

# **COUNTRYSIDE BIBLE CHURCH CONSTITUTION**

Amended August, 2012

## **OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT**

- To *equip* individuals to *search* the scriptures and to *act* upon their responsibilities as Christians.
- To *love* and *serve* one another, our neighbors and the one true God.
- To *proclaim* the gospel of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.
- To *prepare* all for citizenship in that coming kingdom.
- Thus *worshiping* God, and *honoring* His son Jesus.

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the people of the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith, resident in/near Peculiar, Missouri, for the purposes of mutual aid in Christian growth and service, and biblical research and comprehension, and for the more effective preaching of the gospel within the radius of our influence, do prayerfully ordain and establish this constitution of the Countryside Bible Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith in the township of Peculiar, county of Cass, state of Missouri.

## **ARTICLE I - STATEMENT OF FAITH**

**Section 1:** GOD. We believe that there is only one God, who is only one person, the Father. He is almighty, eternal, immortal and the creator of all things.

**Section 2:** JESUS CHRIST. We believe that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah), was miraculously created in the womb of the virgin Mary. He is the sinless and only begotten Son of God. He died for the sins of the world and was raised from the dead to eternal life by God on the third day. He will return to establish and rule over the kingdom of God as king.

**Section 3:** HOLY SPIRIT. We believe that the Holy Spirit is God's divine power, presence, and influence manifest in His mighty works and in the lives of His people.

**Section 4:** THE BIBLE. We believe that the Bible, containing sixty six books, is the authoritative and divinely inspired source of our doctrine and practice.

**Section 5:** HUMANS. We believe that humans, through disobedience to God, fell under condemnation of death...the cessation of life and consciousness. We affirm that the location the dead is the grave (Sheol/Hades) and we deny the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. All persons, being both sinful and mortal, are in need of salvation.

**Section 6:** SALVATION. We believe that salvation is by the grace of God available to all, through the atoning blood of Christ. It consists of God's forgiveness of sin, the imparting of His Spirit to the believer, and finally the gift of immortality at the resurrection when Christ returns. The steps in the gospel plan of salvation are:

- A. Belief of the things concerning Jesus Christ and the gospel of the kingdom.
- B. Sincere repentance and confessions of sins.
- C. Baptism...by immersion...in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.
- D. Indwelling of the believer by Christ through God's Spirit.
- E. Continuing in a life of faithful obedience, growing in grace, love, and knowledge of God and his Son Jesus Christ.

**Section 7:** THE CHURCH OF GOD. We believe that the Church of God is the scriptural name for that body of people who have been called out from among all nations through obedience to the gospel plan of salvation. Christ is the head of the church; and the nature, work, and government of the church are set forth in the New Testament.

**Section 8:** THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. We believe that the Christian life is primarily a life of consecrated discipleship to Jesus Christ as Lord, Savior, and teacher. It will be exemplified by love, prayerful dependence on God, study of the Scriptures, development of the fruit of the Spirit, and stewardship.

**Section 9:** RETURN OF CHRIST AND KINGDOM OF GOD. We believe that the Kingdom of God will be consummated on earth when Christ returns personally and visibly to reign as King in Jerusalem over the whole earth, with the church as joint-heirs with Him. At the return of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead will occur. Judgment and destruction of the wicked will come subsequently, after which will be established "the new heaven and a new earth" wherein there will be no more death or suffering.

## **ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1:** Anyone who has been baptized by immersion, agrees with the statement of faith (Article 1 of this constitution), and whose life reflects those beliefs by having made a public expression of their faith, is eligible and encouraged to be a member of Countryside Bible Church. The counseling of individuals interested in membership will be the duty of the Elders.

**Section 2:** A voting member shall be one who has attended thirty Sunday morning Worship Services during the previous twelve months and has made a contribution of money or service. Attendance to national or state sponsored Sunday events or other COG churches will be regarded as sufficient for Sunday attendance requirements. Members that due to age, health, college attendance, or distance who are unable to meet attendance requirements, but maintain regular contact, in addition to providing financial support of the church, will be allowed to vote (based on the stipulations in Article V Section 2).

**Section 3:** Membership shall continue so long as one's true efforts in Christian faith, unity of the congregation, and conduct continue to be evident. This assessment will be made by the Church Board. Membership may be withdrawn or transferred by a written request to the Church Board secretary. Letters of transfer to other affiliated church groups of like faith will be given upon request.

**Section 4:** It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to counsel any member of this church who may change their beliefs so as to deny those truths for which this church stands, or whose conduct shall deem them untrue to his/her profession of Christ. If, after counsel, the member indicates no desire or intention of making correction, the Board of Elders may recommend to the Church Board that the membership be discontinued. It shall be the responsibility of the Church Board to discontinue membership.

### **ARTICLE III - OFFICERS**

**Section 1:** The elected officers of this church shall consist of a maximum of:

- two elders
- six deacon/deaconesses
- three trustees
- a secretary
- a treasurer
- a Sunday School Superintendent
- and the Pastor.

If there are not enough qualified candidates, then the maximum number of officers allowed per position should not be pressed. All officers must qualify as voting members under ARTICLE II, Section 2.

**Section 2:** The purpose of the CBC board is to serve Christ in the administration of his congregation by working as a team in the:

- Serving as a steward of the Scriptures
- Supporting of the Pastor through prayer
- Actively supporting the Pastor's ministries, direction, vision, and teaching
- Overseeing of the church finances
- Establishing of church policy
- Facilitating decision-making for major business matters of the church
- Leading with a positive influence upon the congregation
- Insofar as possible, being an example in the participation of church functions
- Offering advice and counsel as the pastor develop plans, objectives and church strategy
- Supporting of the Child Protection Policy

This group of members should visibly display a strong commitment to the mission and vision of the church and desire to support the Pastor and the work of God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. These expectations are to be mandated in conjunction with the CBC Statement of Faith and Constitution.

**Section 3:** Terms of Office

- A. The term of office for the Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sunday school Superintendent shall be for one year or until their successors are properly elected and qualified.
- B. The elected term for each Trustee shall be for three years with one Trustee elected each year unless a vacancy has to be filled.
- C. Any vacancy in these offices may be filled by special election at the discretion of the Church Board.
- D. These officers shall be elected by ballot, a majority being required to elect. Nominations shall be submitted to the Church Board in writing.
- E. All elected officers and appointees shall assume their duties on June 1<sup>st</sup> unless a vacancy necessitates an elected officer or appointee to assume their responsibilities at the first available Church Board meeting following their election.

**Section 4:** It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to counsel any officer of this church who is negligent or no longer is qualified to hold the office including the objectives in ARTICLE III, Section 2. If, after counsel, the officer indicates no desire or intention of making correction, the Board of Elders may recommend to the Church Board that his/her position in that office be discontinued. It shall be the duty of the Church Board to render the final decision.

**ARTICLE IV - QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

**Section 1:** Elders

- A. The qualifications of Elders shall be such as are described in Titus 1:5-9 and I Timothy 3:1-7. These qualifications include “a male who is faithful”, able to teach our doctrine, not addicted to alcohol, not greedy, and not a convert of less than twelve months. They are to be examples to the flock and the world in prayer, Bible study, conduct, church attendance and financial support.
- B. The duties of the Elders shall be as follows:
  - 1. To recommend, as necessary, properly qualified persons for the pastorate of

the church.

2. To compose, with the Pastor, the Board of Elders, and to "Feed the flock of God...taking the oversight thereof..." I Peter 5:1-4. They shall be responsible for meeting regularly to pray for and to discuss the direction of the church, which includes the direction of teaching, preaching, spiritual oversight, and maintaining of the doctrine. When needed, they shall make recommendations to the Church Board or membership. They shall also make any necessary decisions between Church Board meetings when it seems unfeasible to call the entire board together.
3. To give counsel, encouragement, offer the services of a liaison, and assistance to the Pastor.
4. One of the Elders shall be chosen to be chairman of the board of Elders upon election. The other elder shall be vice-chairman.
5. In the absence of a Pastor, or in the case of his gross misconduct or negligence, the elected Elders shall see that all the duties of the Pastor are performed.

## **Section 2:** Trustees

- A. The qualifications of Trustees shall be those of honesty, uprightness, and other Christian virtues as become one of such trust. They also shall be such as are necessary to properly perform the duties.
  1. A Trustee must be at least 21 years of age.
  2. A Trustee should be somewhat knowledgeable in business matters, maintenance, insurance, etc.
- B. The duties of the Trustees shall be as follows:
  1. To compose a Board of Trustees. Within one month after the election, they shall choose one of their number to serve as Chairman of the Trustees, for the coming year. The Chairman shall then oversee the work of the Trustees.
  2. To purchase, rent, lease or sell property in trust for the church as they are directed by the church and this constitution.
  3. To perform the business matters of the church including the oversight of adequate insurance of all buildings, vehicles, properties, tax exemption papers, etc.
  4. To provide for the safe keeping of legal documents, important papers, deeds, titles, etc.

5. To supervise the maintenance, protection, and general care of the church owned buildings, properties, vehicles, and equipment. This shall include custodial services, lawn, sidewalk, parking lot care, etc. The Trustees shall annually inspect and inventory the church owned properties and equipment with a view toward safety, maintenance and improvement.

**Section 3:** Secretary

- A. Qualifications for Secretary shall be those of honesty, uprightness, and other Christian virtues as become one of such trust. They shall also be such as are necessary to perform the duties of the office.
- B. The duties of the Secretary shall be as follows:
  1. To prepare and preserve an accurate record of all congregational meetings and Church Board meetings, reading the same when properly called upon to do so.
  2. To submit a copy of congregational and Board meeting minutes when properly called upon to do so.
  3. To oversee accurate and current membership records, as well as include in the minutes of any meeting, any reported change in membership. These records shall include the date and manner of admission to this church as well as the date of death or withdrawal.
  4. To do such correspondence as the church or Church Board may request.
  5. To perform such other duties as may properly fall to this office.

**Section 4:** Treasurer

- A. Qualifications of the Treasurer shall be those of honesty, uprightness and other Christian virtues as become one of such trust. They shall also be such as are necessary to perform the duties of the office.
- B. The duties of the Treasurer:
  1. To receive and provide the safe deposit of all funds of the church.
  2. To promptly disburse the funds of the church as authorized by the Church Board.
  3. To keep a neat and accurate record of all funds, and to provide a financial report at all Church Board meetings.

4. To provide financial reports and personal contribution statements as directed by the church board.

**Section 5:** Deacons and Deaconesses

- A. The qualifications of the deacon and deaconesses shall be in accordance with the 1 Tim. 3:8-13
- B. Their duties shall be to look to the needs of the sick and afflicted on behalf of the church, to wait upon the congregation with communion emblems, and to have charge in ushering and comforting the congregation during hours of service.

**Section 6:** Sunday School Superintendent

- A. The qualifications for Sunday School Superintendent shall be the same in regard to character and stating as the qualifications of eldership.
- B. The duty of the Sunday School Superintendent shall be to properly promote Sunday School, the appointment of teachers, and the evaluation of curriculum in conjunction with the Board of Elders.

**ARTICLE V - ELECTIONS**

**Section 1:** Nominations

- A. All nominations shall be addressed in writing to the Church Board (rather than to individual officers) no later than the April board meeting. It will be the responsibility of the Church Board to inquire into the availability of each nominee as well as approve their qualifications for such position. The elections will take place on an agreed-upon Sunday during the month of May each year.

**Section 2:** Elections: The election shall be by secret ballot with the candidate receiving the majority vote being elected. Only voting members are allowed to participate in the voting process. A majority must be present in order for the election to commence, with the majority defined as one over half of the congregation's voting members present. There shall not be any absentee ballots cast; except in instances of physical incapacitation, sickness, or approval by the Board of Elders. The results shall be posted before the meeting is adjourned.

**ARTICLE VI - BOARD MEETINGS**

**Section 1:** General

- A. **Robert's Rules of Order, Revised**, will govern procedures except as it may

conflict with this constitution. Motion shall be carried by a simple majority of voting members present.

- B. The Chairman Elder will moderate all business meetings. In his absence the vice-chairman will preside.
- C. A quorum shall consist of 1/2 of the voting members for all congregational meetings and 1/2 of the Board members for Church Board meetings.
- C. The Bible shall be considered the foundation on which reasoning and decisions are based, and this ARTICLE shall be considered the guideline - not a rule book. (II Timothy 3:16,17)

### **Section 2:** Congregational Meetings

- A. WHEN: There shall be an annual congregational business meeting each year sometime during the month of May. The Church Board shall establish the date and time and shall give notice to the congregation at least four weeks prior to the annual meeting. Special congregational business meetings may be called at any time by an Elder, provided notice is given in at least two public services.
- B. PURPOSE: The purpose of the annual Congregational Business Meeting shall be for the election of officers, and any other Church Board business that shall be brought before the congregation.

### **Section 3:** Church Board Meetings/Executive Board

- A. WHEN: Church Board meetings shall be held monthly at a time and date set by the Board.
- B. PURPOSE: The Church Board shall conduct all business of the church except matters which require the action of the whole congregation or matters which are the specific work of certain officers within the church.
- C. ATTENDANCE: All members of the congregation may attend, but only Church Board members may participate in discussions, the making of motions, and voting. The exception to this rule is that when the Church Board deems the subject matter to be confidential, it may request a closed meeting of only the elected Church Board members.
- D. MEMBERS: The Church Board shall consist of the Pastor, Elders, Trustees, Sunday School Superintendent, Secretary, Treasurer, and the six deacon/deaconesses. Each member shall have one vote regardless of the number of offices held.

## **ARTICLE VII - PASTOR**

**Section 1:** Qualifications for the Pastor shall be the same as for Elder.

**Section 2:** Selection of a Pastor. The elected Elders, as necessary, shall recommend properly qualified men for the pastorate of the church, and with the approval of the congregation, shall engage a man for that position, installing him as Pastor and Elder.

**Section 3:** The duties of the Pastor shall be as follows:

- A. To foster his own spiritual development that he might be an example to the flock and the world in prayer, Bible study, conduct, church attendance and financial support.
- B. To foster the development of Christian character in all members and to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ.
- C. To occupy the pulpit regularly and in their temporary absence see that the pulpit is filled.
- D. To counsel candidates for baptism to insure their readiness and understanding.
- F. To counsel candidates for marriage, to help guide them in their life-long decision.
- G. The Elders, together with the Pastor as Chairman, who by virtue of his office shall be considered an Elder, shall compose the Board of Elders. In matters concerning the hiring and dismissal of a Pastor, or dissatisfaction with the Pastor, or in matters specifically delegated by the Church Board to the elected Elders, the elected Elders shall meet. They shall then make recommendations to the Board for action.
- H. To coordinate the calendar of activities in all departments of the church.
- I. Every department and service of the church shall be under the Pastor's guidance. He shall be, ex-officio, a member of every board, committee, department, office, and every other activity of the church.
- J. The pastor shall be answerable firstly to God, secondly to the Elders, and thirdly to the congregation.
- K. In the absence of a Pastor, the elected Elders shall see that all the duties of the Pastor are performed. These duties will be limited by licensing laws.

**Section 4:** Salary and Benefit Agreement

- A. A "Salary and Benefit Agreement" shall be formed which shall state the salary,

benefits, and provisions of engagement.

- D. The terms of the agreement shall be agreed upon by the Church Board, acting in behalf of the church, and by the Pastor.
- C. These terms may be changed at any time, provided both the Church Board and Pastor agree.

**Section 5:** Contract Renewal Procedures: at least 60 days prior to the expiration of the contract, the congregation will vote whether or not to offer the Pastor a continuation of employment. If the vote is favorable and the Pastor is willing to continue the Church Board will negotiate terms of the renewal.

**Section 6:** Dismissal and Termination Procedures: The engagement may be discontinued or terminated by the fulfillment of the following requirements.

- A. The Pastor may discontinue his office as Pastor upon consummation of his contract. The church requires that if he feels led to do this, he is to give the church at least sixty days notice.
- B. The church may consider the termination of the engagement by having a membership vote on the Pastor upon the fulfillment of any of the following:
  - 1. The church shall vote on the Pastor when upon dissatisfaction. 10% or more of the voting members of this church must request this vote in order for it to occur.
  - 2. The church shall vote on the Pastor, when upon dissatisfaction, three or more Board members request a vote by confidentially making their request known to the Chairman Elder.
  - 3. The church shall vote on the Pastor if he requests a "vote of confidence." This vote will consist of a show of hands of voting members (not by secret ballot).
  - 4. In any vote on the Pastor, a majority vote against the Pastor shall constitute his termination.
  - 5. Any termination of the Pastor's engagement shall be at the conclusion of his contract unless a different time shall be mutually agreed upon.

## **ARTICLE VIII – CHILD PROTECTION POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Section 1:** Countryside Bible Church will abide by the rules and regulations outlined in the Child Protection Policy document. The CPPC will meet at least once a year to discuss and address any potential changes needed in this document. A team of six

Church members will form the committee, consisting of the Pastor, Sunday school superintendent, one elder, and a maximum of three Church members. These individuals will be required to abide by the Child Protection Policy and its guidelines and procedures.

### **ARTICLE IX - AFFILIATIONS**

**Section 1:** Countryside Bible Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith shall be a member of the Missouri State Conference of the Churches of God of the Abrahamic Faith and also a member of the General Conference of the Churches of God of the Abrahamic Faith, with headquarters in McDonough, Georgia.

### **ARTICLE X - DISSOLUTION CLAUSE**

**Section 1:** In case of dissolution of this congregation, ownership of all church property shall transfer to the Atlanta Bible College/Church of God General Conference (Abrahamic Faith), Inc., (General Conference), located in McDonough, GA for use in establishing or assisting groups or churches in Missouri or its contiguous states.

### **ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1:** This constitution may be amended by a 2/3 majority vote of voting members present, at a regular or special congregational business meeting, provided written notice of a proposed amendment has been given to the membership at least four weeks preceding the meeting.