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This is Harvest Bible Chapel bringing together the common beliefs and practices of a church family. It is our hope that as we grow together in wisdom over the years that our understanding concerning matters of belief will deepen and that our decisions and our practices will reflect God at work among us.

HARVEST BIBLE CHAPEL

Ratified Constitution

April, 1991

Amended January 9, 2008

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church is, and shall be, **Harvest Bible Chapel**.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

To glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39). The commission is fulfilled as disciples of Jesus Christ are made. God is glorified as we manifest His presence in doing so (2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

ARTICLE III: PILLARS

At the outset of Harvest Bible Chapel, four pillars were established as the biblical priorities for this ministry. A fuller statement is available upon request.

Proclaiming the authority of God's Word without apology 2 Timothy 4:2

Lifting high the name of Jesus through worship John 4:24

Believing firmly in the power of prayer Ephesians 6:18

Sharing the good news of Jesus with boldness Ephesians 6:19-20

ARTICLE IV: DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

THE SCRIPTURES

We believe in the Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament as verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writing. We believe the 66 books of the Old Testament and New Testament are God's completed and sufficient revelation for the total well-being of mankind.

GOD

We believe in the only true God (John 17:3), the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). He created all things (Revelation 4:11) and upholds all things by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). He is a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He (Deuteronomy 32:4) and He shall judge the world (Psalm 9:8). We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience (Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Matthew 29:19-20; Acts 4:3-4).

JESUS CHRIST

We believe in the total deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe He is the manifestation of God in the flesh. We believe He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We believe Him to be true God and true man (John 1:1, 14, 18; John 14:8-9; 1 Timothy 3:16).

HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ during this age. He convicts us of sin and regenerates the sinner upon believing on Christ, baptizing the believer into one body of which Christ is the head. He indwells, guides, instructs, fills, comforts, and empowers the believer for godly living and service through individually bestowed spiritual gifts. While the Scriptures do not teach that certain gifts have ceased, it does seem to indicate that their usage would vary according to the need that each gift is designed to meet. Harvest Bible Chapel does not encourage the use of the "sign gifts." Instead we choose to emphasize the more excellent way of love and zeal for the more edifying gifts (John 16:8; 13:15; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; Romans 8:9-17; 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-5, 11-13, 19; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 4:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12). A fuller statement of our position on the charismatic movement is available upon request.

MAN

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners; not only by constraint, but by choice and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse. We believe that without exception every man is totally depraved and needs a Savior (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; Romans 1:18, 32).

SALVATION

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice. We believe that all who by faith receive Him as their personal Savior are justified on the basis of His blood shed on Calvary. They are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become eternally secure as children of God. We believe the Holy Spirit baptizes a person who believes into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation (Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

RESURRECTION

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven, and His present life for us as High Priest and Advocate (Acts 1:3, 9; Hebrews 7:25-26).

RETURN OF CHRIST

We believe in *“that blessed hope,”* the personal, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ. His return has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

BAPTISM AND COMMUNION

We believe that Christian baptism is a public declaration of and identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection signified by immersion in water. The Lord’s Supper is the commemoration by believers of Christ’s death until He comes and should be preceded by a careful self-examination (Acts 4:13; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29).

THE CHURCH

Upon accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, all believers have therefore become part of His body, the church. There is one church universal, composed of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scriptures command believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances (baptism and communion), fellowship, service to the body through the development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world in fulfillment of the command of Christ to make disciples of all believers (Ephesians 5:23; Romans 12:1; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Matthew 28:18-20).

Wherever God’s people meet regularly in obedience to this command there is the local expression of the church—under the watch care of Elders and other supportive leadership. Its members are to work together in love and unity,

intent on the one ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ (Ephesians 4:16).

STATEMENT ON MISSIONS

Missions is a response to the call Jesus Christ has given us to be His witnesses in all the earth. Realizing that the cause of Christ extends beyond any one local fellowship, we commit ourselves to an ongoing ministry of extending the call of Christ to make disciples around the world.

Harvest Bible Chapel is committed to the establishment and support of biblically-based, reproducing churches worldwide . . . planting churches that plant churches.

The primary focus and priorities that guide Missions are centered on efforts that establish, reproduce, and strengthen the local church. Our aim is to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment by making disciples in all nations.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

CONCERNING CONDUCT

The Bible teaches that all believers are saints, set apart unto God and are thus responsible to live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord (Romans 21:1-2; 1 Peter 1:14-19; 2 Timothy 2:19; Titus 2) lest the Word of God be blasphemed (1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:5). As Christians we should obey the Word of our Lord, seek the things which are above, walk as He walked, and accept as our responsibility the duty and privilege of bearing the Gospel to a lost world (1 John 2:3; Colossians 3:1; Ephesians 5:23; Matthew 29:19-20). A victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who have presented themselves wholly to Christ and walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, which all believers are called to do (Romans 12:1,2; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 6, 7).

“I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1

“Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16

“Be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit.” Ephesians 5:18

CONCERNING SEPARATION

Because of God’s holy nature and the believers’ high calling, Scripture teaches and commands personal and ecclesiastical separation from religious apostasy (2 John 7-11; Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10), from all worldly and sinful pleasures,

practices, and associations (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:1-5), and from professing believers living in willful disobedience to the Word of God (2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6, 14-15; 1 Corinthians 5). This does not include separation from unbelievers who need the Word of God to penetrate their world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“. . . note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned and avoid them.” Romans 16:17

“. . . that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.” 2 Thessalonians 3:6

“And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him that he may be ashamed.” 2 Thessalonians 3:14

MEMBERSHIP

The New Testament clearly indicates that groups of people who were followers of the Lord Jesus Christ identified themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body.

In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ, as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches, Harvest Bible Chapel recognizes the need for formal membership. Membership at Harvest Bible Chapel is for all who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and have visibly demonstrated that commitment through believer's baptism.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT

The effectiveness of our joining together will be determined by the level of the commitment we make. In a society where so few make commitments and fewer still keep them, Harvest Bible Chapel is seeking a group of people who are determined to know the joy Christ intended for His body, the church. To this end members of Harvest Bible Chapel must be willing to live in submission to our doctrinal statement. Further they must be willing to abide by the entire membership commitment.

1. I have, by faith, become a follower of Jesus Christ and I have been baptized as a visible way of demonstrating that commitment.
2. I will, with God's help, seek to maintain my consistent disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and evangelism.
3. I will neither criticize nor listen to criticism concerning any member(s) of this body and will, when personally offended, speak directly and lovingly with those involved.

4. I will financially support the ministries of the Chapel by giving back to the Lord a biblical portion of my increase faithfully.

PROCEDURE FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. Prospective members need to attend Peak Performance. These classes are a clear and concise overview of who Christ is, how one becomes a Christian, and how to be meaningfully connected to the church.
2. Upon completion of the class any person professing personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior who has expressed that commitment visibly by being baptized, or is willing to be baptized at the next available service, should indicate their desire for membership on the Peak Performance response card. The card will be turned in to the church office for further review and follow up.
3. Your name will be placed in the bulletin for a period of two weeks. During this period members will be encouraged to clear up any relational or other difficulties, which could hinder your ministry among us. This is done in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-17 so that both you and the Harvest family will benefit.
4. At the end of the two-week period those who remain as candidates will be welcomed into membership on the next Sunday set aside for that purpose.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

TWO CHURCH OFFICES

The biblical teaching on the subject of two church offices is found in 1 Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9. Though there are three terms used for the offices of the church, i.e. bishop, elder, and deacon, a careful analysis of these terms indicates that bishop and elder are used interchangeably, with the bishop simply being the “ruling” or leading elder. The pastors of the church have the spiritual authority of the Elders. However, with the exception of the Senior Pastor, they will serve on the board only as needed and at the request of the Elders.

SELECTION

When the need arises for additional Elders, a nominee will be recommended by the existing Board of Elders. In keeping with the clear biblical injunctions regarding authority structures within the church only men will be considered

for the office of elder. An in-depth interview will ensue to determine if the nominee is biblically qualified. The congregation will then be reminded of the biblical requirement for Elders and given 30 days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any disqualifying characteristics. If the matter remains unresolved, the nominee or church member should approach the Board of Elders and request that their name be withdrawn from consideration.

TERM

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for Elders, no specific fixed term of office is recommended. Instead, each elder, upon appointment, shall be asked for a three-year commitment. At the end of three years the commitment will be reviewed, along with a possible recommitment and reaffirmation by fellow Elders. During the review, both the individual and the other Elders shall evaluate his continued service as an elder, again considering the biblical qualifications, as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service as an elder may be discontinued by his own decisions or by a consensus decision of the other Elders or the congregation.

A person leaving the Board of Elders would not preclude his service as a future elder, subject to the regular selection process.

DUTIES

The Scriptures are clear that the elder's responsibility is the spiritual oversight of the congregation. The elder's responsibility can be broken down into three main areas:

- a) Ensuring that the doctrine of the church remains purely biblical; all doctrinal issues in the church will be settled by the Board of Elders.
- b) Ensuring that the direction of the church remains consistent with our statement of purpose and the four pillars statement as outlined in the Constitution.
- c) Administering in love and humility the biblical process of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20 and Galatians 6:1-4.

All decisions affecting the overall doctrine, direction, and discipline of the church will be the responsibility of the Board of Elders.

STRUCTURE

All Elders will have equal authority and responsibility. The Senior Pastor will work in cooperation with the Elder Board Chairman to ensure healthy ministry development and strong accountability. Agenda items for the elder meetings

must be submitted to the Elder Board Chairman prior to the Elders' meeting. An Elders' meeting may not be held without a majority of the Elders present and the entirety of the Elders informed. The Elder Board Chairman will be selected by consensus decision of the Board of Elders with no fixed term and may not be one of the pastors. The Elder Board will consist of the Chairman, the Senior Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacon Board and additional Elders, who will assume responsibility as agreeable and necessary.

QUALIFICATIONS (Titus 1:6-9)

Above reproach

Able to teach

Husband to one wife

Not addicted to wine

Temperate

Not antagonistic

Prudent

Uncontentious

Respectable

Free from the love of money

Hospitable

Manage own household

Not a new convert

PASTORS

SELECTION

All members of the pastoral staff will be chosen by the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor will automatically be a member of the Board of Elders. The Elders may nominate additional member(s) of the pastoral staff to serve on the Board of Elders.

TERM

All pastoral staff members will serve for an indefinite period of time. The Senior Pastor is responsible and accountable in the performance of his duties to the Board of Elders. All other staff members are responsible to the Board of Elders through the Senior Pastor. A staff member may only be dismissed by a consensus decision of the Board of Elders.

DUTIES

The responsibility of the Senior Pastor will be to faithfully preach God's Word and model the priority of discipleship within the church. He will give oversight and direction to all ministry staff and work with the Board of Elders in carrying out the overall vision of Harvest Bible Chapel.

QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications are equivalent to the biblical qualifications of an Elder.

ADDITIONAL PASTORAL STAFF

Ministry descriptions for the remaining pastoral staff will be established by the Board of Elders in keeping with the giftedness of the individual and agreed upon at the time of hiring.

DEACONS

The office of deacon is one that exists biblically to give leadership to the serving functions of the church (Acts 6). The qualification for deacons are the same as elder in the area of character, but different in aptitude. The Elders are to be "apt to teach" while the deacons are to be "able and proved as servants."

SELECTION

When the need arises for additional deacons, a nominee will be recommended by the existing Board of Elders. Following an independent interview to determine if the nominee is biblically qualified, the congregation will be reminded of the biblical requirements for deacons and given 30 days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any disqualifying characteristics. If the matter remains unresolved, the nominee or church member should approach the Board of Elders and request that his name be withdrawn from consideration.

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for deacons, no specific term of office is recommended. Instead, each deacon, upon appointment, shall be asked for a two-year commitment. At the end of two years the commitment will be reviewed, along with a possible recommitment and reaffirmation by fellow deacons.

During the review, both the individual and the other deacons shall evaluate his continued service as a deacon, again considering the biblical qualifications as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service as a deacon may be discontinued by his own decision or by the consensus decision of the Deacons Board. Upon their request the Elders will have the opportunity to participate in the review process.

A person leaving the Board of Deacons would not preclude his service as a

future deacon, subject to the regular selection process.

TERM

Deacons shall serve a term of two years and be eligible for additional terms upon nomination of the Board of Elders. A deacon may only be dismissed by a consensus decision of the Board of Elders.

DUTIES

The Board of Deacons will be responsible for the oversight of all financial, benevolent, ordinance, and facility operations of the church.

STRUCTURE

The Board of Deacons shall consist of a chairman, who shall be a member of the Board of Elders. The church treasurer will be the deacon in charge of finances. The remainder of the deacons will assume responsibilities as agreeable and as needed.

QUALIFICATIONS (1 Timothy 3:8-12)

Individual of dignity

Above reproach

Not double tongued

First tested as servants

Not addicted to wine

Spouses must be faithful

Dignified

Temperate

Not fond of sordid gain

Holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience

Husband of one wife

Manages household well

CHURCH SECRETARY

The Church Secretary will be any member of the church with the qualities of faithfulness, spiritual maturity, and a reputation for keeping confidences. The Church Secretary will attend board meetings and business meetings of the church and record the minutes of these meetings. The minutes will then be formally prepared by the Church Secretary and distributed to the appropriate

people one week before their next meeting. Corporate offices, as required by law, will be subject to church offices as outlined by this Constitution. The Church Secretary will be chosen by the Board of Elders with no fixed term.

FULL BOARD

At the discretion of the Board of Elders, a Full Board meeting may be called. The Full Board consists of the three divisions of church leadership: the pastoral staff, which is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the church; the deacons who direct the financial, benevolent, ordinance, and facility operations of the church; and the Elders, who oversee the doctrine, direction, and discipline of the church. The Elders may also include, when needed, small group leaders or other key ministry leaders who are not on staff in a Full Board meeting. All are to be under the authority of, and in submission to, the Board of Elders.

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

At Harvest Bible Chapel, we affirm the significant and God-ordained role that women are to play in the establishment and leadership of the local church. We believe that every opportunity of leadership is open to women except those that are excluded by Scripture. We do not feel any pressure to reexamine the clear biblical teaching on the exclusion of women from the office of elder simply because the unregenerate world is clamoring for the church to do so. We stand with the 2,000-year-old historical consensus on the teaching of Scripture that women are not to be placed in positions within the church where they would exercise authority over the male leadership or where they would teach doctrine to the adult members of the congregation. We do not see this as an issue of equality, for men and women are equal under God in every way. We see this as an issue of sameness. Men and women are not the same. The Bible makes that very clear. Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different in function and responsibility yet equal, so it is with the relationship between men and women. While we reject the movement within Christianity to see men and women as the same, we do stand against the other extreme, which de-emphasizes the significant leadership role of women in the church. We want to see female leadership when qualified candidates are available, in any leadership position other than elder or deacon.

BUSINESS MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP

A business meeting of the membership can be called at the discretion of the Elders, as they see the need. Attendance at the business meetings of Harvest Bible Chapel will be open to all who regularly attend the church. Participation

(i.e. speaking publicly, asking questions, affecting consensus, etc.) shall be limited to the members in good standing. A member in good standing will be one who is not under the discipline of the Board of Elders and who gives clear evidence of seeking to fulfill the membership commitment.

The Deacon Board will be responsible to ensure that regular and full disclosure of all business matters of the church is made. This will be done in the form of an annual report to be distributed each year or at any time that a member requests this information.

The annual report will include a full financial statement of the previous year and a proposed budget for the following year. The church commits itself to a program of fiscal responsibility that precludes over-budget spending.

Any item of business that a member wishes to raise at any business meeting that is not part of the published agenda (which will be published 14 days prior at a business meeting) must be given in writing to one of the Elders at least seven days before the business meeting.

DECISION BY CONSENSUS

The Book of Acts reveals that the authority for the direction of the affairs of the church was vested in the Elders. The Elders are responsible to be sensitive to the leadings of the Holy Spirit and to discern on behalf of the congregation the Holy Spirit's direction.

When the Elders believe an issue is sufficiently significant to require congregational input, the Elders will present the pertinent information to the congregation. The congregation will have opportunity to give input to the Elders. It is the responsibility of the Elders to discern direction of the Holy Spirit through the truth of Scriptures, prayer, and understanding of the pertinent issues at hand and input from the congregation.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution will be made as needed by the Board of Elders. However, a mailing will be sent to the entire membership for input and feedback before any changes would be made.