

CONSTITUTION OF CROSSPOINT FELLOWSHIP

PREAMBLE:

We, the members of Crosspoint Fellowship, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit.

ARTICLE I

NAME:

The name of this church shall be "Crosspoint Fellowship". The word "church" as used in this Constitution shall refer to Crosspoint Fellowship, whereas the word "Church" shall refer to the Body and Bride of Christ.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify God. It shall seek to attain this end through the public worship of God, the preaching of the Scriptures, consistent Christian living by its members, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor and Christian education (Eph. 1:5-14; Col. 1:9-10; Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:9-12).

AUTHORITY:

The Board of Elders is the governing body of this church as described in Appendix C.

INCORPORATION:

To implement this purpose legally the church is incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas, so that it may own, provide and/or maintain a place of worship (including suitable real estate and buildings), receive, hold and disburse gifts, bequests and funds, and/or do all and sundry things necessary or incident to carry on such purpose.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP:

Any person may become a member upon professing saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and upon satisfactorily meeting the requirements set by the Elders to include baptism by immersion. A person whose permanent residence is outside a 100 mile radius of the main Crosspoint Fellowship facility shall be classified as a "non-resident member".

1. Responsibilities of membership

The responsibilities of church membership are summarized in the church Covenant as follows:

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we do now in the presence of God and this church most solemnly and joyfully enter into this Covenant with one another as one body in Christ. By the aid of the Holy Spirit:

We covenant to be intentional in building life-on-life relationships to the end of sowing the seed of the harvest, cultivating that seed, reaping, and "vintaging" believers into mature followers of Christ. We will not be dependent on Crosspoint worship services to be the only instrument of sowing in our community.

We will spend ourselves in the harvest here and around the world. He has called us to disciple all peoples and we will be invested in big dreams and big plans concerning "global discipling".

We will be serious about growing and maturing in our faith and discipling other believers. Community Bible study and teaching times will be a priority and this will be reflected by our attendance and participation.

We commit to respond to the Word of God prayerfully and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We covenant to serve the Crosspoint community of faith through our areas of giftedness. Through prayer, wise counsel and under the direction of church leaders, we will seek to know what our spiritual strengths and gifts are in an effort to build up the church.

We covenant to financially support the ministry of Crosspoint Fellowship through regular, sacrificial giving. We understand that our financial support is a privilege and a part of our worship as well as our pledge and responsibility to the church.

We covenant to participate in community worship with other members and to grow in our understanding of worship as an entire life offered to God.

We covenant to always be acutely aware that community worship is an encounter with the Living God.

We covenant to honor Christ through regular worship attendance and help hold one another accountable to the ministry of attendance.

We covenant to pray for God's sovereign work through Crosspoint Fellowship.

We understand that we have the responsibility to seek out Holy Spirit-led connections with other members at Crosspoint Fellowship.

We agree to guard and preserve the unity of the church by adhering to the instruction of Scripture concerning the fellowship of believers.

We covenant to practice biblical humility and submission one to another.

We understand that Crosspoint Fellowship is a theocracy, not a democracy. We understand that Crosspoint Fellowship is led by an Elder Board, not led by the entire congregation, and that submitting to that authority is Biblical. We agree that the prescribed Biblical model for the community of faith includes church discipline.

2. Renewal

There shall be an annual renewal of membership. Such renewal procedures shall be adopted and approved by the Board of Elders.

3. Discipline of Members

The purpose of church discipline is to effect a return to a Biblical standard of conduct and doctrine in a member who errs (Galatians 6:1), to maintain purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6) and to deter sin (1 Timothy 5:20).

Any member of this church who teaches or insists on holding false doctrine, and persistently conducts himself or herself in a manner inconsistent with biblical teaching, or who persists in disturbing the unity or peace of the church shall be dealt with as follows, according to Matthew 18:15-17:

- a. It is the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of an erring member's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct the erring member in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.
- b. If the erring member does not heed this warning, the warning member shall again go to the erring member accompanied by one or two other members as witnesses to warn and correct, seeking repentance and restoration.
- c. If the erring member still refuses to heed the warning, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Elders, who, upon careful and prayerful investigation, shall decide whether or not the allegations warrant discipline by the church. If the Elders deem it necessary, they will bring it before the church, encouraging the congregation to pray for repentance and restoration of the erring member.
- d. If the erring member refuses to heed the warnings of the Elders and the church, he or she shall be dismissed from the church pursuant to the Scriptures and treated as an unbeliever (Matt 18:15-17). There shall be no appeal of the discipline process or the dismissal to any court. The congregation shall be encouraged to continue to pray for the repentance and restoration of the erring member.

It is clearly understood that the discipline process will continue to conclusion whether the erring member leaves the church or otherwise seeks to withdraw from membership. Those seeking restoration will be reconsidered for membership by the Elders.

Accusations against an erring Elder will be considered on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in error are to be brought before the body and rebuked publically for the purpose of keeping others from sin. (1 Tim 5:19-20).

4. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated in one of four ways:

- a. By physical death.
- b. By transfer: When it is requested, the Elders may grant to a departing member in good standing, a letter of dismissal to the fellowship of another church. No such letter may be given to a member who is at the time under the corrective discipline of this church. The Elders may refuse to grant a letter of transfer to any church which is in their judgment disloyal to the gospel.
- c. By exclusion: If a member habitually absents himself from the stated meetings of the church without valid reason, or if due to relocation he ceases to maintain a vital contact with the church, he may be excluded from membership. If an excluded member applies again for membership, the procedures set forth will again be followed.
- d. By dismissal as a final step of church discipline.

ARTICLE IV

DOCTRINE:

We accept the Scriptures as our authority in matters of faith and practice and adopt the following Confession of Faith as our interpretation of bible doctrine:

1. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as being verbally inspired by God and inerrant and infallible in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority.
2. We believe in one God eternally existing in One Essence, yet three co-equal Persons, the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary.
4. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, Who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He is the life of the believer, and He empowers the preaching and teaching of the gospel.
5. We believe that mankind was created in the image of God, sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature.

6. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood.
7. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, His ascension into heaven, and His present life there as High Priest and Advocate for us.
8. We believe in the blessed hope, which is the personal, visible, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
9. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
10. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in hell, and the fellowship of the saved in heaven.
11. We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, who is working in the world to destroy the souls of men.
12. We believe in the Church, whose mission it is to preach the Scriptures to all the world, all of its endeavors being guided by multiple leadership and supported by the wise stewardship of God's people.
13. We believe that the ordinances of the Church, given by our Lord, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
14. We believe that the foregoing are Bible doctrines; therefore, we stand firm upon this Confession of Faith.

(A further explanation of the Doctrine is contained in Appendix A.)

ARTICLE V

QUALIFICATIONS OF CHURCH EMPLOYEES:

Any person who holds an office, custodial or grounds staff position must meet and maintain the following qualifications to the satisfaction of the Board of Elders:

- Has trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- Is growing in his/her relationship with God.
- Demonstrates competencies in the specified job description.

ARTICLE VI

QUALIFICATIONS OF MINISTRY STAFF:

Any person who holds a position of leadership (including but not limited to teachers and ministry team members) must meet and maintain the following spiritual qualifications for leadership:

1. Has trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. Is a member of Crosspoint Fellowship. (Non-members may be invited to teach on a temporary basis).
3. Teaches no doctrine contrary to Article IV of the Constitution of Crosspoint Fellowship.
4. Provides systematic spiritual, financial, and physical support to Crosspoint Fellowship ministry.
5. Is known for a dedicated Christian life according to the standards of God's Word, and will purpose to put any sin out of his/her life so that the resulting influence is helpful rather than a hindrance.
6. Fulfills such specific biblical requirements as may apply to the position of responsibility.

ARTICLE VII

ELDERS:

God has provided various forms of leadership for His Church. At Crosspoint Fellowship we recognize and seek to channel this leadership focus through the Elders. Those who serve and minister in these roles shall collectively and individually oversee, provide for, and encourage the spiritual life, welfare, and total ministry of the congregation in order to insure the proper equipping of the saints.

As God's servants and stewards, these leaders shall be persons:

A. Who meet the qualifications as given in Scripture (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 1:5-9) as explained in Appendix B.

B. Who adhere to the doctrinal basis of this church;

C. Whose soundness in the faith and whose ability to serve has been examined and approved by the Elder Board;

D. Nominees for Elders must have served in ministry as a Crosspoint member for at least six months before being considered.

Therefore, our church leaders are to be assisted, obeyed and respected as they carry out their duties (Heb. 13:17).

1. Duties of Senior Pastor: As an Elder of this church the Senior Pastor shall:

a. Give himself to prayer and the study of the Word of God;

b. Preach and teach the Word of God;

c. Administer the Ordinances in accordance with the Word of God;

d. Share in the pastoral care of the congregation along with the other Elders and members of the pastoral staff;

e. Perform the marriage ceremony at his discretion in accordance with the laws of God and the State;

f. Officiate at funerals of members of the church and non-members at his discretion; Together with the other Elders maintain church discipline;

h. Participate in the installation of newly designated Elders;

i. Act as an ex-officio member of all committees and boards;

j. Perform other constitutional, Scriptural, and general pastoral duties.

The Senior Pastor shall be free to accept invitations to preach the Word of God to other groups or organizations, provided such engagements do not interfere with the work of the church. Before accepting invitations to speak for other groups which require his absence from the church and its activities, the Senior Pastor shall consult with the Board of Elders and obtain permission.

2. Duties of Elders:

a. To be devoted to prayer and the study of God's Word and sustain a caring ministry for the flock, which involves:

1. Serving as partners with the Senior Pastor for the church's spiritual growth;

2. Praying for the sick and visiting the congregation;

b. To teach and exhort as well as refute those who contradict the truth, which involves:

1. Insuring that instructors, Bible study leaders and youth leaders are properly qualified;

2. Arranging for pulpit supply during the Senior Pastor's absence.

c. To lead by Christ-like example, which involves:

1. Consistently modeling spiritual character, attitudes, values, and behavior among the congregation;

2. Providing and inviting the opportunity for frequent and on-going contact with members of the congregation;

3. Conducting the affairs of the church in an atmosphere of openness and mutual sensitivity, focusing as much on nurturing one another as on decision-making.

d. To oversee the affairs of the church, which involves:

1. Being responsible for the employment, terms of employment, direction, and termination of employment of pastoral staff and the Senior Pastor;
2. Installing the Pastor, other ministers and ministry staff members;
3. Approving all subordinate organizations of the church;
4. Approving all applicants for church membership;
5. Maintaining the legal status of the church;
6. Being responsible for securing funds necessary to meet the current expenses of the church;
7. Conducting the Annual and special meetings of the church;
8. Submitting the approved budget to the congregation at the Annual Meeting of the church;
9. Approving nominations for the Board of Elders for the Annual Meeting of the church;
10. Communicating to the congregation on a regular basis concerning the activities and concerns of the Elders.

e. To perform other constitutional, Scriptural, and general duties of oversight.

3. Duties of Pastoral Staff: To perform such duties as are outlined by the Board of Elders.

4. Pastor and Ministry Staff Sabbatical

The Senior Pastor and Ministry Staff, not including support staff, assistants, or interns, will receive a scheduled 3 month sabbatical including current salary compensation after their 5 year anniversary as a staff member at Crosspoint Fellowship. The sabbatical will be a 3-month uninterrupted period of time, scheduled by the staff member with the approval of the Elder Board. The sabbatical must be completed before the end of their 6th year of ministry at Crosspoint. The sabbatical is designed for two primary purposes.

REST – A sabbatical is a time for a staff member to disengage from the work of their ministry and get away from the daily schedule that their job requires. This time is not intended to be idle time, but a time of enjoying current hobbies and exploring new ones, time away with family, renewing old friendships, and enjoying travel near or far.

GROWTH – A sabbatical is also a time for a staff member to renew their mind through study, benchmark their ministry with other churches, and dream new dreams for their ministry at Crosspoint.

While on sabbatical, each staff member will report to the Elder Board on two occasions. The purpose of the report is to keep the Elders informed on the staff member's time away and hold the staff member accountable to getting both REST and GROWTH from their time away. The Elder Board may appoint interim staff members during the sabbatical of any full-time staff member.

At any time during the tenure of a staff member, the Elder Board may recommend a sabbatical. The Elder Board will determine the terms and length of a non-scheduled sabbatical.

ARTICLE VIII

NOMINATION AND SELECTION OF SENIOR PASTOR AND ELDERS:

1. The Senior Pastor

When the Senior pastorate of this church becomes vacant, it shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to provide for the filling of the pulpit until an interim Pastor is identified, and to appoint for Senior Pastor one who possesses the requirements set forth in these articles. In carrying out this process, the Board of Elders shall directly, or through a search committee, communicate to the congregation regularly, and at reasonable intervals. We encourage that all church members who desire to suggest the name of an individual for consideration as Senior Pastor do so in writing to the secretary of the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders may conduct a non-binding vote for the purpose of hearing from the church corporately.

When the Board of Elders intends to appoint a Senior Pastor they shall notify the membership by mail at least ten business days in advance. The notice shall include the name of the individual being considered for appointment. We encourage all church members desiring to submit questions, comments or suggestions concerning the individual being considered to do so in writing at least three business days before the meeting of the Board of Elders at which they intend to appoint an individual as Senior Pastor for the church.

After the Senior Pastor has been appointed, a written offer shall be tendered to him, signed by the Board of Elders. In this written call the Elders shall specify the financial support.

2. Board of Elders

The Board shall consist of a minimum of two members in addition to the Senior Pastor and a maximum as determined by the Board. Each Elder shall hold office as long as he is faithful to his calling and has the confidence of his brethren and the congregation.

The selection process shall be as follows:

- a. The members shall be encouraged to regularly submit to the Board of Elders, the names of members whose life and gifts are consistent with their being considered for nomination to the task of Elder. The Board of Elders shall review the individuals so nominated by the congregation and will prayerfully consider, review and make a final decision in each case.
- b. The Elders may at any time during the year call a special congregational meeting for corporate consideration of Elder nominees. In no case should a man be nominated without his knowledge

and prior consent. Any questions concerning the nominees shall be addressed to the Elders in writing.

c. The Elders shall vote on the final list of nominations. A nominee must receive a unanimous vote by the Elders to be elected.

d. Following recognition of an Elder by vote, he shall be publicly ordained to his office at a regular worship service by the prayer of the whole church and the laying on of hands by the existing Elders.

The Board of Elders shall elect a chairman and a secretary from its members. The chairman of the Board of Elders shall preside over the meetings of the Board of Elders and shall insure that the Board serves the congregation in a balanced manner addressing each area of responsibility as outlined in the duties. The term of chairman shall be for no more than two consecutive years. Thereafter a break of one year shall occur before possibly assuming chairmanship again.

The Elders will reaffirm their commitments and responsibilities as Elders at the Annual Meeting. An Elder may, however, resign his office without prejudice if for good and valid reasons he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties required.

In recognition that the task of Eldership is significant and is accomplished while continuing care of family and work responsibilities, we understand that individual Elders may need to take leave of some of the responsibilities of Eldership for periods of time. Such sabbatical times will be arranged through mutual consent of the Elders.

A process of mutual accountability among the Elders safeguards against the continuation in office of an Elder who has rendered himself unqualified for future participation.

ARTICLE IX

TERMINATION OF SENIOR PASTOR:

The Senior Pastor shall serve until removed by the Lord; or by a majority vote by the Board of Elders; or by resignation. When the Senior Pastor resigns to accept another call, or for reasons of his own choosing, he shall give the church two weeks notice in writing of his intention to do so.

ARTICLE X

DEACONS:

The office of Deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13 and Acts 6: 1–6. The church shall recognize men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons.

The selection process shall be as follows:

- a. The members shall be encouraged to regularly submit to the Board of Elders, the names of members whose life and gifts are consistent with their being considered for nomination to the task of Deacon. The Board of Elders shall review the individuals so nominated by the congregation and will prayerfully evaluate and examine nominees and make a final decision in each case.
- b. The Elders may at any time during the year call a special congregational meeting for corporate consideration of Deacon nominees. In no case should a man be nominated without his knowledge and prior consent. Any questions concerning the nominees shall be addressed to the Elders in writing.
- c. The Elders shall vote on the final list of nominations. A nominee must receive a unanimous vote by the Elders to be elected.
- d. Following recognition of a Deacon by vote, he shall be publicly installed in his office at a regular worship service by the prayer of the whole church and the laying on of hands by the existing Elders and Deacons.

The responsibilities of deacons do not include preaching, teaching, or spiritual oversight, which are the responsibilities of the elders (pastors), nor does it include financial control of the church. Deacons exercise a ministry of service primarily. Although they may teach and preach in contexts

in which they are not infringing upon the oversight duties of elders (Acts 6-7:53; Titus 2:3-5), the responsibilities of deacons include the following:

1. The ministry of mercy is a particular responsibility of deacons. They shall see that the sick, the sorrowing, the aged, and the infirm receive spiritual and physical comfort.
2. Deacons shall also attend to the benevolence ministries of the church. They shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.
3. Deacons shall attend to the accommodations for public worship. Deacons may assist in providing for the elements during the Lord's Supper.
4. Deacons shall attend to the normal care and maintenance of church properties.
5. Deacons shall attend to the welcoming and greeting ministries of the church.
6. The Deacons, with the agreement of the Elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions, committees, or ministry teams to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

ARTICLE XI

PROPERTY AND ASSETS:

1. The church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and so hold such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Texas and is deemed necessary for the functioning of the church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, bill of sale, deed, or otherwise. All property shall be held in the name of the church.
2. In case of division of the church caused by conflict (from which we pray God by His mercy to preserve us), all property and assets of the church shall belong to those who abide by its Constitution.
3. In case of dissolution of the church organization, the property and all assets shall be sold, either through private or public sale. From the proceeds, firstly all current and long-term obligations of the church shall be paid. Secondly, all remaining funds shall be directed to such one or more Christian organizations qualified under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, for the benefit of the church's supported missionaries and/or such other Christian endeavors as the congregation shall determine. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the Elder

Board, or when the church has not held an annual meeting for three years, or when less than six members remain.

4. No real property shall be purchased or disposed of without approval of the Elders, except as noted in Section 3 above.

ARTICLE XII

MEETINGS:

There shall be two types of meetings of the church: The Annual Meeting and special meetings.

1. The Annual Meeting shall be held during the month of January or such other time during the year as the Board of Elders may determine. The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the selection of the date on which the Annual Meeting will be held. Written notification to the congregation shall be mailed at least ten business days prior to the meeting, except that no mailing shall be required to those members who shall have picked up their written notices at Crosspoint at least ten business days in advance of the meeting. The notice of the Annual Meeting shall include a typewritten agenda. All reports required by the Board of Elders for the annual meeting must be legibly written and submitted to the secretary of the Board of Elders by the first Monday in November. Typewritten reports from all church boards and appropriate committees shall be available to the congregation at least ten business days prior to the Annual Meeting. These reports shall include but not be limited to a current financial statement and recommendations and comments as to past, present, and future matters relating to the congregation. Matters of church discipline shall not be included within the annual reports. We encourage all comments or amendments to the agenda or reports be given to the secretary of the Board of Elders, in writing and signed, at least five business days prior to the Annual Meeting. The Chairman of the Board of Elders will, if possible, preside over the Annual Meeting

2. Special meetings may be called by the Board of Elders. Notice of a special meeting shall be mailed to each church member at least ten business days in advance of the special meeting, except that no mailing shall be required to those members who shall have picked up their written notices at Crosspoint at least ten business days in advance of the meeting. This notice shall include the agenda of the business to be conducted or considered at said meeting. In the event that a condition or situation arises which is deemed an emergency by the Board of Elders, the advance notice regulation may be waived.

3. Except as otherwise provided herein, all church meetings shall be publicly announced in all appropriate church services.

ARTICLE XIII

ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE:

The Board of Elders may conduct a non-binding vote for the purpose of corporately hearing from the body on an issue. In those cases only members of this church who are at least eighteen years of age and whose permanent residence is within a 100 mile radius of the main Crosspoint Fellowship facility shall have the right to vote. Non-resident members retain status on the church roll but do not carry the privilege of voting in the church meetings. A quorum shall be necessary for any vote.

ARTICLE XIV

QUORUMS:

Sixty percent of the Elder Board members must be present to constitute a quorum at any Elder Board meeting.

ARTICLE XV

AMENDMENTS:

The Constitution or Articles of Incorporation of this church may be amended at any meeting of the Board of Elders by a majority vote.

ARTICLE XVI

RAISING FUNDS:

It shall not be the policy of this church to promote suppers, parties, or engage in the sale of products and/or services for the purpose of raising funds. Any exception to this general policy must have the prior approval of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE XVII

CHURCH UNITY:

We do not create unity since it has already been earned through the work of Christ. As the bride of Christ we are to guard and preserve it. There is one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:4-6). These things in common with other members provide ample resources to reconcile differences and maintain unity.

ARTICLE XVIII

INDEMNIFICATION:

Crosspoint Fellowship will indemnify and hold harmless any and all officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, and business administrators for any expenses actually and necessarily incurred in connection with any action, suit or proceeding against said officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, and business administrators. This indemnification shall include costs for attorney fees. The indemnification shall occur as the expenses are incurred and in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit or proceeding, on receipt of the officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, or business administrators' promise: (1) to repay the amount advanced if proved by clear and convincing evidence in court that the officers', directors', Elders', Ministers', Pastors', and business administrators' conduct involved a deliberate intent to injure the corporation's best interests, (2) to reasonably cooperate with the corporation in connection with the action, suit or proceeding.

This indemnification shall be available to any officer, director, Elder, Minister, Pastor, and/or business administrator which is made or thereafter to be made a part to any action, suit or proceeding because of the person's relationship with the corporation. Persons who are officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, and/or business administrators at the time of being made a party, or threatened with being made a party to any action, suit or proceeding, or were officers, directors, Elders, Ministers, Pastors, and/or business administrators shall be allowed indemnification. Indemnification will also be available in criminal actions only if it is found that the officer, director, Elder, Minister, Pastor, or business administrator had no reasonable cause to believe that the subject acts were unlawful.

ARTICLE XIX

EFFECTUAL POWER OF THE CONSTITUTION:

This Constitution shall remain in force as presently formulated or as duly amended according to Article XV until this corporation is legally dissolved. This Constitution shall not be suspended or abrogated.

ARTICLE XX

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CHURCH RECORDS:

No member shall have the right to inspect the church records as to (i) the disciplining of any member, (ii) the hiring or firing of any employee, (iii) the need or problems of any member or employee, (iv) the financial contributions of any member, or (v) any other records which the Board of Elders may determine to be in the best interests of the church to keep confidential.

Appendix A

INSPIRATION

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being verbally inspired by God and inerrant and infallible in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority.

Terms explained:

1. Verbally:

This means that the individual words of the Bible are true and without error in the original writings. Therefore, more than just the thought or concept is inspired, but also every word (Matt. 5:17,18; Prov. 30:5,6). The term "plenary" is often used with the word "verbal" to give the view that all Scripture is fully and equally inspired (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

2. Inspired (Inspiration):

Inspiration is that particular work of God by which the Holy Spirit, becoming the co-author of Scripture, supernaturally directed the writers of Scripture and without excluding their human intelligence, individuality, literary style, personal feelings, or any other human factor, God's own complete and coherent message to men was recorded in perfect accuracy and the very words of the Bible bear the authority of this divine authorship. Inspiration is not equivalent to dictation except in certain instances, as God uses the experience, feelings and thinking of the human author. The end result, however, is just as accurate as if God Himself had taken the pen. Hence, the Scriptures were inspired or breathed out by God and, though the authors were fallible men, what they wrote was without error (2 Peter 1:20,21). Inspiration does not suppress the intellectual ability and talent but rather uses that intellectual ability and talent (Luke 1:1-3; 2 Samuel 23:2).

3. Inerrant:

Inerrant means that the Scriptures in their original writings were without error (John 10:35; Luke 16:17).

4. Infallible:

Infallible means that the Scriptures in their original writings were incapable of error and never wrong (John 10:35; Luke 16:17).

5. Final Authority:

The Scriptures are God's special revelation (communication of truth) to man and because they are inspired and inerrant they become our final authority. However, we take careful note of what the Bible indicates as not being authoritative, such as Satan's statement to Eve in the Garden of Eden, "You surely shall not die." (Gen. 3:45; 2 Tim. 3:16,17).

TRINITY

We believe in one God eternally existing in One Essence, yet three co-equal Persons, the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Terms explained:

1. Eternally existing:

There is but one God (Deuteronomy. 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6,14,18,21-22; Mark 12:29-32), Who has no beginning and no ending (Ps. 90:1-2; Gen. 1:1).

2. Three in One:

God is One in Essence, yet three Persons, co-equal, eternally existing (Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:4-6; Rev. 1:4; John 12:26; 15:26; 16:15; 1 Peter 1:2; Acts 2:32-36; I Cor. 12:3-6, II Cor. 13:14).

3. Co-equal:

- a. The Bible tells us that the Father is God (John 6:27; Rom. 1:7).
- b. The Son is recognized as God (John 1:1; 20:28; Heb. 1:8; I John 5:19-27; Phil. 2:6).
- c. The Holy Spirit is also identified as God (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:4,9).

INCARNATION

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary.

Terms explained:

1. Jesus Christ:

Jesus Christ has two natures in one Person, so that He is simultaneously fully God and fully Man, and this relationship is such that there is no dividing of Person nor confounding of the two natures. (John 1:1-14).

2. Conceived by the Holy Spirit:

The conception of Jesus was a divine act of the Holy Spirit, without human agency (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:26-38).

3. Born to the virgin Mary:

At the time of Christ's conception up until the time of His birth, Mary was a virgin (Matt. 1:18-25; Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:27).

HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, Who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He is the life of the believer, and He empowers the preaching and teaching of the gospel.

Terms Explained:

1. Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, equal with the Father and the Son (John 14:16; Matt. 28:19).

2. Convicts:

Jesus Christ said that the Spirit would perform this ministry with respect to the world (John 16:7-11).

3. Life:

The Holy Spirit is the agent of spiritual birth (John 3:5-8). The Spirit regenerates, indwells, seals, and baptizes into the Church body all believers (1 Cor. 12:13; Titus 3:5; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9,11; 2 Cor. 1:21,22). The believer's life is strengthened and guided by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 3:16; John 16:13; Rom. 8:4,14,26-27). The believer is commanded to be filled or controlled by the Spirit, so that the characteristics of Christ-likeness will be evident in his or her life (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16).

4. Empowers:

The Holy Spirit enables the spreading of God's word in testimony, preaching and practical living (John 15:26-27). Spiritual obedience will give fruit to a spiritually powerful life of service for Christ (Eph. 5:15-21; Gal. 5:22-25).

MANKIND

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God, sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature.

Terms explained:

1. Created in the image of God:

The whole man (male and female), body and soul, is the image of God. Man is the physical image of the spiritual God. This term incorporates man's dominion over creation as given by the Creator. (Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1)

2. Separation from God:

When Adam, of his own free will, chose to disobey God, he sinned (the breaking of God's law). This original sin separated us from God, Who, because of His holiness, could not tolerate sin, and therefore, judged such sin (Rom. 6:23; 3:9-20; 8:7).

ATONEMENT

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood.

Terms Explained:

1. Representative:

This means that Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:14-21). As Adam was the representative of man in the fall, so Christ is the representative of man in the Atonement (1 Cor. 15:22). Therefore, since Christ represented all who believe in Him, His sacrifice will cover all who believe in Him (John 3:16).

2. Substitutionary:

This is called the "vicarious" suffering since Christ died in our place. He did not die for His own sin (Heb. 4:15-16; 1 John 3:5), but died for the sins of others (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:8).

3. All Who Believe:

Only those who exhibit faith are justified (Gal. 2:16; 3:11).

4. Justified:

Justification is that act of God whereby He declares the guilty and depraved sinner to be righteous because of Christ's own righteousness having been imputed, or credited to the sinner (Rom 3:23-26; 4:5-8,13-25; 5:18-21; 8:33).

RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, EXALTATION

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, His ascension into Heaven and His present life there as High Priest and Advocate for us.

Terms Explained:

1. Resurrection:

We believe that on the third day, Jesus Christ arose bodily from the grave (Luke 24:1-7, 13-27). Belief in the doctrine of the resurrection is essential to salvation (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:12-23).

2. Ascension:

After His resurrection and forty-day ministry Jesus ascended up into Heaven (Acts 1:1-11; 1 Peter 3:21-22).

3. High Priest And Advocate:

Since Christ's atonement has restored our relationship with God, we now can approach God through Christ, Who as our High Priest represents us before God. As our Advocate, He compassionately deals with our needs and strengthens us (Heb. 4:14; 5:1-10; 7:25; 8:1-2; 9:11-15,24; 13:5).

ESCHATOLOGY

We believe in the blessed hope, the personal, visible and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Terms Explained:

1. Blessed Hope:

The return of the Lord is an event that believers ought to wait for with high expectation and excitement. As still imperfect people, we eagerly await the restoration of all things to perfect Christ-likeness after the return of Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13; Rom. 8:18-25; 1 Peter 1:7,13; 4:13; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:7).

2. Personal, visible:

Jesus, not just in spirit, but in bodily form, will return to this earth (Acts 1:11).

3. Imminent:

The Church, as God's steward, ought to consider the return of Christ as an event which is about to happen, and therefore, though patient, we are to be alert to such an event as we seek to glorify Him through our lives (Mark 13:32-37; Matt. 24:3-51; Luke 21:34).

4. Patient Lifestyle:

The Bible's teaching concerning the Lord's impending return is always set in the context of practical exhortation, focusing upon our present lifestyle, rather than upon undue speculation (2 Peter 3:11; Matt. 24:42-51).

SALVATION

We believe that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again by the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God and heirs of eternal life.

Terms explained:

1. Faith:

Faith is the "gift of God" (Eph. 2:8) and is produced by the Word of God (Rom. 10:14,17). We are saved by faith alone apart from works (Eph. 2:9; Rom. 3:20; Titus 3:5). However, genuine faith necessarily leads to good works (Eph. 2:10; Matt. 5:16; James 2:17-26).

2. Born again by the Holy Spirit:

The new birth (regeneration) is absolutely necessary for fellowship with God (John 3:7). Man is totally passive in regeneration since it is completely a work of God (John 1:13; 3:5-6). The new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8) by which He creates within a person a new nature, a new heart, a new spirit (John 3:5; 2 Peter 1:4; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17).

3. Children of God:

Those who have received the Spirit of Christ have therefore been born again into God's family (John 1:1-12; Rom. 8:9,14-17). As members of His family we not only have fellowship with our Father in Heaven, but we are being transformed by the Holy Spirit into the image of Christ, and when Christ returns we will be completely changed in body and spirit to be like Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:19-23; 1 John 3:2). This experience of the life of Jesus Christ within us now by the presence of the Holy Spirit and forever ours in the presence of Jesus Christ is "eternal life"

HEAVEN AND HELL

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in hell, and the fellowship of the saved in heaven.

Terms explained:

1. Bodily resurrection:

Those saints who are "asleep in Jesus" will be raised at the same time the living saints are "raptured" and changed (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58). After the resurrection, all the unsaved will stand before the Great White Throne for judgment, and since their names will not be found in the Book of Life, they will be cast into the Lake of Fire (20:11-15; 21:8; Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Acts 13:48).

2. Everlasting conscious suffering:

The Devil, his agents and those who fail to repent and follow Christ will experience conscious never-ending torment. (Rev 20:10, 14-15).

3. Heaven:

We believe heaven to be a literal place where Jesus Christ is preparing an eternal home for believers of all ages (John 14:1-6; Rev 21:1-22:5).

4. Hell:

We believe hell to be a literal place where all unsaved will spend eternity (Rev. 20:10, 15; Matt. 13:36-43).

DEVIL

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, who is working in the world to destroy the souls of men. We believe that Christians can overcome Satan's schemes by applying Scriptural truth in the power of the Holy Spirit. We believe that Satan, all his angels, and all who do not persevere in Jesus Christ will eternally perish in Hell, separated from the presence of God. (Eph. 6:10-19; Luke 10:18; Job 1:6-12; John 8:44)

Terms explained:

1. Devil/Satan:

Though a created being and one of the highest angels, the devil fell because he wanted to be greater than God (Isa. 14:12-15).

2. Eternally perish:

The judgment upon the devil and his followers is an unending punishment (Rev. 20:10,14,15; 19:20).

CHURCH

We believe in the Church, whose mission it is to preach the Scriptures to all the world, all of its endeavors being guided by multiple leadership and supported by the wise stewardship of God's people.

Terms explained:

1. Church:

The collective body of believers in Jesus Christ is the Church (Eph. 5:23-32; Col. 1:18; Matt. 18:20; Eph. 1:22-23, Col. 2:19; 3:15).

2. Mission:

The Church has been given the privilege and responsibility of making disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe all that He commanded (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

3. Preach:

By this term we encompass all of the believers who are to declare and make known God's truth through the totality of their lives, in addition to the formal proclamation of the Word of God (Eph. 3:8-10; 4:15,16; Col. 1:9-12, 28).

4. Multiple leadership:

Within each local church we believe God provides a team of Pastor/Elders, Deacons and other workers who are to guide and enable the congregation to develop spiritual maturity. Pastor/Elders are appointed to exercise spiritual oversight for the flock entrusted to them and will ultimately be held accountable for their decisions and actions toward the Lord, each other and the church body. Deacons serve as assistants to the Elders and are ministering workers who fulfill various formal or informal roles within the congregation (Acts 14:23; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 6:1-6).

5. Stewardship:

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth (Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

ORDINANCES

We believe that the ordinances of the Church given by our Lord, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion).

Terms explained:

1. Baptism:

Baptism, by immersion, is commanded of all believers and it is an act of obedience signifying the believer's death, burial and resurrection "in Christ" (Rom. 6:3,4; Acts 18:8; 1 Peter 3:21). The disciples were commanded to see to it that baptism was a part of their ministry (Matt. 28:19,20) and the pattern of the book of Acts (Acts 2:38-41; 8:12,13,36,38) indicates the widespread practice of water baptism for believers. We baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We do not believe in baptismal regeneration, nor do we hold that baptism is necessary for salvation.

2. Lord's Supper (Communion):

On the night of His arrest, Jesus instituted what is also known as the Eucharist, or Communion service, which symbolizes and calls our attention to the atonement. This celebration is one in which we look back to the finished work of Christ and also forward to the yet to be completed consummation of our redemption. This church views the elements of the Communion as symbolic of the body and the blood of Christ. and does not view the taking of Communion as a means of distributing grace (Matt. 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-30).

Appendix B

Biblical Qualifications for Elders

1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Aspiration

3:1 "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires [to do]."

At least one way for a man to attain the role of elder was to aspire to it. In fact, since it is the duty of elders to do their work with gladness and not under constraint or for love of money (1 Peter 5:1-3), this should be thought of as one of the elders' qualifications. This need not exclude the possibility that a man may be sought out and urged to become an elder. But no pressure should be used that would result in an unwilling, half-hearted service.

Above Reproach

3:2 "An overseer, then, must be above reproach,"

The word is used elsewhere in the New Testament only in 5:7 (where widows are to be without reproach by putting their hope in God and not living luxuriously or sumptuously or self-indulgently) and 6:14 (where Timothy is to keep the commandment irreproachable until Jesus comes).

The words "above reproach" seem to be general words for living in a way that gives no cause for others to think badly of the church or the faith or the Lord. This tells us nothing about the sort of thing that would bring reproach on the church or the Lord. But, coming at the head of the list it puts a tremendous emphasis on what a person's reputation is. The focus here is not a person's relationship to the Lord, but how others see him. It seems, therefore, that right from the outset, the public nature of the office is in view with its peculiar demands.

Husband of One Wife

3:2 " the husband of one wife,"

The word order emphasizes the word "one". So it is not likely that Paul meant to say that the elders have to be married. There are other words for "married" he could have used. He probably would have put "husband" in the prominent place if that were his intention. Moreover, Paul was not married (1 Corinthians 9:5; 7:7) and he thought singleness was an excellent way to be freer for ministry (1 Corinthians 7:32).

Does this standard mean that an elder cannot have been divorced and remarried?

When Paul writes of divorce, he calls it divorce. For such an important qualification, ambiguity would be inappropriate. It seems that Paul is describing a man without multiple wives or various affections for other women. He does not appear to be excluding the divorcee from the office of Elder. The Elder is to be characterized as a "one woman man" with eyes and affections for his wife exclusively.

Temperate

3:2 ". . .temperate. . ."

This word is used two other times in the New Testament – in 3:11 of the wives of deacons; and in Titus 2:2 about older men in general.

It is odd that it is used here, even though in verse 3 the elders must not be addicted to wine. Perhaps here the point is more general – namely, that his temperance extends over other things besides wine. Or perhaps the repetition comes because in verse 3 there begins a list of things which the elder is not supposed to be, and Paul felt obliged to include the problem of wine in the negative list as well as the positive. The standard here is one of self-control and mastery of his appetites. Wine would surely not be the only thing that a person can misuse.

Sensible, Prudent, Reasonable

3:2 ". . . prudent . . ."

The word is used only here and in Titus 1:8 of elders, and 2:2 of older men and 2:5 of younger women.

This word means "to be of a sound mind" – like the demoniac after he was healed (Mark 5:15). The basic idea seems to be having good judgment, which implies seeing things as they really are, knowing yourself well, and understanding people and how they respond. We might say "being in touch with reality" so that there are no great gaps between what you see in yourself and what others see in you.

Respectable, Honorable,

3:2 ". . . respectable . . ."

The idea seems to be one of not offending against propriety – a person who handles himself in situations so as not to step on toes unnecessarily.

Hospitable

3:2 ". . . hospitable . . ."

An elder should be one who loves strangers – that is, who is given to being kind to newcomers and makes them feel at home - a person whose home is open for ministry and who does not shrink back from having guests, not a secretive person.

Skilled in Teaching

3:2 ". . . able to teach. . ."

This need not mean that the person is very good in front of a group, since not all elders devote all their time to formal teaching or preaching (1 Timothy 5:17). Rather, as Titus 1:9 says, "He must hold firm to the sure Word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it."

In other words, he must know Biblical doctrine well and be able to explain it to people. He must be astute enough theologically that he can spot serious error and show a person why it is wrong and harmful.

Not Addicted to Wine

3:3 ". . . not addicted to wine. . ."

The general qualification here would be like the one above under temperance, namely, self-control – not addicted to anything harmful or debilitating or worldly. Freedom from enslavements should be so highly prized that no bondage is yielded to.

Not Pugnacious or Belligerent

3:3 ". . . pugnacious. . ."

The point here is that the temper should be under control. He must not be given to quarreling or fighting. There should be a conciliatory bent. His feelings should not be worn on the sleeve. He should not carry resentments or be hypercritical.

Gentle

3:3 ". . . but gentle. . ."

This is the opposite of pugnacious or belligerent. He should not be harsh or mean-spirited. He should be inclined to tenderness and resort to toughness only when the circumstances commend this form of love. His words should not be divisive but helpful and encouraging.

Peaceable

3:3 ". . . peaceable. . ."

This seems almost identical with "not pugnacious or belligerent". In fact, the last three seem to go together as a unit that stresses peacemaking rather than factiousness or troublemaking. This would have great implications about the way he uses his tongue.

Not a Lover of Money

3:3 ". . . free from the love of money. . ."

He should be putting the kingdom first in all he does. His lifestyle should not reflect a love of luxury. He should be a generous giver. He should not be anxious about his financial future. He should not be so money-oriented that ministry decisions revolve around this issue.

Leader of a Well-ordered Household

3:4-5 "[He must be] one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),"

The home is a proving ground for ministry. He should have submissive children. This does not mean perfect, but it does mean well-disciplined, so that they do not blatantly and regularly disregard the instructions of their parents. The children should revere their father. He should be a loving and responsible spiritual leader in the home. His wife should be respected and tenderly loved. Their relationship should be openly admirable.

A Mature Believer, Not a New Believer

3:6 "[and] not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil."

The "condemnation of the devil" seems to be the condemnation that the devil is under because of his being puffed up. So the new believer, given too much responsibility too soon, may easily swell with pride. The implication is that part of Christian seasoning is a humbling process and a growing protection against pride. We should see evidences in his life that humility is a fixed virtue and not easily overturned.

Good Reputation with Outsiders

3:7 "And he must have a good reputation with those outside [the church], so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

This is similar to being "above reproach" in verse 2. But here it is made explicit that the outside unbelieving world is in view. This doesn't mean the world sets the standards, since Jesus himself was rejected by some. What it seems to mean is that a Christian leader should at least meet the standards of the world for decency and respectability, for the standards of the church should be higher.

The snare of the devil is referred to in 2 Timothy 2:26. It seems to involve deception and sin, since to be rescued from it is to repent and come to knowledge of the truth. How does not being well thought of by outsiders cause you to fall into reproach and the snare of the devil? Could it be that the reproaches of the world would cause a person to try to hide his faults in the church and thus fall into lying or duplicity?

Titus 1:6-9.

1:6 "if any man is above reproach. . ." See above, Above Reproach

1:6 ". . .the husband of one wife. . ." See above, Husband of One Wife.

Honest and Orderly Children

1:6 ". . . having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion."

The meaning is probably the same as 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and the well-ordered house. There, the children are to be "in subjection with all reverence".

Here, the focus is not just on the relationship of the children to the father, but on their behavior in general. They are not to be guilty of the accusation of "wild living" or uncontrolled behavior. And they are not to be "insubordinate".

Children are to be orderly, generally obedient, responsible, and reliable.

Humility

1:7 ". . . not self willed. . ."

This is the assumption behind his not being a new believer, lest he be puffed up. He should be lowly in his demeanor, not speaking much of himself or his achievements. He should count others better than himself and be quick to serve. He should sincerely give God the credit and honor for any accomplishments.

1:7 ". . .not quick-tempered. . ." See above on 1 Timothy 3:3, Gentle and Peaceable.

1:7 ". . .not addicted to wine. . ." See above on 1 Timothy 3:3, Not Addicted to Wine.

1:7 ". . .not violent. . ." See above on 1 Timothy 3:3, Not Pugnacious or Belligerent.

1:7 ". . .not fond of sordid gain. . ." See above on 1 Timothy 3:3, Not a Lover of Money.

1:8 ". . .hospitable. . ." See above on 1 Timothy 3:2, Hospitable.

Lover of Goodness

1:8 ". . . loving what is good. . ."

He should love to see good done and love to be involved in doing good. This is more than doing good. It is a bent and love to see it done.

1:8 ". . . sensible. . ." See above on 1 Timothy 3:2, Sensible, Prudent, Reasonable.

Just

1:8 ". . . just. . ."

He should care about whether people are treated fairly and should want to see justice in the world at all levels.

Devout, Holy

1:8 ". . . devout. . ."

He should be a person of devotion to Christ with a life of prayer and meditation. He should love worship and have a deep personal relationship with the Lord.

Self-Controlled

1:8 ". . . self-controlled. . ."

The focus here is especially on sexual self-control. He should not be in the grip of lust. He should not toy with pornography. He should be utterly faithful to his wife.

Doctrinally Proficient

1:9 "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

First is stressed his firm hold on the truth. This refers to the subjective relation he bears to the truth. Is it loved (2 Thessalonians 2:10)? Is the person solid and unshakable in his grasp of the truth? Has the truth taken hold of him? The opposite would be a person who is never quite sure of where he stands or a person who thinks that doctrinal definition is generally unimportant or a person who has his learning mainly second-hand from books and teachers and not from the Bible itself, so that his hold is weak.

Second is stressed the nature of the word he holds – it is sure and accords with the (apostolic) teaching. This would mean a good grasp of Biblical truth, especially the doctrine of the apostles. The Bible, not other books, must be the foundation of doctrinal knowledge, though other books are very helpful and inspirational.

Third is stressed the positive role of teaching this healthy doctrine to others. A person who says, "I know what it means but I can't explain it so others can understand it" would probably not make a suitable elder. The church is in great need of being led by men who not only know, but can explain, Biblical doctrine. They are responsible for the spread of the truth in the church and from the church.

Finally is stressed the negative role of confuting doctrinal error. So the elders must be fairly incisive observers of the thought-world of the day. They need to be able to spot the encroachments of secular principles and assumptions. And they need to be able to correct opponents and straying saints (2 Timothy 2:24-26; James 5:19-20).

These Lists of Qualifications Are Not Exhaustive

These lists in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are not intended to be exhaustive. We can tell that from the fact that they are not the same. Titus mentions piety and justice and sexual self-control, but 1 Timothy does not mention these in particular. On the other hand, 1 Timothy mentions that the elder must not be a new convert, and that he must be respectable which Titus does not mention specifically.

Neither mentions specifically prayer. Neither forbids the elders explicitly from being robbers or liars or gossips, etc. The point is that the lists are not exhaustive. Paul takes numerous virtues for granted and gives these as examples. There may be other expectations implied in the ones listed. We should follow the ones listed and let them be the guide for what others we assume.

Appendix C

Principles of Local Church Governance

Principle One.

The Local Church Is governed by Christ (Matthew 16:18). This governance was mediated through the authority of the apostles and their close associates (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 7:17; 14:37-38; 2 Thessalonians 3:14). Today Christ still rules through the words of his apostles as they are preserved for us in the inspired writings of the New Testament. Therefore, every effort will be made to conform the structure and procedures and spirit of church governance as closely as possible to New Testament guidelines, with a constant eye to promoting the glory of God and the advancement of faith (1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:25).

Matthew 16:18. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Ephesians 2:19-20. So then you are . . . the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 7:17. Only, let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

1 Corinthians 14:37-38. If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.

2 Thessalonians 3:14. If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.

1 Corinthians 10:31. Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Philippians 1:25. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith.

Principle Two.

The ministry of the church is primarily the work of the members in the activity of worship toward God, nurture toward each other and witness toward the world. Internal structures for church governance are not the main ministry of the church, but are necessary in the equipping and mobilizing of the saints for the work of ministry.

Ephesians 4:11-12. And [Christ] gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.

Principle Three.

Governance structures should be lean and efficient to this end, not aiming to include as many people as possible in office-holding, but to free and fit as many people as possible for ministry (implied in the preceding principle).

Principle Four.

Christ is the head of the church and, spiritually, all his disciples are on a level ground before him, each having direct access to him and responsibility to intercede for the good of all as a community of priests.

Ephesians 4:15. Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.

Matthew 23:8-11. But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

1 Timothy 2:5. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Revelation 1:6. [Christ] has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father –to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Galatians 6:1-2. Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Hebrews 3:13. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Principle Five.

Not inconsistent with this equality, God has ordained the existence of officers in the church, some of whom are charged under Christ with the leadership of the church.

1 Timothy 5:17. The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

1 Thessalonians 5:12. But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction.

Hebrews 13:7. Remember those who led you, who spoke the Word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

Hebrews 13:17. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Acts 20:28. Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Principle Six.

The leaders of the church should be people who are spiritually mature and exemplary (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9), gifted for the ministry given to them (Romans 12:6-8), have a sense of divine urging (Acts 20:28), and are in harmony with the duly established leadership of the church (Philippians 2:2).

1 Timothy 3:1-13. It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, etc [15 qualifications are listed].

Titus 1:5-9. For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man is above reproach, etc. [18 qualifications follow].

Romans 12:6-8. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Acts 20:28. Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Philippians 2:2. Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.