

# Heritage Bible Church Constitution

Ratified December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003  
Amended February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009

## Name

The name of this church is Heritage Bible Church, an Oklahoma Corporation. Its principal place of worship is in or near Tulsa, Oklahoma.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Church is to glorify God: teaching His Word and the fundamentals of the faith as contained in the Holy Scriptures; providing a place of worship to build the Body of Christ through the edification of individual Believers with teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayer (Acts 2:42); and presenting the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ at home and abroad.

## Doctrine and Tenets

### The Bible

The Bible is the Holy Scripture; the inspired, inerrant, authoritative, and complete Word of God. Its content, in the form of its original languages, was revealed to the individual writers by the Holy Spirit without error so that God could reveal Himself to man. It is our authoritative guide to all spiritual matters, and is complete according to the tests of canon.

### The Trinity

God exists in three persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are identical in nature and attributes. They are eternal in essence, and are equal in perfection and in power and glory. The Father serves as the planner and supervisor of this single triune God.

### The Human Race

Man was created in God's image, but in Adam's sin mankind fell, inherited a sinful nature and became separated from God, unable to reconcile himself to God.

- We accept the Genesis account of Creation
- All people are responsible for and share the penalty of Adam's sin
- All people inherit the capacity to commit personal acts of sin, sometimes referred to as "the sin nature," through their human fathers.
- Acts of personal sin may be mental, spoken, or overt.

Therefore, all people need to be reconciled to God, and are invited to be reconciled to God through the work of Jesus Christ.

### Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, completely God and completely man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life and accomplished the redemption of mankind through his substitutionary death on the cross. He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven where He is now exalted at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest, Intercessor, and Advocate.

## **Salvation**

Because God desires all people to be saved, salvation is available to anyone through faith alone in Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross for the sins of all people provided it completely as a free gift. Each person is convicted by the Holy Spirit of their need for salvation. It is the decision of each person to accept or reject this gift; God's plan to eternally reconcile fallen mankind to His holiness. Once received, salvation cannot be lost.

## **The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit reveals information from God to man, convicts the world of sin, permanently indwells the believer from the moment of salvation in the present age, baptizes the believer into the body of Christ, and seals the believer until the Day of Redemption. Through dependence on the Holy Spirit, believers are able to understand and apply the Word of God and grow spiritually. The believer in Christ should strive to remain filled with the Holy Spirit, but everyone fails through sin. When this state of carnality exists, the believer restores the filling of the Holy Spirit through confession and repentance. The Holy Spirit also bestows on each believer one or more spiritual gifts. We believe the gifts of apostleship, prophecy, miracles, healing, tongues, and interpretation of tongues were temporary gifts ended by the close of the canon of scripture and are no longer granted to the individual believer.

## **The Church**

The Church is the body and future bride of Christ, consisting of all who experience saving faith in Jesus Christ. This local church is an assembly of like-minded believers in Christ for prayer, worship, fellowship, Bible study, and ministry in its community and the world.

- Baptism by immersion in water is a symbolic testimony by the believer of his or her identity in Christ. It does not affect salvation, or spiritual growth.
- The Lord's Supper is an institution in which believers are instructed to share the bread and cup, which represent the physical and spiritual death of Jesus Christ. We partake in the Lord's Supper to remind ourselves of Christ and the Hope we have in him. The Lord's Supper, as practiced in this Church, is open to all believers in Jesus Christ in fellowship.

## **Future Things**

Jesus Christ will receive to himself the dead in Christ and believers who are alive prior to the tribulation. The tribulation will fulfill Daniel's seventieth week, and will end with the return of Jesus Christ to Earth to set up His Kingdom, in which He will reign over the nations of the earth for a thousand years.

## **The Eternal State**

The souls of those who have believed in Jesus Christ will pass immediately into His presence at death. They will remain in conscious bliss until their bodily resurrection immediately prior to the Rapture. In their glorified bodies, all who have believed in Jesus Christ will be with Him throughout eternity. The souls of those who have not believed in Jesus Christ will pass immediately into a state of conscious misery after death. They will remain there until they are resurrected prior to the final judgment at the Great White Throne at the end of the millennium. From that judgment they will be cast into the Lake of Fire where they will be punished with everlasting torment throughout eternity, never consumed, and always separated from the Lord.

## **Angels**

Angels are superior beings created after the universe but before humanity. Satan, once the chief of all angels, rebelled against God. With other fallen angels, he is now involved in a war, known as the angelic conflict, against the elect angels. Satan will be defeated and will be sent to the Lake of Fire with all fallen angels and will share the eternal state of all unbelieving humans.

### **Dispensations**

This Church is Dispensational; believing that the Bible should be interpreted plainly, and therefore that Israel and the Church are separate entities in the scripture, and that God will keep his promises to Israel. We also believe that God's purpose in the world is His own glory.

### **Tenets**

This Church shall not at any time become a member of, sanction, or support any national or international religious council, and shall remain a nondenominational Church that is not affiliated or responsible to any other religious organization.

This Church, for the specific purposes of missions, publications, and other cooperative ministries, may form alliances with other groups of believers. In such circumstances, this Church will respect the authority of such groups concerning their own ministries.

This Church shall not permit solicitation, campaigning, or petitioning on Church property.

This Church shall not solicit anyone to become a member.

This Church shall operate under the principles of grace giving.

This Church is committed to fulfilling biblical standards of financial stewardship while operating within applicable laws and regulations.

## **Church Government**

Jesus Christ is the Head of this Church. The Bible is our first guide in all policies of faith and church order. The Holy Spirit is our teacher.

The Government of this Church is vested in its Members.

## **Church Leadership**

### **The Pastor**

The Pastor is responsible for the full-time pastoral ministry of the Church. In addition to the duties of Elder, the Pastor-Teacher is to gently shepherd the congregation, serving as a prominent source of spiritual leadership and influence, to teach the Word of God, and to supervise the teaching of the Word of God throughout all church ministries. The Pastor(s) is an equal voting member of the Elder Board.

A Pastor selected according to church policy must receive 4/5 of the votes cast by the Members to be appointed.

The number and roles of additional Pastors will be determined by the Elder Board according to the needs of the Church and are subject to approval by the Members.

### **The Elders**

Spiritual leadership of the church resides within a plurality of Elders comprising the Elder Board. The Elders are to serve cooperatively with the Pastor(s) as the spiritual leaders of the Church, setting a vision in accordance with God's will and providing general spiritual oversight of the assembly and its ministries. The Elders are to watch over the spiritual life of the Church, pastoring and equipping the Members for

ministry and encouraging them to use their spiritual gifts. They are to protect the ministries and reputation of the Church and ensure that doctrinal purity is maintained.

The qualifications for men to serve as Elders are found in the scriptures (I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-20; Titus 1:5).

Elders shall be nominated from among the Members by current members of the Elder Board and affirmed by the Members by a 2/3 vote. Each Elder will serve as an equal voting member of the Elder Board. The terms of those chosen to serve as Elders are indefinite.

A minimum of three Elders, not including the Pastors, shall be required to form an Elder Board. In the event that this minimum number is not achieved, the Elders and Deacons will choose Deacons to hold voting positions on the Elder Board until sufficient Elders are affirmed by the congregation. A maximum number of Elders shall not be specified.

### **The Deacons**

It is the Deacons' primary purpose to ensure that administrative duties do not prevent the Elders from ministering to the church. The Deacons take spiritual direction from the Elder Board, and involve the Elder Board in all planning and communications.

The Deacons are to serve the church by providing for its administrative needs, including providing for physical property, establishing an operating budget, tending to the physical and material needs of the people of the church, and handling the receipt and disbursement of funds, aligned with the ministry priorities established by the Elders. The Deacons determine compensation for all paid staff including pastors.

The qualifications for men to serve as a Deacon ~~Elders~~ are found in the scriptures (I Timothy 3:8-13). The Deacons will establish and direct Committees made up of Members of the Congregation desiring to serve in such capacity.

Deacons may be nominated from among the Members by any Member of the Church. Deacon nominees will be evaluated by the Elders and recommended to the Congregation.

A minimum of three Deacons shall be required to form a Deacon Board. In the absence of this minimum, the Elders will select men to complete the Deacon Board until the Annual Business Meeting. A maximum number of Deacons shall be determined by the Elders based on the ministry needs of the Congregation. The terms of Deacons are three years.

The Deacons serve as equal voting members of the Deacon Board, and are responsible for interpretation of the Church Constitution in matters of policy and procedure, deferring to the Elders for guidance on spiritual issues and conformity with scripture. As part of the agenda of a Deacon Board meeting, the Chairman may specify rules inviting Elders to serve as voting members of the Deacon Board.

### **The Members**

The Members affirm the appointment of Pastors and Elders, and nominate and affirm the appointment of Deacons. They also ratify an annual budget at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation and must approve material changes to the budget and any commitment of finances for non-routine expenditures such as the purchase of land or facilities or committing the church to any form of indebtedness.

### **Committees**

Committees will consist of Members of the Church who desire to serve in a given area according to their gifting and will be directed by an Elder or Deacon. Each Committee will determine its own policies and procedures, subject to approval by the Elders, to best serve its respective area of ministry.

### **Removal of Church Leaders**

If it becomes necessary to consider the removal of any Elder, including a Pastor, or Deacon:

***Elders and Pastors:*** The Elders and Deacons will hold a special meeting, in which all Elders, excluding any being considered for removal, and all Deacons may vote. This Elder/Deacon meeting may be called by any Elder, or by a majority of the Deacons. A vote for dismissal by 2/3 of the combined Board members casting a vote will result in the dismissal of the Pastor or Elder. If he chooses, a Pastor may appeal his dismissal at a special duly-called Congregational Meeting in which he may be retained with a 2/3 vote in his favor.

In the case of a Pastor, the members of the Elder Board not subject to dismissal proceedings will have discretion as to whether or not that Pastor will continue teaching the Congregation during this process.

***Deacons:*** Individual Deacons may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the Elders.

### **Retention and Dismissal of Employees**

Employees, not subject to the dismissal procedures previously described in this Constitution, are to be retained or dismissed at the discretion of the Deacon Board, with the best interests and wishes of the Congregation in mind.

## **Membership**

### **Procedure for Joining the Membership**

The Elder Board shall be responsible for and shall establish a procedure for interviewing and approving all prospective members. This procedure shall include an opportunity for any members of the Church to express to the Board as a whole or to an individual Board member any comments he may have as to the prospective member's qualifications.

### **Qualifications:**

- Statement of faith in Christ.
- Shares a common interest in the purpose, vision, and values of this church.
- No fundamental disagreement with the Doctrinal Statement and a willingness not to propagate doctrine contrary to it.
- Be committed to faithfully supporting this local church through serving, giving financially, showing forbearance, striving to preserve unity, and functioning as an active part of this local Church.

### **Children:**

Children may be received into membership of the Church. However, they are ineligible to vote until they reach the age of 18.

### **Removal from Membership:**

- A member may be removed from the roll of the Church for any of the following reasons:
  - 1) Death.
  - 2) Requesting that his/her name be dropped from the roll.
  - 3) Absence from the worship services of the Church for three months or longer without valid reasons.
  - 4) Church discipline.
  
- Church discipline shall be administered only in cases where clear Scriptural grounds are apparent. The purpose or intent of discipline is restoration and to provide a way for reinstatement when proper repentance and a change of behavior has occurred. The procedure for church discipline shall be established by the Elder Board. The procedure shall follow the biblical principles for church discipline in Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5 and shall require a unanimous vote of the Elder Board (except when a member of the Elder Board or a member of his immediate family is being considered) and an 80% vote of a quorum of the Congregation in a duly called meeting, if the person being disciplined requests a hearing before the Congregation.

### **Membership Roll:**

The Deacon Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining a current church membership role. The secretary shall periodically review the membership roll and shall move all names of inactive members to a list of inactive, non-voting members, or completely drop them from the roll as he deems appropriate. Any and all roll changes shall be reported to the Elder Board by the secretary.

### **Inactive Membership:**

Inactive membership status may be maintained for members who request it, or who are unable to maintain regular attendance, but wish to maintain association with this church. Inactive members may not vote on church business, hold church office, or chair church committees. An inactive member may be restored to active membership upon request, pending approval of the Elder Board.

## **Congregational Meetings**

### **The Congregation**

The Congregation of this church consists of all Members and non members who regularly attend and are interested in the affairs of this church. Only Active Members may speak or vote at a Congregational Meeting. Inactive members and non members may speak only if invited to do so by an Elder.

### **Meeting Place and Time**

All Congregational Meetings and votes will be held at the principle place of worship unless otherwise specified in the notice. Notice of any meeting will be announced from the pulpit during at least two Sunday worship services immediately preceding the meeting, and notification will be publicly posted with an agenda by the Secretary of the Deacon Board in the church facility at the time of the first announcement.

### **Quorum and Conduct of Business**

A Quorum of one-third of the Members is required for the transaction of Church Business. Unless otherwise specified in this constitution, the majority of votes of the Members cast will prevail.

The Deacon Board will establish order for all Congregational Meetings. The Chairman of the Deacon Board may appoint any current Elder or Deacon to preside over all or part of any meeting. With the guidance of the Elders, the Deacon Board will determine the agenda for the meeting and the method of

voting for each item on the agenda. The Deacon Board or their appointee(s) will prepare special rules for each meeting.

No question may be voted upon unless specifically stated in the notice of the meeting.

Absentee voting is not required by this Constitution, but may be allowed at the discretion of the Deacon Board. Absentee voters will not count toward the requirement of a quorum.

Unless otherwise specified by the constitution or the rules of the meeting, the principles of Robert's Rules of Order will be used.

### **Types of Meetings**

***Annual Business Meeting:*** There will be an annual Congregation Meeting at a date specified by the Deacon Board, falling during the month of February of each year. The agenda of this meeting must include, but is not limited to:

- Affirmation of new Deacon nominees
- Approval of the budget

***Special Congregational Meetings:*** A special Congregational Meeting may be called by 2/3 vote of the Elder Board.

***Special Vote:*** At the discretion of the Elders, items that require congregational approval may be voted upon during the regular worship service.

## **Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended by a vote of 2/3 of the Members voting at a duly called Congregational Meeting.