



**HARMONY  
BIBLE CHURCH  
*CONSTITUTION***

# HARMONY BIBLE CHURCH CONSTITUTION

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## PREAMBLE

*This organization shall be called the Harmony Bible Church of Danville, Iowa. The purpose of this Church is to bring glory to God by being disciples and making disciples of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>*

## PART I: CONFESSION OF FAITH

### BIBLE

We believe that all “Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” by which we understand the whole Bible is inspired in the sense that holy men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings—historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic—as appeared in the original manuscripts. We believe that the whole Bible (66 books) in the original manuscripts is therefore without error. We believe in the sufficiency of Scripture and that the Canon is closed. We believe that the manuscript evidence we now possess represents fully authoritative copies of those inerrant original documents.<sup>3</sup>

We believe that both the Old Testament and New Testament center on the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work.<sup>4</sup>

We believe the Bible will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried.<sup>5</sup>

### THE TRINITY

We believe that God, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe,<sup>6</sup> eternally exists in three distinct persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and that these three are one God, having precisely the same essence, and perfect attributes, and are equally worthy of worship and obedience.<sup>7</sup>

### THE PERFECT ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

We believe that God is the perfect spiritual being and every perfect attribute of God is fully true of each person of the Trinity.

We believe that the Triune God is perfectly independent, the eternal source of His being, not dependent on anything outside Himself.<sup>8</sup> The Triune God is perfectly immutable, unchanging in any of His perfect attributes.<sup>9</sup>

We believe that the Triune God is perfectly eternal, transcending all limitations of time and space.<sup>10</sup>

We believe that the Triune God is perfectly omnipresent, transcending all limitation of space, and yet is present in every point of space with His whole being.<sup>11</sup>

We believe that the Triune God is perfectly omniscient, eternally knowing all things possible and actual.<sup>12</sup>

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1 Matthew 4:19; 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 1:1-14, 3:21

2 Exodus 24:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:37; Colossians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21

3 Psalm 119:89; Acts 1:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

4 Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 17:2-3; 18:28; 26:22-23; 28:23

5 Psalm 119:9, 105; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Revelation 22:18-19

6 Genesis 1:1, John 1:3; Hebrews 1:1-5

7 Matthew 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:1, 14; 10:30; 20:27-29; Acts 5:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-5; Revelation 5:11-14

8 Psalm 90:2; John 5:26; Acts 17:25

9 Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17

10 Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 32:40; Revelation 1:8

11 Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 66:1; Jeremiah 23:23-24

12 Isaiah 46:10; Matthew 6:8; 1 John 3:20

We believe that the Triune God is perfectly omnipotent, able to do anything consistent with His essence.<sup>13</sup>

We believe that the Triune God is perfect in holiness, morally and ethically without any stain of sin.<sup>14</sup>

We believe that the Triune God is perfectly true, perfectly gracious, perfectly just, perfectly good, perfect in love, perfect in mercy, and perfect in all His other attributes.<sup>15</sup>

## **GOD THE FATHER**

We believe God the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding from anything. He is the invisible person from whom the Son is eternally begotten and from whom, along with the Son, the Spirit eternally proceeds.<sup>16</sup>

We believe the Father, through the Son and the Spirit, created all for His eternal purpose, and His own glory.<sup>17</sup>

We believe the Father does not allow His sovereign will to be frustrated.<sup>18</sup>

We believe the Father forms all people as a potter forms clay, creating us and giving us life.<sup>19</sup>

We believe the Father has graciously ordained the redemption of His people and lovingly makes provisions for accomplishing that redemption.<sup>20</sup>

We believe that through the Son, the Father judges all men and lays His perfect wrath on the unjust.<sup>21</sup>

## **GOD THE SON**

We believe the eternal Son of God came into this world that He might manifest God to men, fulfill prophecy, and become the Redeemer of a lost world. To this end, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and received a human body and a sinless human nature.<sup>22</sup>

We believe that, in His humanity, He became and remained a perfect man, but sinless throughout His life; yet He retained His absolute deity along with all His divine perfections, being at the same time fully God and fully man.<sup>23</sup>

We believe that, in infinite love for the world, He perfectly accomplished His Father's will and became the divinely provided sacrificial Lamb to take away the sin of the world, bearing the holy judgments against sin which the righteousness of God must impose. His death was therefore substitutionary in the most absolute sense—the just for the unjust—and by His death He became the Savior of the world.<sup>24</sup>

We believe that, according to the Scriptures, He arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died, and that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which ultimately will be given to all believers. We believe He ascended into heaven in that glorified body, where at the right hand of the Father, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.<sup>25</sup>

We believe that He became Head over all things to the church, which is His body, and in this ministry He never ceases to intercede and advocate for the saved. He also currently dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.<sup>26</sup>

We believe He will come again personally and visibly in power and glory to judge the living and the dead and to consummate His redemptive mission.<sup>27</sup>

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13 Job 42:2; Jeremiah 32:27; Matthew 19:26

14 Exodus 15:11; Hebrews 4:15; Revelation 4:8

15 Numbers 23:19; Psalm 86:15; 119:75; 145:3; Jeremiah 33:11; Matthew 5:48; Ephesians 2:7-9; 1 John 4:8

16 John 1:14, 18; 4:24; 14:16; 15:26; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 John 4:9

17 Genesis 1:1; Proverbs 16:4; Ephesians 1:3-6; 3:9-11

18 Psalms 33:8-11; Isaiah 14:27; 46:9-11; Daniel 4:35

19 Genesis 2:7; Isaiah 29:16; 64:8

20 Deuteronomy 7:6-9; Mark 13:20; John 17:1-2; Ephesians 1:4-5

21 Acts 17:31; John 3:36; Ephesians 5:6

22 Luke 1:30-35; John 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:15

23 Isaiah 9:6; Luke 2:40; John 1:1-2, 10:30; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 1:8; 4:15

24 Romans 3:23-26; John 1:29; Hebrews 10:5-14; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18

25 John 20:19-20; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:42-49; Philippians 3:20-21; Hebrews 7:23-25; 10:12-14

26 Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 1:20-23; Hebrews 7:23-25; 1 John 2:1

27 Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31-46

## **GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe the Holy Spirit is the divine third person of the Trinity.<sup>28</sup>

We believe He inspired the writers of Scriptures.<sup>29</sup>

We believe He convicts the world concerning sin, concerning the need for righteousness, and concerning judgment upon the unrighteous.<sup>30</sup>

We believe He effects spiritual regeneration.<sup>31</sup>

We believe at the moment of regeneration He baptizes and indwells every believer into the Body of Christ. His indwelling presence is permanent in the life of every believer.<sup>32</sup>

We believe He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His indwelling presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of our eternal inheritance.<sup>33</sup>

We believe as our instructor and guide He enables believers to understand His truth.<sup>34</sup>

We believe He exalts Christ, and guides believers into exalting Christ.<sup>35</sup>

We believe He cultivates Christian character, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which believers serve God through His church. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, prayer, evangelism, and service.<sup>36</sup>

We believe the Christian life is supernatural and that the Lord continues to perform miracles. We also believe many current displays of the gift of tongues and other such sign gifts are outside the purpose and guidelines set forth in the Scriptures for the normative operation of the established local church.<sup>37</sup> Those believing they possess the gift of tongues and other such sign gifts are welcome if they are willing to be a source of unity within our church body. Although we do not control personal, individual interactions with the Lord, the expression of tongues and other sign gifts are not to be overtly expressed at gatherings under the organization and authority of Harmony Bible Church's leadership.

We believe Christians are at all times called to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit who will build up the body of Christ for works of service and Godly living.<sup>38</sup>

## **MANKIND**

We believe mankind is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. Therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.<sup>39</sup>

We believe that though mankind was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, mankind fell through the sin of the one man Adam, and as a consequence of his sin the entire human race became spiritually dead in sin.<sup>40</sup>

We believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity of human nature, has been transmitted to the entire human race, except the incarnate Christ Jesus.<sup>41</sup> As a result, every child is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of divine life, but his nature is essentially, unchangeably and fully evil apart from regeneration.<sup>42</sup> Every person proves that to be true by his or her sinful actions.<sup>43</sup> As a result, every person is in desperate need of a

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28 Matthew 28:18-19

29 2 Peter 1:21

30 John 16:7-11

31 John 3:5-6; Titus 3:5

32 John 14:16-17; Acts 10:44-48; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14

33 Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30

34 John 14:25-26; 16:13

35 John 16:14-15

36 Luke 12:11-12; John 4:23-24; Acts 1:8; 4:31; 13:2; Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 3:3; 1 Peter 4:10

37 1 Corinthians 14

38 Ephesians 4:12-13; 5:18

39 Genesis 1:26-30; Isaiah 64:8; John 3:16

40 Genesis 3:1-19; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 2:13

41 Romans 5:12-19

42 Psalm 14:2-3; 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 8:6-7; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:3

43 Psalm 14:1-3; Romans 3:10-19

Savior to rescue them from their spiritually dead condition.<sup>44</sup>

We believe that the person saved from their depraved condition by the grace of God exists for the primary purpose of bringing glory to God, and delighting in Him forever.<sup>45</sup>

## **SALVATION, SECURITY, ETERNITY**

We believe salvation is the unmerited gift of God to rescue spiritually dead, sinful people from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God.<sup>46</sup>

We believe the salvation of the believer is only by God's grace, through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and therefore there is no basis for boasting in the flesh concerning salvation. Our salvation has been purchased solely by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though sinless by nature and deed, bore our sins in His body and died in our place on the cross. There is absolutely nothing we can add in the very least degree to the sacrifice of Christ, to merit salvation.<sup>47</sup>

We believe repentance, as it relates to salvation, is the act of turning from unbelief to belief in Christ. Therefore, repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.<sup>48</sup> We believe repentance, as it relates to the process of sanctification, is the act of a believer turning from sin to acts of righteousness. That process of repentance and sanctification will never be made complete and perfect until the final state of glorification.<sup>49</sup>

We believe the immediate blessings of salvation upon the believer include regeneration, redemption, reconciliation, justification, and adoption. Each of those blessings is fully realized in every believer at the point of salvation, and is fully a work of God's grace upon the believer.

*Regeneration* is the gracious work of God whereby a believer is spiritually born-again through the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God.<sup>50</sup>

*Redemption* is Christ's saving work of 'buying back' sinners out of their bondage to sin through the payment of the death of Christ made to God.<sup>51</sup>

*Reconciliation* is the gracious work of God through the death of Christ by which sinful man is forgiven and brought into spiritual peace with God.<sup>52</sup>

*Justification* is the gracious judicial act of God in which He declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the sinner, on the basis of the righteousness of Christ.<sup>53</sup>

*Adoption* is the gracious act of God by which He makes us members of His family and heirs of His kingdom.<sup>54</sup>

*Sanctification* is the experience, beginning at the point of justification, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. That part of sanctification is immediate in the life of every believer at the point of salvation, and is fully a work of God.<sup>55</sup> However, sanctification is also a progressive work continuing throughout the life of the believer, making him more Christ-like in holy living. That progressive aspect of sanctification is a work of God and man, in the sense that man cooperates with God through obedience. Progressive sanctification is never completed in this life.<sup>56</sup>

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44 Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:3

45 Isaiah 61:10; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 2:9-10

46 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

47 John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 3:7-9; Colossians 2:13-14; Titus 3:5-6; Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2:24

48 Mark 1:14-15; John 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; Acts 2:36-38; 13:39; 16:31; 20:21; Romans 1:16-17; 10:4; Galatians 3:22

49 Matthew 7:15-23; Luke 17:3-4; Acts 26:20; 1 John 1:8-10; Revelation 21:1-8

50 John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Titus 3:5

51 Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19

52 Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:21-22

53 Romans 3:23-24, 27-28; 5:1, 9; Galatians 2:16

54 Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:6-7; Ephesians 1:5

55 1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:10

56 Romans 6:19; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 7:1; 1 John 1:8

We believe salvation ultimately culminates with the blessing of eternal glorification for every believer. At death the spirits of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into the presence of God, and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body when Christ comes for His own, whereupon spirit and body reunited shall be with Him forever in glory.<sup>57</sup>

We believe that in the eternal state, those not having been saved will eternally experience God's wrath. The spirits of the unbelieving remain after death conscious of condemnation and in misery in a place of torment until the final judgment, when spirit and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished eternally away from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.<sup>58</sup>

We believe salvation is entirely a gracious work of God, rooted in His love and mercy, according to the kind intention of His will.<sup>59</sup>

We believe that the believer is eternally secure. Because of the unchanging eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His special love, because of His perfect grace toward the unworthy, because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the faithfulness of God, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, all true believers everywhere, once saved shall be kept saved forever. Once a person has actually trusted Christ as Savior, that person cannot lose their salvation for any reason or by any means.<sup>60</sup>

## THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church of Jesus Christ is made up of all true believers, irrespective of ethnicity or denomination.

We believe in a separated walk of life. This means that believers are to live holy lives;<sup>61</sup> separated from sin and set apart unto God. This however, does not mean believers should have no contact with unbelievers.<sup>62</sup> This is accomplished by living a life of uncompromised purity and holiness, manifesting love and friendship toward unbelievers with the purpose of creating in them a thirst to also know Christ personally.

We believe that all people who place their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are members of the one true church of which Jesus Christ is the Head.<sup>63</sup> The believers are commanded to worship regularly together as they preach, teach, serve, evangelize and encourage the development of spiritual gifts to build up the Body.<sup>64</sup> The church is to be led by the loving shepherding of elders and deacons.

## THE ENEMY

We believe in a personal devil, Satan, and his hosts. We believe that he is the originator of sin, seeks people to attack and appears enticing to many drawing them into false doctrine. He is powerless against Jesus.<sup>65</sup>

## THE END

We believe the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. The believers who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.<sup>66</sup>

We believe in the personal, physical and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>67</sup>

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57 Matthew 25:31-34; Luke 23:42-43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23-24

58 Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15

59 John 6:37, 65; Romans 8:28-30; 9:8-16; Ephesians 1:3-6

60 John 5:24; 10:28-29; 14:16-17; Romans 8:28-39; Ephesians 1:3-6, 13-14; 4:30; Hebrews 7:25

61 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 1:14-16

62 1 Corinthians 5:9-10

63 Ephesians 1:22-23

64 Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Hebrews 10:24-25

65 Job 1; John 8:44; 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:8

66 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

67 Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-13

We believe the saved are raised to eternal conscious bliss, forever with our Lord in the glory of Heaven. <sup>68</sup>

We believe the lost are brought to eternal judgment and conscious separation from God in the torment of Hell.<sup>69</sup>

## **MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY**

We believe that, since the beginning, the relationship between a man and a woman exemplifies in a basic way God's ordering of the interpersonal life for which He created mankind and issued His first command for them to fill the Earth and subdue it.<sup>70</sup> Anarchy in sexual relationships is a symptom of man's alienation from God, his neighbor, and himself.<sup>71</sup> The Church, as the household of God, is called to lead men and women out of this alienation into the responsible freedom of the new life in Christ. Reconciled to God, each person has joy in and respect for his own humanity and that of other persons, a man and a woman are enabled to marry, to commit themselves to a mutually shared life, to welcome children as a gift from God, and to respond to each other in sensitive and lifelong concern. The Church comes under the judgment of God, and invites rejection by men, when it fails to lead men and women into the full meaning of life together, or withholds the compassion of Christ from those caught in the moral confusion of our time.

We believe that marriage is a relationship sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union as described by Scripture.<sup>72</sup> No provision in the civil law allowing marriage in some other circumstances shall govern this Church.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to one another. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside the marriage between a man and a woman.<sup>73</sup>

We believe that any form of sexual immorality including, without limitation, adultery, fornication, homosexual or bisexual relationships, rape, bestiality, incest, pornography, underage sex, and any attempt to change one's sex or the disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.<sup>74</sup>

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, including sexual sin, by repenting of the sin and seeking God's mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.<sup>75</sup>

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68 Matthew 25:34; John 14:2; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 8; Revelation 2:7

69 Matthew 10:28; Mark 9:47-48; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8

70 Genesis 1:28

71 Romans 1:18-27

72 Genesis 2:18, 24; 1 Corinthians 7:2-16; Ephesians 5:23-33

73 Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 6:18-7:2; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Timothy 5:1-2

74 Leviticus 18:6-28; Acts 15:20; 21:25

75 Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 6:11

## **PART II: RULES OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

### **OFFICERS**

#### **ELDERS**

##### **DUTIES**

Elders lead the church,<sup>76</sup> teach and preach the Word,<sup>77</sup> protect the church from false teachers,<sup>78</sup> exhort and admonish the saints in sound doctrine,<sup>79</sup> visit the sick and pray,<sup>80</sup> and judge doctrinal issues.<sup>81</sup> In biblical terminology, elders shepherd, oversee, lead, and care for the local church.

##### **STRUCTURE**

The Church Elder Board shall consist of the Elders and Pastoral Staff. Each year the Elder Board shall appoint a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Elder Board Chairman shall serve as Chairman of Board meetings and Church business meetings. The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping minutes of all Elder Board and Church meetings, as well as an updated member roll. The offices of Chairman and Vice-Chairman must be held by Elders who are not employees of the Church. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by any member of the Church in good standing. The Elder Board may delegate such routine decisions as it shall determine to an Executive Committee consisting of the Lead Pastor and such other Pastors and Elders as the Board shall determine. Any decisions of the Executive Committee shall be subject to the control and supervision of the entire Elder Board. For the purposes of this paragraph, the Pastoral Staff shall consist of the Lead Pastor and all other Pastors employed by the Church but shall not consist of Assistant Pastors. All organizations of the Church are responsible to the Church Elder Board.

##### **QUALIFICATIONS AND TERM**

The biblical qualifications for Elders are set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. In accordance with these qualifications, Elders shall be Church members elected by the congregation. Elders will serve in three-year terms. Elders must be evaluated by the Elder Board every three years and re-affirmed for continuing service by the congregation. After serving two consecutive three-year terms, Elders are ineligible for re-election as an Elder or a Deacon for a one-year period. Elders may be removed from service on the Elder Board by unanimous vote of the other Elders.

##### **SELECTION**

Nominees to fulfill the office of church Elder will be identified by the Elder Board as described in the Policy Manual. Each nominee will be interviewed by the Elder Board regarding his interest in the position.

If it is the opinion of the nominee and the Elder Board that he is suitable for the position the Elder Board will make a public announcement of the man's nomination, seeking input from members of the church body. The congregation will be reminded of the biblical requirement for Elders and given 30 days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any disqualifying characteristics. If any matter remains unresolved, the Elder nominee or church member should approach the Elder Board and request that the nominee's name be withdrawn from consideration.

Following this period of public and private examination, the nominee will be subject to a vote among the Elder Board. Unanimous approval is required to bring the nominee before the congregation as a candidate for election.

The Elder Board will present the candidate to the congregation for confirmation. Seventy-five percent (75%) approval of the ballots cast will be necessary for his election.

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76 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:1-2

77 1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9

78 Acts 20:17, 28-31

79 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 3:13-17; Titus 1:9

80 Acts 20:35; James 5:14

81 Acts 15:16



## **DEACONS**

### **DUTIES**

Deacons serve the church by providing leadership to the serving ministries of the church and by assisting the Elders in shepherding the flock. They serve by fulfilling the specific functions assigned to them by the Elders.

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND TERM**

The Biblical qualifications for Deacons are set forth in 1 Timothy 3. In accordance with these qualifications, Deacons shall be Church members elected by the congregation. Deacons will serve in three-year terms. Deacons must be evaluated and re-affirmed for continuing service by the Elder Board every three years. After serving two consecutive three-year terms, Deacons are ineligible for re-election as a Deacon for a one-year period. Deacons may be removed from service as a Deacon by unanimous vote of the Elder Board.

### **SELECTION**

Nominees to fulfill the office of church Deacon will be identified by the Elder Board as described in the Policy Manual. Each nominee will be interviewed by the Elder Board regarding his interest in the position.

If it is the opinion of the nominee and the Elder Board that he is suitable for the position, the Elder Board will make a public announcement of the man's nomination, seeking input from members of the church body. The congregation will be reminded of the biblical requirement for Deacons and given 30 days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any disqualifying characteristics. If any matter remains unresolved, the Deacon nominee or church member should approach the Elder Board and request that the nominee's name be withdrawn from consideration.

Following this period of public and private examination, the nominee will be subject to a vote among the Elder Board. A unanimous approval is required to bring the nominee before the congregation as a candidate for election.

The Elder Board will present the candidate to the congregation for confirmation. Seventy-five percent (75%) approval of the ballots cast will be necessary for his election.

## **LEAD PASTOR**

### **DUTIES**

The Lead Pastor is to teach the Scriptures, pray, and watch over the spiritual life of the congregation. The Lead Pastor also serves on the Elder Board and has a three-fold function: over them as shepherd, among them as fellow elder, and under them as servant. The Lead Pastor is directly responsible to the Elder Board.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

The Lead Pastor will fulfill the biblical qualifications of an Elder as set forth in the constitution.<sup>82</sup>

### **SELECTION**

Under the direction of the Elder Board, the Lead Pastor will be elected at a special or regular business meeting of the church. Public notice of this meeting must be given from the pulpit two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. Seventy-five percent (75%) approval of the ballots cast will be necessary for his election.

### **TERM**

The Lead Pastor will continue in office until he resigns or until his employment is terminated at a special business meeting. This meeting may be called by a seventy-five (75%) majority of the remaining Elders, or by the written request for such action, signed by twenty percent (20%) of the adult members in good standing. This meeting must be publically announced from the pulpit on two (2) consecutive Sundays before such meeting. A majority vote will terminate the Lead Pastor's employment. Should the Lead Pastor's employment cease for any reason, the Elder Board shall function as overseers of the Pastors and all other staff.

## **PASTORS**

### **DUTIES**

Pastors are responsible to the Lead Pastor and to the Elder Board. Determination of pastoral responsibilities and their allocation among the Pastors shall be made by the Lead Pastor in conjunction with the Elder Board. Additional responsibilities may be agreed upon by mutual consent between the Lead Pastor and Pastor.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

Pastors must fulfill the biblical qualifications of an Elder as set forth in the constitution.<sup>83</sup>

### **SELECTION**

The Lead Pastor, assisted by the Elder Board, is responsible for any searches for Pastors. Upon the recommendation of the Lead Pastor and the Elder Board, a candidate for Pastor will be presented to the church for approval by a majority vote of all eligible church members present.

Pastors will adhere to the teachings and practices of the church. In no case will anyone be considered for a Pastor position without the approval of the Lead Pastor.

### **TERM**

Pastors will serve for an indefinite period of time. Pastors are responsible to the Lead Pastor and are subject to his leadership. If the employment of a Pastor needs to be severed for the welfare of the church, a majority vote by the Elder Board is required for the dismissal of the person in question.

## **ASSISTANT PASTORS**

### **DUTIES**

Assistant Pastors are responsible to the Lead Pastor and to the Elder Board. Determination of responsibilities and their allocation among Assistant Pastors shall be made by the Lead Pastor with counsel from the Elder Board.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

Assistant Pastors must demonstrate the biblical qualifications of an Elder.<sup>84</sup>

### **SELECTION**

The Lead Pastor, assisted by the Elder Board, is responsible for any searches for Assistant Pastors and may hire an Assistant Pastor with the approval of the Elder Board.

Assistant Pastors will adhere to the teachings and practices of the church. In no case will anyone be considered for an Assistant Pastor position without the approval of the Lead Pastor.

### **TERM**

Assistant Pastors will serve for an indefinite period of time. Assistant Pastors are responsible to the Lead Pastor and are subject to his leadership. If the employment of an Assistant Pastor needs to be severed for the welfare of the church, a majority vote by the Elder Board is required for the dismissal of the person in question.

## **OTHER STAFF**

All other staff are responsible to the Lead Pastor and are subject to his leadership. The Lead Pastor, with counsel from the Elders, is responsible for hiring and dismissing staff personnel.

Staff must be members in good standing of Harmony Bible Church.

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<sup>83</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9

<sup>84</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9

# MEMBERSHIP

## MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Persons applying for membership in the Harmony Bible Church must be prepared to subscribe to the following Covenant upon acceptance into membership:

- I have received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and desire to join in membership with Harmony Bible Church. I have read the Constitution of Harmony Bible Church, including Part 1: Confession of Faith, and Part II: Rules of Church Government. I agree to act in accordance with the Confession of Faith and to not teach against any of the stated doctrines. I also agree to act in accordance with the Rules of Church Government as stated.
- I further agree to accept the leadership of this Church by the Elders as they follow God's Word and the Constitution.
- I commit to worship Christ in all of life, striving in all things to honor my Lord and Savior through a manner of life that is a demonstration of the Christian Gospel to the Church, to the world, and through obedience to the will of God as set forth in Scripture and in the Confession of Faith.
- I commit to live on mission by growing as a disciple who makes fellow disciples of Jesus Christ.
- I commit to faithfully pray for the Church leaders, graciously and biblically expecting them to be of sound doctrine and godly character. I will also pray for the people and ministries of Harmony Bible Church, desiring the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit for all the church body.
- I commit to faithfully attend weekly worship services of Harmony Bible Church and specially called congregational meetings.
- I commit to financially support Harmony in a joyful, sacrificial way.
- I commit to live in community with one another, seeking to form growing relationships of encouragement, love, and discipleship.
- I commit to faithfully use my abilities and time for the Lord for the church body of Harmony and/or in the community or world.
- I commit to actively participate in Harmony's shepherding relationships.
- I commit to work to preserve church unity through gracious speech and by lovingly addressing concerns directly to the correct people in a timely manner.
- I understand and agree that if at some later time my beliefs or conduct are called into question by the Church Elder Board, or if I find myself out of harmony with the beliefs and practices of this Church, I will submit to the careful consideration and decision of the Church Elder Board regarding the faith or conduct in question, and will be governed by such decision as to my future relationship with this Church.

## MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

To become a member, a person shall:

- Profess being a Christian who is saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone,
- Not be under discipline from another congregation, (In the event of an unresolved discipline process, Harmony's Elder Board will determine if/how to proceed with the request for membership.)
- Attend the required number of membership classes,
- Complete any assignments given in those membership classes, including carefully reading the Constitution of Harmony Bible Church, containing the Confession of Faith and the Rules of Church Government,
- Provide a completed, signed membership application (via written or digital means), and
- Participate in one or more membership interviews with Elders to reasonably attest to faith in Christ, unity with the mission and people of Harmony Bible Church, and acceptance of the Constitution of Harmony Bible Church.

Once these steps have been satisfied, the interviewing Elder(s) will recommend to the Church Board that the person be made a church member. If the Elder Board affirms this recommendation, the name of applicant shall be announced to the congregation via verbal, printed, projected, and/or digital methods. If no concerns are received within 10 days of said announcement, the applicant will be welcomed into membership of the Church via verbal, printed, projected, and/or digital methods and thus shall be considered a member of Harmony Bible Church. If concerns are received, one or more Elders will seek a biblical resolution and determine if/how that membership application is to progress.

- Special Case: A Pastor (including the Lead Pastor and any Pastor or Assistant Pastor) and his wife shall automatically become members of this Church upon his employment.

A person's membership shall be dissolved and his/her name removed from the membership roll in any of the following cases:

- A member is absent from the Church services for a period of three months, unless providentially hindered or an acceptable explanation is given to the member's shepherd or the Elder Board. Prior to a person's membership being dissolved, an Elder/Shepherd should communicate by letter, phone or internet with the absent member and make earnest effort to visit with him/her. If a satisfactory explanation is not made regarding his/her absence, then upon the majority approval of the Elder Board the person's name shall be stricken from the Church membership roll.
- A member requests that his/her membership be dissolved. This request must be: 1) made to the Elder Board in writing by either physical or digital means; or 2) made orally to a member of the Elder Board and confirmed in writing (by either physical or digital means) by a member of the Elder Board to the member prior to any vote regarding the request. A majority approval of the Elder Board is required in order for the membership in question to be dissolved and the name to be removed from the Church membership roll. If it appears that a member has requested removal from membership merely to avoid the member restoration process, the Elder Board may decide to deny the request until the restoration process has been properly concluded.
- A member is excommunicated as part of the member restoration process.

## MEMBER RESTORATION

The Elder Board will lead the process of member restoration and will be guided by Matthew 18:15-20 and 1 Corinthians 5. The goal of every member restoration process is the restoration of the individual to the Lord and to the Church.<sup>85</sup> The Elder Board shall move promptly in safeguarding the purity and peace of the church.

When personal differences between members of the church arise, the Elders will recommend that the parties strive to settle their differences in the manner taught by our Savior in Matthew 18:15-20.

When charges are made against a member, the accused will be notified about the nature of the charges through personal conversation or written means, and the accused will be asked to appear before the Elder Board to make answer to the charges. At least two weeks notice of this appearance will be given to the party involved. If the accused does not appear in response to the Elder Board's request, and if a satisfactory reason for failing to appear is not given, the Elder Board will complete the restoration process. If the accused appears before the Elder Board, there will be a full and fair hearing of the case. If, by majority vote of those present, the Elder Board determines that the member is innocent of the charges, then the member shall be deemed acquitted and remain a member of the church. If, by majority vote of those present, the Elder Board determines that the member is guilty of the charges, and the member fails to confess and make proper repentance, then the person's membership shall be dissolved and his/her name removed from the membership roll.

In accordance with the teachings of 1 Corinthians 5, if at any time a member is harming the reputation of the gospel or hindering the ministry of the church, the Elder Board, upon meeting to discuss the matter and by unanimous vote of those present, may dissolve the person's membership and remove his/her name from the membership roll.

When a person is excommunicated as a result of the membership restoration process, the member's removal must be announced to the congregation in a manner deemed appropriate by the Elder Board.

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<sup>85</sup> Galatians 6:1

## **FINANCES**

Believing that the Bible teaches that the proper method of financing the Lord's work is by free-will offerings of consecrated hearts in systematic, proportionate giving of money, this church will under no circumstances consent to any method of collection of funds for the support of the Church other than free-will offerings.<sup>86</sup>

## **BAPTISM**

We believe that the baptism of every believer is the command of Christ.<sup>87</sup> We do not believe that water baptism is in any way necessary for salvation.<sup>88</sup> Rather, it publicly identifies the believer with his Savior<sup>89</sup> and gives him a visual picture of an invisible spiritual reality.<sup>90</sup>

Therefore, the ordinance of baptism will be administered to believers only. Furthermore, the mode of baptism will be immersion, as it is most consistent with the actual meaning of the word "baptism" and best pictures the new birth and new life of the believer.<sup>91</sup> Believers may be baptized at any regularly scheduled baptismal service or in a special ceremony if deemed necessary by an Elder. Believers may be baptized by a mode other than immersion if deemed necessary by the Elder Board.

## **LORD'S SUPPER**

The Lord's Supper is the second ordinance that this church adheres to. All believers in Jesus Christ are instructed to partake in this ordinance as a remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.<sup>92</sup> The Lord's Supper will be celebrated as scheduled by the church leadership.

## **MEETINGS**

The Corporation shall hold its Annual Business Meeting in November of each year. Special meetings may be called by public announcement on two separate Sundays, one of which may be on the same Sunday as the meeting called. A quorum of 10% of the church membership is required to vote on any church business.

## **CHURCH PROPERTY**

All property belonging to the Church shall remain intact. Members severing their connection with the Church, for whatsoever reasons, relinquish all claims on its property.

In case of division of the Church, the property shall revert to that group that adheres to this Constitution.

Be it resolved that Article Eight of the Articles of Incorporation of the Harmony Bible Church be amended as follows:

That after the last period in said Section Eight, the following be added, "That in the event this corporation shall be dissolved, at any Annual Meeting or a special meeting duly called and convened for said purpose, that all of the assets and property of said corporation shall be distributed only to such organizations which have been granted exemption from Federal Income Tax under the provisions of Section 501 'C''3' of the Internal Revenue Code and that after such amendment the said article Eight shall read as follows:

"The corporate life of this corporation shall begin on the date of the approval of these articles by the Secretary of State unless dissolved by 3/4 vote of the membership, at an Annual Meeting or a special meeting duly called and convened for such a purpose. That in the event this corporation shall be dissolved, at any Annual Meeting or a special meeting duly called and convened for said purpose, that all of the assets and property of said corporation shall be distributed only to such organizations which have been granted exemptions from Federal Income Tax under the provisions of Section 501 'C''3' of the Internal Revenue Code."

86 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7

87 Matthew 28:19-20

88 Ephesians 2:8-9

89 Acts 2:38

90 Romans 6:3-4

91 Romans 6:3-4

92 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-29

## **AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended at any meeting of the Church, properly called, if a resolution to that effect has been presented in a foregoing meeting, and if 3/4 of the resident members present are in favor of such amendment.

The Church Property and Amendments sections of this document cannot be changed.

