present Constitution and By-Laws an independent, fundamental, separatist Baptist Church.

1. By “independent,” we mean that this church is to carry on its ministry in an entirely autonomous fashion and is not to be controlled by any group or individual outside the membership of this church.
2. By “fundamental,” we mean that this church is governed by and seeks to conduct its ministry according to the Word of God which we acknowledge to be inerrant and infallible in the whole and in all of its parts.
3. By “separatist,” we mean that:
  - a. As individuals, the members purpose and practice a life that is separated unto the Gospel and separated from the world, this latter term signifying all those practices and associations that are contradictory to the Christian life taught by the Bible in practice and principle.
  - b. As a church, the members purpose and practice a ministry that is separated from all forms of ecclesiastical activity that contradict or compromise the Word of God.

## **Membership**

### A. Reception

All applicants for membership must make their desire for membership known by public decision and attend a series of classes during which the pastor will deal with the *Constitution of Inter-City Baptist Church*. The applicants shall then be presented to the church for approval.

### B. Requirements

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and giving evidence of a change of heart, who can conscientiously subscribe to the *Constitution of Inter-City Baptist Church*, may be received into membership by a two-thirds vote of members present at any congregational meeting:

1. By a vote of the church upon baptism.
2. Upon experience, if previously scripturally baptized.
3. By letter from another church of like faith and practice, showing such person to have been in good standing in such church.
4. Members whose names for any reason have been erased from the Church Roll may be restored to membership upon expression of repentance,

renewal of covenant duties, and repeating of the membership classes as the Pastor deems proper.

C. Responsibility

1. Our responsibility as members should include regular attendance at the services of God's house (including the Lord's Supper), the daily systematic reading of the Bible, private and family devotions, personal and public testimony, and the winning of others to Jesus Christ.
2. Proportionate giving, we believe, is in accordance with the teaching of God's Word and pledge ourselves to a systematic contribution for the support of the Church of such a portion of our income as we believe God requires of us according to the principles laid down in I Corinthians 16:2.
3. We shall require for each other in our daily walk and conversation loyal obedience to all those moral precepts laid down in the Word of God so plainly as not to need definition.

In these days of worldliness among professing Christians, it is necessary that we call the attention of believers to the plain teaching of God's Word concerning worldly amusements and entangling alliances with unbelievers: "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord. 'And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' says the Lord Almighty. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 NASB.

D. The Neglect of Spiritual Duties

The New Testament pattern of church life is that believers come together on the first day of the week to worship and serve the Lord, and that they regularly sit together at the Lord's Table to remember His death on their behalf. Persistent, willful neglect of these spiritual obligations, unless due to unavoidable circumstances, is sinful disobedience and should be challenged according to the pattern taught in Matthew 18:15-17. Members should be committed to being present to worship and serve on more Sundays than not, and they should expect and welcome spiritual accountability on this matter.

Members who are unwilling to repent over persistent, willful non-attendance shall be presented to the congregation for removal from membership.

#### E. The Practice of Church Discipline

Since accountability within the context of loving relationships is a vital part of God's plan for spiritual growth, members of Inter-City Baptist Church are expected to demonstrate their love for one another through mutual exhortation and encouragement (Hebrews 3:13, Romans 15:14, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Timothy 5:19). When a member becomes aware of a sin pattern that is hindering another member's spiritual growth and testimony for Christ, he should first examine his own heart (Matthew 7:5) and then go alone to that person seeking to restore him in a spirit of gentleness (Galatians 6:1).

If the sinning member refuses to listen to admonition and continues in his pattern of disobedience, then two or three members should meet with him in order to confront him with the need to be restored to a place of obedience (Matthew 18:16). If the sinning member still refuses to repent of his sin, then the confronting members should bring the matter to the attention of the spiritual leaders of the church. Since the senior pastor is chiefly responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church (Hebrews 13:17) and has been chosen by the congregation to provide this spiritual leadership, the matter should be brought to his attention first. In keeping with the pattern of Acts 6, the deacons will assist the pastor in dealing with discipline problems.

Upon the recommendation of the pastor and deacons, the situation will be brought to the attention of the church body in obedience to Matthew 18:17. The purpose for this announcement is that the whole body will, having first examined themselves, seek to restore the unrepentant member to obedience. If the disobedient member refuses to listen to the church, then he is to be excluded from the membership by a vote of the church body. Even removal from membership is intended to bring the person once again to a place of obedience and to the full fellowship of the church. All contact by church members with the excluded person should be for the purpose of restoration (Matthew 18:17, 1 Corinthians 5:11, 2 Thessalonians 3:15).

Only matters that have followed this biblical pattern will be brought to the attention of the church family except matters of public sin that require public repentance and confession. No member may be excluded when there is genuine evidence of repentance, and no information regarding private matters will be brought to the congregation's attention when those who are involved have shown evidence of genuine repentance (Matthew 18:15-17a).

#### F. Dismissal from Membership

When members in good standing move from this area, they will be given a letter of dismissal to present to a congregation of similar faith and practice which they intend to join in their new place of residence. Their membership in our assembly will terminate when they have been received into the

membership of that congregation or six months after the dismissal letter was issued. If, for unavoidable circumstances, they have not been able to find a new congregation to join within six months, they may request a new letter.

## **Officers of the Church**

- A. The biblical officers of the local church are pastors and deacons. The pastors are also referred to in the New Testament as elders and bishops.
- B. Inasmuch as one of the chief tasks of the pastor is that of overseeing the work of the local church, it is proper that there should be one pastor who is the true overseer of the work and ministry of each local church. Though there may be other men called of God to perform pastoral ministries in the church, the ministries of these men will also be carried on under the oversight of the man called by the congregation to be its pastor.

In light of the meaning given by the New Testament to the office of pastor of a local church, all workers in the local church, in either voluntary work or as paid employees of the church, are directly responsible to the pastor.

### 1. The Pastor

- a. The pastor shall be a regularly ordained minister of an acceptable, fundamental Baptist church.
- b. He shall be called by at least a three-quarters (3/4) vote of the members present at any regular or special business meeting, provided notice has been given for two consecutive Sundays. He shall continue in office as long as both parties, the congregation and the pastor, are agreed. Before his name shall be presented to the church for consideration, he shall affirm in the presence of the deacons his belief in the acceptance of the Constitution adopted by this church.
- c. If at any time the pastor differs with any of the Articles of Faith, mentally or otherwise, this shall be called to the immediate attention of the Deacon Board; and appropriate action shall be taken by the Deacon Board including airing before the congregation as necessary. If he refuses to repent of these views, he shall be subject to immediate dismissal by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the members present at a regularly-called congregational meeting.
- d. In the case of a proposed dissolution of the pastoral relation, three months notice shall be given by the party desiring the

dissolution, unless a shorter time is agreed upon by both parties in writing. The latter shall require a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present at a regularly-called congregational meeting.

- e. It shall be the duty of the pastor to preach the Gospel, to administer the ordinances of the church, to exercise a general pastoral oversight of the total ministries of the church, to preside at all business and Deacon Board meetings, and to perform the various duties incumbent upon his office. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and boards.
- f. It shall also be the duty of the pastor to secure adequate help for the various ministries of the church with the approval of the Deacon Board. These workers, whether ordained or not, shall be of the Baptist persuasion and must be in full accord with the Constitution adopted by the church.
- g. The activities of all the church workers are to be under the supervision of the pastor, who determines the engaging or the termination of their services.

## 2. The Deacons

- a. The Board of Deacons shall consist of the number of men deemed necessary by the pastor and congregation to accomplish sufficiently the work of the deacons in the church.
- b. The deacon's term of office shall be three years.
- c. Men must fulfill the scriptural requirements for deacons as given in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13 before they can be considered eligible for the office of deacon by the church.
- d. The deacons cannot succeed themselves in office.
- e. The deacons shall assist the pastor in the administration of the Lord's Supper and shall have at heart the spiritual welfare of the members.
- f. The deacons shall assist the pastor in every way possible so as to enhance his God-given ministry among the people.
- g. The Board of Deacons shall act as the Pulpit Committee in case of a pastoral vacancy.

- h. The Board of Deacons is also the Nominating Committee of the church and shall prepare a list of nominees for the office of deacon, said list to be posted one month before the Annual Meeting of the Church.

The members of the church may add names to this list by submitting to the Nominating Committee a written request signed by members of the church representing at least 10 families who are members of the church. The request for additions must be made at least two weeks before the Annual Meeting of the Church.

- i. A deacon who is neglectful or indifferent of his office or who evidences a spirit, in the judgment of the pastor and Deacon Board, which is not in keeping with the scriptural demands of that office may be dismissed by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the Deacon Board.

### 3. The Trustees

- a. The Board of Trustees shall consist of five members of the Deacon Board elected by the deacons.
- b. Their term of office shall be one year.
- c. It shall be the duty of the Trustees, in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan and in harmony with Article 54 of Public Acts of 1899, to hold trust and exercise supervision over all the property of the church, subject to the vote of the church.

### 4. Additional Boards and Committees

In keeping with 1 Corinthians 14:40, the pastor and the Board of Deacons may create and dissolve additional boards and/or committees as they deem necessary for the most fruitful and efficient operation of the church. All these boards and committees shall be subject to annual review by the pastor and deacons.

## **Final Authority**

The Bible is the sole and final rule of faith and practice for Christians and hence for local churches. In light of the independence and autonomy of the local church taught in the New Testament, the pastor and deacons are responsible to the congregational assembly of the church for the offices and authority they hold.



## Government of the Church

### A. Services

The regular services of the church shall be:

Sunday:            Sunday School  
                         Sunday Morning Service  
                         Sunday Evening Service  
Wednesday:      Prayer Meeting  
Communion:      First Sunday of each month

### B. Business Meetings

1. The church year shall close December 31. The Annual Business Meeting shall be held within one month thereafter on a day determined by the pastor and deacons.
2. Special meetings for the transaction of business may be called by the pastor, the Board of Deacons, or by a written request of any twenty-five (25) member families of the church to the pastor and Deacon Board, providing notice of such meeting and the purpose for which it is called shall have been given at the two church services on the Sunday immediately preceding the time of said meeting.
3. Fifteen percent (15%) of the active “voting” members of the church shall constitute a quorum. The voting age is eighteen (18) years. Members who are not in good standing forfeit their right to vote.
4. At a meeting of important business, the Moderator may request those who are not members of the church to leave the meeting.
5. *Robert’s Rules of Order*, Revised, shall be the parliamentary authority in all matters of procedure not specifically covered herein or by special rules of procedure adopted by the church.

### C. Finances of the Church

The ministry of the church shall be supported by the tithes and offerings of the people of the church. No fairs, bazaars, entertainments, or similar methods for raising money for Christ’s cause shall be held as such practices are contrary to the principles of giving as set forth in the Bible and are dishonoring to the Lord.

### D. Ordinances of the Church

In obedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ and in conformity to the precedent established by the New Testament churches, the ordinances of the church shall be two:

1. Baptism: administered by the pastor by immersion only, and only to those people who give satisfactory evidence of having repented of their sins, accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, and given evidence of a sincere desire to live for Christ.
2. The Lord's Supper: administered by the pastor with the aid of the deacons on the first Sunday of each month. Those people shall be welcome to participate in the Communion Service who give evidence of being true Christians and who are members of a fundamental, Bible-believing, local church.

#### E. Business Procedures

Realizing that the Church is in the world but not of the world, and that the Church thus has the responsibility to conduct all its business in the world in a manner that will bring honor to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the business procedures of the Church will be conducted under the supervision of the pastor aided by the Board of Deacons. Every effort will be made to institute and utilize the most efficient business innovations and methods in conducting the Church's business.

### **Purpose as to Educational Institutions**

#### A. Non-Public School

To own and operate a non-public school offering kindergarten through grade twelve (12). Admission will not be denied because of race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin.

#### B. Graduate Degree – Master of Divinity

To offer a graduate level degree program consisting of ninety-six (96) semester hours or equivalent term hours for the granting of a Master of Divinity degree for candidates who successfully complete the program.

Admission to the said degree program will be limited to those candidates who have a bachelor's degree or equivalent and no more than ten percent (10%) of the candidates applying per year with equivalent degrees will be admitted. Admission will not be denied because of race, color, sex, age, handicap, national, or ethnic origin.

#### C. Graduate Degree – Master of Theology

To grant a Master of Theology degree to those candidates who possess a Master of Divinity or Bachelor of Divinity or its equivalent and who complete thirty-two (32) semester hours or equivalent term hours in resident courses of study. Admission will not be denied because of race, color, sex, age, handicap, national or ethnic origin.

### **Revision and Amendments**

This Constitution and these By-Laws may be altered or amended at any regular or special business meeting of the church by seventy-five percent (75%) of the church membership present, public notice of the proposed change(s) having been given one month previously, provided that such change shall not conflict with Act 54 of Public Acts of 1899.