



# The Constitution of the South Side Bible Church

November 2015 Update

## **PREAMBLE**

We the members of the South Side Bible Church, Battle Creek, Michigan, recognizing that the Word of God sets forth the divine plan of local church organization, do, upon this basis, ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The organization shall be known as South Side Bible Church.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

### **Section A – Phases of Its Ministry**

The object of this church is the ministry of the Word of God for the salvation of souls, the edification of Christians, the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the promotion of godly worship and cooperation with Christian activity consistent with the Constitution, doctrine, and principles and practices of the South Side Bible Church.

### **Section B – Independence and Autonomy**

It is the purpose of this church that it shall be, and forever remain an independent and autonomous organization, adhering to the fundamental and pre-millennial doctrines of the Christian faith, as set forth in the Holy Bible, and as defined in the “Statement of Faith and Doctrine” of the Independent Fundamental Churches of America as amended June, 1970.

### **Section C – Nondenominational Character**

It is likewise the purpose of this church, in accordance with the New Testament’s example and teaching, that it shall forever remain free from denominationalism. It shall, for this reason, avoid identification with denominations or associations of churches by means of its name, or by the observance of traditions peculiar to such denominations or associations. It shall never change its name nor its polity so as to effect such identification. *1 Cor. 1:11-13; 3:1-9.*

## **ARTICLE III – FELLOWSHIP**

### **Section A – Fellowship with Other Local Churches**

Fellowship with other local independent churches shall be maintained by this church. It may also enter into such cooperation with other fundamental churches as shall not jeopardize its fundamental position. To this end, the church may be a member of and affiliate with the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, as long as such membership does not jeopardize its independence or fundamental character.

### **Section B – Affiliation with Local Church Councils**

Affiliation or cooperation with local church councils, etc., shall be such as shall not compromise the fundamental doctrinal position of this church.

## ARTICLE IV – STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE

**Preamble:** The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of South Side Bible Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elders Board is South Side Bible Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

### Section A – The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, and infallible. *2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Mt. 5:18; Jn. 16:12-13.*

### Section B – The Godhead

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfection. *Dt. 6:4; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2.*

### Section C – The Person and Work of Christ

(1) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, became a man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. *Jn. 1:1-2,14; Lk. 1:3-5.*

(2) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. *Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 2:24.*

(3) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. *Acts 1:9; Heb. 9:14; Rom. 8:34; 1 Jn. 2:1-2.*

### Section D – The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

(1) We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. *Jn. 16:11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14.*

(2) We believe that He is the divine teacher who guides believers into all truth; and, that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. *Jn. 16:13; Eph. 5:18; 1 Jn. 2:27.*

### Section E – The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and that man, outside Christ, is totally depraved, and of himself utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. *Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3, 12.*

#### **Section F – Salvation**

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on the cross for forgiveness of our sins. *Jn. 1:12; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19.*

#### **Section G – The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers**

(1) We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. *Jn. 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:5.*

(2) We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sin to reign in the mortal body, exacting obedience to the body's desires. *Rom. 6:12; 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15.*

#### **Section H – The Two Natures of the Believer**

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and, that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. *Rom. 6:13; 8:12-13; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 Jn. 3:5-9.*

#### **Section I – Separation**

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God. *2 Tim. 3:1-5; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 1 Jn. 2:15-17; 2 Jn. 9, 11; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1.*

#### **Section J – Missions**

We believe that it is the solemn duty of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind. *Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:19-20.*

#### **Section K – The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts**

(1) We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts and that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. *1 Cor. 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 14:1-25; 2 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12.*

(2) We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and afflicted. *Jn. 15:7; 1 Jn. 5:14-15.*

## Section L – **The Church**

(1) We believe that the Church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age. *Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2.*

(2) We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. *Acts 14:27; 20:17; 28:28-31; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11.*

## Section M – **Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. *Gen. 1:26-27.* Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. *Gen. 2:18-25.* We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. *1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4.* We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. *Ex. 20:14; 1 Cor. 6:18; Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 13:4,5.*

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, (including but not limited to) adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, transgenderism, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography, is sinful and offensive to God. *Mt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10.*

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of South Side Bible Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the South Side Bible Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by South Side Bible Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. *Mt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22.*

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. *Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.*

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. *Mk. 12:28-31; Lk. 6:31.* Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of South Side Bible Church.

## Section N – **Sanctity of Human Life**

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. *Ps. 139.*

## Section O – **Dispensationalism**

We believe in the dispensational view of Bible interpretation. However, we reject the extreme teaching known as "Hyper Dispensationalism," such as that teaching which opposes either the Lord's Table or water baptism as a scriptural means of testimony for the Church in this age. *Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:8; 1 Cor. 11:23-26.*

**Section P – The Personality of Satan**

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall of man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire. *Job 1:6-7; Is. 14:12-17; Rev. 20:10.*

**Section Q – The Second Advent of Christ**

We believe in the “Blessed Hope,” the personal, imminent, pre-tribulation and pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth with His saints to establish His Millennial Kingdom. *1 Thess. 4:13-18; Zech. 14:4-11; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6; 1 Thess. 1:10.*

**Section R – The Eternal State**

(1) We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. *Mt. 25:46; Jn. 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13.*

(2) We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit and soul will be reunited in a new body to be glorified forever with the Lord. *Lk. 23:43; Rev. 20:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 1 Thess. 4:16-17.*

(3) We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment because of the rejection of God’s Son as their Savior. *Lk. 16:19-26; Mt. 25:4-46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Mk. 9:43-48; Rev. 20:11-15.*

**ARTICLE V – ORDINANCES**

We recognize two ordinances of the Church for this age—the Lord’s Supper and water baptism. They are not to be regarded, however, as a means of salvation nor as a means of grace by which special merit is obtained.

**Section A – The Lord’s Supper**

This ordinance shall be observed at least once each quarter, and as often as the pastor and elders shall decide. All who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior and are walking in fellowship with the Lord shall be welcome to join in this service—unless they are under the discipline of the church, as defined in Article VI, Section E, Par. 2. *1 Cor. 11:17-34.*

**Section B – Water Baptism**

Baptism shall be administered by immersion at the request of those who have personally acknowledged Jesus Christ as Savior. New believers shall be encouraged to be baptized soon after conversion, and scriptural teaching on the meaning of this ordinance shall be conducted for all candidates prior to their baptism. This is, however, a personal act and is not set forth in Scripture as a condition of salvation, fellowship, or membership in this church. *Acts 8:36-38; 10:47-48.*

## **ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section A – Qualifications for Membership**

Persons who give testimony to their faith in Christ as Savior, who give assurance of their willingness to follow and submit themselves to the Word of God as the only rule of faith, doctrine and practice, and who indicate their agreement with the Constitution and By-Laws of this church shall be eligible for membership.

### **Section B – Reception of Members**

(1) Christians who desire to associate themselves with this church, and who fulfill the qualifications for membership shall make application to the pastor or the Board of Elders. They shall then meet with the pastor and one or more members of the Board of Elders for a recommendation for membership.

(2) Applicants who have been recommended for membership shall be presented to the church by announcement from the pulpit or in the church bulletin for two consecutive Sundays. If no valid objections are received by the Board of Elders during that period, the right hand of fellowship shall be extended to them at a following Sunday morning or evening service. Their membership shall then be in force.

### **Section C – Status of Membership**

The membership of this church shall consist of three groups—Active, Associate and Inactive.

(1) The active membership shall consist of such Christians as have been received in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and who are not members of any other church.

a. Active members who have reached the age of eighteen shall be entitled to vote.

b. No minimum age shall be set for membership.

c. A review of the active membership shall be conducted by the pastor and Board of Elders at least once per year. Any member absent from the regular worship services for a period of six months shall be called upon officially. Any member absent for a period of twelve months shall receive a letter calling attention to his absence and urging him to again become active. The names of all members who fail to express interest either through attendance or letter of testimony for a period of eighteen months shall be placed on the inactive roll by action of the Board of Elders. The above shall not apply to members physically prevented from active participation.

(2) Associate members shall be received in the same manner as regular members (see Article VI, Section B) but without privileges or right of holding elective offices. The Associate Membership Roll shall be composed of people of temporary residence, ordained or licensed ministers except those who are serving this pulpit as regular pastor(s) or Pastor Emeritus, and all others whose occupation, activity or personal circumstances prevent attendance at regular church services for a period of six months or more in any calendar year. Any regular member whose status changes sufficiently to come under this section shall be placed on the Associate Membership Roll by action of the Board of Elders. The above shall not apply to members physically prevented from active participation.

a. Any associate member whose status changes sufficiently may, upon written request, be placed upon the Active Membership Roll by action of the Board of Elders after consistent attendance at services for a period of at least one month from the date of the request.

b. Pastor(s) Emeritus: Former pastors of this church and their wives, expressing the desire to re-affiliate with the church during their retirement years may, upon the approval of the Board of Elders and the vote of the membership, be accepted as active members of the church with voting privileges. Such prior service to the church shall preclude the necessity of membership classes and testimonies. "Pastor Emeritus" is an honorary title, in appreciation for past service to the church. It confers no authority nor does it imply any responsibility in the church program. The pastor emeritus may be invited, from time to time, to participate in various ministries by the pastor and the Church Council, but shall not be eligible for office on the Church Council. At the same time, the congregation assures him and his wife of their continued, prayerful fellowship.

c. Associate members shall be permitted to teach a Bible School class or participate in a similar ministry such as committee membership, youth work, etc. They shall have the right to attend the business meetings of the church and participate in discussions, but not to vote.

(3) Inactive membership shall consist of the following:

a. Those who no longer have residence in this area, but still desire to hold their membership in this church.

b. Those who have been absent from the services of the church for a period of eighteen months without giving satisfactory reasoning for such absence.

c. Those who have come under some disciplinary action of the church.

d. Inactive members shall not have the right to vote or hold office in the church.

#### Section D – **Letters of Transfer**

(1) Letters of transfer shall be received from other churches, subject to the provisions of Article VI, Sections A and B.

(2) Letters of transfer to other churches shall be granted to those on the Active Membership Roll. Application for dismissal from this church and recommendation for membership in another church should be made by letter to the church clerk. Letters shall be granted by action of the Board of Elders.

(3) The names of those members who become members of another church without a letter of dismissal, shall be dropped from all rolls by a vote of the council.

#### Section E – **Discipline of Members**

(1) The reasons for discipline are threefold:

a. Doctrinal deviation, or heresy. *1 Tim. 6:3-5; Titus 3:10-11; Rom. 16:17-18.*

b. Immoral conduct. *1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 2 Thes. 3:6.*

c. Sowing discord within the church. *Prov. 6:16-19; 1 Pet. 4:15; 2 Thes. 3:11-12; 1 Tim. 5:13.*

(2) The discipline of this church in doctrinal and moral matters shall be entrusted to the pastor and Board of Elders. Any disciplinary action that is deemed necessary shall be in the spirit of love and meekness. *2 Thes. 3:14-15; Gal. 6:1.*

a. No accusation shall be brought against any member except upon the testimony of two or three witnesses. *Mt. 18:15-16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19.*

b. The suspected person shall be confronted with the charges with the desire and effort to correct the difficulty and restore proper fellowship. If this does not lead to restoration of fellowship, charges shall be put in writing and placed in the hands of the suspected person and he or she shall be summoned to meet the pastor and Board of Elders not later than two weeks subsequently. Failure on the part of the accused to appear will not prevent the Board from examining the information and rendering a verdict in accord with the testimony received. In the event the individual being disciplined is not satisfied with the decision of the Board, he or she will have the privilege of appearing before the congregation at a regularly called meeting. A simple majority vote of all members of the church present at the final hearing will make the final decision in the case.

c. Those who are guilty of doctrinal deviation or heresy and who refuse to repent of their error shall be deleted from the church roll. Those guilty of immoral conduct shall be placed on the Inactive Roll and forbidden to partake of the Lord's Supper (*1 Cor. 5:11-13*). Persistent immorality shall result in deletion from the church roll by action of the Board of Elders. The names of those whose status of membership has been changed shall be reported at the Sunday morning service, either by announcement from the pulpit or publication in the Sunday bulletin, indicating whether they have been placed on the Inactive Roll or deleted from the roll.

(3) The purpose of all discipline shall be to restore the individual to fellowship and active membership in the church. Such efforts shall be made in light of the following Scriptures: *Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Thes. 3:14-15; Heb. 10:24-25; Jas. 5:19-20*. Restoration to fellowship shall be granted upon due repentance by action of the Board of Elders and the pastor(s).

## ARTICLE VII – GOVERNMENT

### Section A – The Nature of the Government

The government of the church shall be vested in the active membership and executed, through the democratic process, by the elected Board of Elders, Board of Deacons, and the pastor. These officers shall comprise the voting members of the Church Council. Other officers may be appointed, boards formed and committees created as provided in these By-Laws as necessary to assure an orderly execution of church business.

### Section B – The Church Council

(1) The council shall be composed of the pastor, Board of Elders and Board of Deacons, as voting members. The chairwoman of the deaconesses, the Bible School superintendent, the treasurer, financial secretary and church clerk shall meet with the Church Council at regular meetings. The council may invite chairpersons of church committees or other individuals to participate without vote in council discussion.

(2) In the event there are less than three deacons, any three voting council members shall be designated as trustees for the purpose of handling legal matters. These trustees shall continue in office until their successors are elected and assume office.

(3) The council shall meet within two weeks after the annual meeting for organizational purposes. It shall meet thereafter at times designated at the first meeting, and at other times when deemed necessary upon the call of the chairman. The chairman shall be elected by the council from its membership for a term of one year. The pastor may be elected chairman.

(4) Special meeting of voting members only may be called by the chairman as necessary to discuss sensitive matters.

(5) All council members must be active members of this church. At the first meeting of the council following the annual meeting, all council members shall sign a statement indicating their unreserved agreement with the Constitution and By-Laws of this church. This signed statement shall be preserved with the records of the church by the church clerk.

(6) The qualifications set forth in *1 Tim. 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9*, as applicable to each office, shall be required of all members of the council.

(7) The term of office for elders, deacons, and deaconesses shall be for three years, and their election shall be so arranged by the Nominating Committee that all shall not terminate at the same time. Of this group, persons may be elected for up to two (2) consecutive terms of three (3) years each (elder, deacon and deaconess) subject to selection by the Nominating Committee, and a majority vote of the congregation.

(8) The council shall appoint from among the active membership for terms of one year a Bible School superintendent, a financial secretary and a church clerk to assist in church administration. Unless terminated by specific action of the council, these officers shall remain in office until the next council has met for organizational purposes following the annual meeting and has appointed a successor. These officers may succeed themselves if reappointed by the new council. The council may also appoint from among the active membership for terms not exceeding one year such other officers with functions to be specified as may be necessary for timely and orderly church administration and operation. No such appointed official may vote at council meetings unless already a council member.

(9) Duties of Council Members

a. The elders shall be responsible, with the pastor, for the spiritual guidance of the church. They shall arrange the details of all church meetings and perform all duties ascribed to them in other parts of these By-Laws. The Board of Elders shall function for the pastor in emergencies or when the church has no pastor.

b. The deacons shall administer all business matters of the church, to include preparation and administration of the budget. They shall function as trustees in all legal transactions and shall be responsible for the maintenance of all church property. They shall, with the pastor, minister to the needy and supervise the benevolent funds of the church. They shall supervise the work of the treasurer and financial secretary and provide substitutes in case of their absence. They shall also recommend to the church any paid staff positions as may be needed.

c. The deaconesses shall be responsible for assisting at baptismal services, preparation of the communion elements, supervision of the nursery, overseeing of the kitchen and aiding the pastor and Board of Deacons in ministering to the sick or bereaved. They shall serve under supervision of the Board of Deacons.

d. The Bible School superintendent shall exercise the general supervision of the Bible School as specified in Article VIII, Section C. He/she shall be chairperson of the Bible School Board. He/she shall be appointed by the Church Council from the active membership annually. He/she shall serve under supervision of the Board of Elders.

e. The treasurer shall receive, safeguard, disburse, and be responsible for all of the funds of the church in its various ministries and keep accurate accounts of the same. He/she shall be responsible for the timely deposit of all monies in the bank and shall submit a monthly report to the Board of Deacons and a quarterly report to the church. The treasurer shall be appointed by the Church Council from among the active membership, and may annually succeed himself/ herself upon appointment by the Church Council. The books of the treasurer shall be audited annually under the direction of the Board of Deacons.

f. The financial secretary shall assist the treasurer in the supervision of counting all offerings and keep a record of the same in a separate set of books. The record shall be audited annually along with the books of the treasurer. The financial secretary shall be appointed annually by the council from the active membership. He/she shall serve under the supervision of the Board of Deacons.

g. The church clerk shall keep official records of all congregational meetings, to include the annual meeting, of all council meetings and such other official records as the council may deem necessary for proper church administration. The church clerk shall be appointed annually by the council from the active membership.

h. Each outgoing council member shall assist his or her successor for one month following his election to office.

### Section C – Election of Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses

#### (1) Nominating Committee

a. A nominating committee, composed of the pastor and at least two council members and at least two other active members of the church, shall be appointed by the Church Council at a meeting held not later than three months prior to the annual meeting. The pastor shall serve as chairman of the committee. In the event the church is without a pastor, the chairman of the council shall take his place on the committee.

b. The committee shall meet to consider the qualifications for offices of all active members of the church. When the committee contacts those whom it believes are qualified to serve, it shall inform the prospective nominee that he/she is under consideration for nomination to the office involved and that the Nominating Committee desires to know if he/she is willing to accept the nomination. The prospective nominee shall be given sufficient time to review the duties and qualifications for the office and to seek God's guidance in accepting or rejecting the nomination.

c. When a prospective nominee indicates that he/she is willing to accept the nomination, the committee shall ask him/her the following questions which must be answered in the affirmative prior to placing his/her name on the recommended slate of candidates:

First: Have you read *I Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9*?

Second: Is it your purpose, God enabling you, to meet the standards of these Scriptures?

Third: Are you in accord with the Constitution and By-Laws of this church?

Fourth: Are you prepared, by God's grace, to fulfill the duties of your office as specified in the Constitution to the best of your ability if elected?

d. The committee shall recommend the number of elders, deacons and deaconesses to be elected and present a slate of candidates for all offices to be filled to the council not later than four weeks prior to the annual meeting.

e. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be announced from the pulpit and posted on the bulletin board two weeks prior to the annual meeting. Members of the church who object to any part of the report or who desire to nominate additional candidates shall notify the committee in writing within one week of the day the report appears with reasons for their action. All nominations must be approved by the Nominating Committee.

f. The Nominating Committee shall certify to the congregation at the annual meeting that the candidates named on the recommended slate, and additional candidates recommended to the Nominating Committee in accordance with paragraph "e" above are qualified for the office, have agreed to serve if elected, and have answered the questions given in paragraph "c" above in the affirmative.

#### (2) Election Procedure

Officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church. When there is more than one nominee for any office, voting shall be by secret ballot. A simple majority is required to elect all church officers except the pastor.

#### (3) Vacancies

In the event of an office being vacated after the annual meeting, the remaining members of the council may appoint a member to fill this office until the next annual meeting of the church.

#### (4) Assumption of Elective Offices

Officers elected at the annual meeting or appointed by the council to fill an elective office vacancy shall assume office with the first council meeting of the new fiscal year after the election, or at the next council meeting following his appointment.

### Section D – Committees

(1) Standing committees, to include a missions committee, for the administration of the various phases of the work, shall be designated and appointed by the Church Council at the first meeting following the annual meeting of the church.

(2) Special committees for short term service may be appointed as needed by the council or other duly constituted boards of the church.

(3) The appointment of all committees shall be reported to the church on the Sunday following the meeting at which they were appointed.

(4) All committees and organizations within the church shall be established with the approval of the Church Council, and shall be subject to its supervision. Each committee chairman or chairwoman shall be represented on the Church Council through an elder or a deacon as determined by the function of the committee or organization.

(5) Every committee and organization shall report periodically, or as requested, to the unit by which they were appointed and annually to the church.

#### Section E – Meetings

##### (1) Annual Meeting

a. The annual meeting of the membership shall be held in November, no later than the third Wednesday, during which new officers for the council and other elective positions shall be elected.

b. The agenda shall include the presentation of reports by the council, committees and other organizations under direction of the council and by the pastor; election of officers, and such other matters as are deemed necessary by the council.

(2) The Boards of Elders, Deacons, and Deaconesses, and the Church Council shall meet within two weeks after the annual meeting, and all other organization units within one month after the annual meeting for organization purposes. They shall at this time elect a chairperson and set a schedule for meetings throughout the year at regular intervals.

(3) Special business meetings of the membership may be held at any time upon call of the pastor, the council, or by written request to the council of twenty-five percent of the voting members of the congregation. The call of such a meeting and its purpose must be announced at the morning and evening services on two consecutive Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. Records of these announcements must be kept with the regular minutes of the business meetings of the church by the clerk.

(4) A quorum at the annual, or special meetings of the membership shall be thirty percent of all voting members. When less than fifty percent are present, a two-thirds majority shall be required to pass any measure.

##### (5) Absentee Ballots

a. Absentee ballots shall be permitted at the request of active members who expect to be absent from business meetings at which the following are to be voted upon; electing of officers; constitutional amendments; the call of a pastor, assistant pastor; dismissal of same; or capital expenditures in excess of \$1,000.00. See also Article XII.

b. Notification of meetings for which absentee ballots are permitted shall be made by the clerk only to those members who request it.

c. All absentee ballots must be received by the clerk before the meeting for which they are cast is called to order. They must be in written form and signed by the voter.

(6) The pastor shall preside at the annual meeting and all special business meetings. In the event of his absence the council shall appoint a chairman for the meeting.

(7) Regular Sunday morning and evening services shall be maintained for worship, Bible study and evangelism including Bible School sessions. Mid-week meetings for prayer and Bible study shall also be held.

#### Section F – **Arbitration Board**

(1) In the event the internal affairs of the church should reach a state of controversy in which is impossible to achieve peaceful negotiations between the pastor and the congregation and/or between factions in the membership, a Board of Arbitration shall be called in to aid in reaching a point of agreement.

(2) The board shall be composed of pastors of three independent churches named by the Board of Elders and approved by the congregation every two years. The Board of Arbitration shall have the privilege of calling in two additional qualified consultants.

(3) The Board of Arbitration shall be called in by a two-thirds majority vote by secret ballot of the council or by a petition presented to the council bearing the names of twenty-five percent of the voting membership.

(4) The decision of this board shall be binding upon the congregation and its conclusions must be accepted by all—with the following exceptions.

a. It has no power to change the Constitution or Doctrinal Statement, nor even to pass judgment on it. It must uphold the Constitution.

b. It has no power to dissolve the church, or to dispose of the church's property.

### **ARTICLE VIII – MINISTRY**

#### Section A – **Responsibility of the Membership**

(1) All members of this church shall be expected to participate in its ministry, in such measure as talents and circumstances enable them. Such service shall be voluntary and subject to the supervision of the pastor, Board of Elders, or appropriate committee.

(2) The members of this church are urged to cultivate those graces in their Christian lives that will glorify the Lord, promote spiritual growth, and further the ministry of the church. And they are further entreated:

a. To engage in private and family Bible reading, prayer and regular attendance at the services of the church. *Heb. 10:25; 1 Tim. 4:12-16.*

b. To practice daily living consistent with the scriptural principles of the Christian life; to abstain from worldliness in all its forms, avoiding such alliances which would constitute an unequal yoke with unbelievers, to guard against religious apostasy and false teaching. *Titus 2:11-15; 2 Cor. 6:14-7: 1; 1 Jn. 2:15-17.*

c. To fellowship in Christian love and unity with the entire membership so as to avoid the development of factions in the church. *1 Cor. 1:2; Jas. 2:1-5.*

#### Section B – **Leadership and Duties of the Pastor**

(1) Qualifications

- a. The pastor shall be a man who gives evidence of the call of God to the ministry of the Gospel and of adherence to the scriptural principles governing church leadership. He shall be recognized as the God-appointed leader of the congregation.
- b. Any man to be considered as a candidate for this pastorate shall have read these By-Laws and shall have signified in writing his unreserved agreement with their provisions and the nondenominational and independent position of this church.

(2) The Call of the Pastor

- a. The Church Council shall appoint a pulpit committee consisting of five persons to investigate possible candidates. Investigation of the candidate shall include a questionnaire regarding training, pastoral experience, and qualifications mentioned in Section B above. A visit by the members of the Pulpit Committee to his present pastorate is advisable when possible.
- b. When a qualified candidate has spoken at a minimum of two Sunday services, his name may be presented by the committee for a vote at a special congregational meeting called for this purpose. A three-quarters majority vote shall be required to extend a call. Only one candidate shall be considered at a time.
- c. Due consideration shall be given the qualifications of the candidate's wife (if married) as a prospective member of the church, before the candidate is recommended to the congregation. Upon the official call of the candidate as pastor, his wife shall automatically become a member of the church.

(3) Duties

- a. The pastor, by virtue of his office as spiritual leader and shepherd of the flock, automatically becomes a member of this church, and his duties shall be those generally associated with his office, including the ministry of the Word, administration of the ordinances, and the care of the spiritual welfare of the members. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and organizations within the church. No committee or board may meet without notifying him of their meeting but he shall not be required to attend all meetings.
- b. Activities and ministries outside the local field, such as attendance at conferences, Bible teaching and evangelistic campaigns, vacations, etc., shall be arranged in conference with the council.

(4) Termination

- a. The pastor's term of office shall be indefinite. A notice of sixty days shall be given to terminate, with remuneration and services continuing through this period, unless otherwise mutually agreed.
- b. A vote may be taken by the congregation at any time to terminate the pastor's services subject to the following:
  1. A special meeting may be called for that purpose in accordance with Article VII, Section E.

2. It shall be placed on the agenda of a regularly called meeting, provided that previous action has been taken by the council, or a petition of twenty-five percent of the membership has been presented to the council.

3. A two-thirds majority shall be required to terminate the pastor's services.

c. In the event of doctrinal or moral defection, the pastor's services and membership may be terminated immediately by action of the council to be ratified by a vote of the congregation with 30 days.

#### **Section C – Paid Staff Positions**

(1) The Board of Deacons may recommend to the Church Council the creation of paid staff positions as the need arises and finances are available. The recommendation shall include a job description setting forth the duties and responsibilities, qualifications, method of selection and salary range. Upon approval by the council, the recommendation shall be submitted to the membership at a regular business meeting.

(2) The recommended position shall be created by majority vote unless the council has specified a higher percentage in the recommended job description. Staff personnel shall be selected by and be responsible to the Church Council and/or such other persons/positions as defined in their job descriptions. Assistant, associate, and youth pastors, along with ministerial personnel shall be under the supervision of and responsible to the pastor.

#### **Section D – The Bible School Ministry**

(1) This ministry shall be recognized as an extension of the Bible teaching ministry of the church. It shall be administered by a board composed of the Bible School superintendent, the teaching staff and such officers as they may appoint, under supervision of the pastor and Board of Elders.

(2) The Bible School superintendent shall appoint the members of the teaching staff and all other Bible School officers. He/She shall fill all positions from among the active and associate membership when possible. All appointments shall be on a temporary basis until approved by the pastor and Board of Elders. Whenever possible, prior approval of the pastor and Board of Elders should be obtained.

(3) The curriculum of the Bible School must have the approval of the pastor and the Board of Elders.

(4) All regular Bible School offerings and expenses shall be handled through the general fund of the church. A record of all offerings deposited with the church treasurer, and all expenditures authorized by the Bible School Board shall be kept by the Bible School secretary. Missionary gifts or allocations made by the Bible School must have the approval of the Missions Committee.

#### **Section E – Missionary Activities**

(1) To insure the regular activity of the church in the cause of missions at home and abroad, a Missions Committee shall be appointed by the council at the first meeting following the annual meeting of the church.

(2) This committee is responsible to communicate with all mission fields and agencies in which the church has an interest and to investigate and report to the church on any matters requiring action.

(3) The Missions Committee shall make recommendations to the council regarding changes or additions to the church missionary program. All new commitments shall have church approval and shall be handled through an independent, fundamental, and reputable mission board or society. Every missionary regularly supported by this church shall annually sign a statement indicating unreserved agreement with these By-Laws and Doctrinal Statement. In such cases where the church has direct contact with the missionary and his field, the requirement regarding a mission board or society may be waived by congregational action at a regularly called meeting.

Should a situation arise in which a missionary already being supported by this church, or a missionary candidate asking to be considered for future support, is not in “unreserved agreement with these By-laws and Doctrinal Statement,” and is, therefore, unable to sign the above statement affirmatively, they will be required to submit the reasons for their disagreement in writing to the elders through the Missions Committee. The elders will then review the differences and make an informed judgment about continued or future financial support. Their recommendation will then be brought to the congregation for their approval.

(4) A stated missionary policy shall be adopted by the church and published with revisions from time to time.

## **ARTICLE IX – FINANCES**

### **Section A – Raising Finances for this Ministry**

The financial program of this church and its sub-organizations shall be supported through the freewill offerings and unsolicited gifts of those interested in its ministry.

### **Section B – Annual Budget Submission**

The deacons shall present a recommended budget for the coming year to the council at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting. This budget shall include a schedule of salaries and other allowances for the pastor and any other paid staff positions and such other expenses as can reasonably be anticipated. Upon approval of the recommended budget by the council, it shall be presented to the active membership at the annual meeting for adoption.

### **Section C – Loans and Expenditures**

Any loan, credit, missionary commitment or other expenditure in excess of \$1,000.00 above the liabilities approved at the last annual meeting must have congregational approval in accordance with Article VII, Section E.

### **Section D – Designated Funds**

- (1) Any temporary use of funds for purposes other than designated must have approval of the council.
- (2) If the purpose for which funds have been previously designated is to be changed, it must be done with congregational approval.
- (3) Gifts designated through the church for a specific purpose or person shall be applied as designated unless the donor approves a change. Otherwise, the gift shall be returned.

## **ARTICLE X – PROPERTIES**

### **Section A – Title of All Properties**

The title of all property of this church, both real and personal, shall be and remain vested in that portion of the active membership that shall remain faithful to the original purposes stated in Articles II and III of these By-Laws and in Articles IV and V of the Articles of Incorporation of this church.

### **Section B – Acquisition and Sale of Property**

(1) The church shall have power to acquire and hold property, both real and personal, for the general purpose of the church. All property so acquired shall be in the name of the church. The church may purchase property for future needs and collect rent or other income from such property until it is needed.

(2) Any purchase, sale, mortgage, or transfer of real or personal property valued in excess of \$1000.00 shall be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a special business meeting called in accordance with Article VII, Section E.

### **Section C – Use of Church Property**

(1) All properties belonging to the church (except those being leased or rented to other individuals or organizations until needed) shall be available to the membership, for purposes consistent with the ministry of the church, subject to regulation by the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons may allow other individuals or organizations to use church properties for purposes consistent with the ministry of the church. Fees for such use, if any, shall be set by the Board of Deacons.

(2) The pastor, council members or their designated representatives shall have access at all times and under all circumstances to all properties owned by the church.

### **Section D – Dissolution**

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall ever benefit any donor, member, director or officer of the corporation, nor shall any private individual be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporation assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the corporation must be distributed to the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, Inc. if it then exists and is exempt from federal income tax, otherwise to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as one organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes.

## **ARTICLE XI – ORDINATION AND LICENSING**

### **Section A – Composition and Function of a Council of Ordination**

(1) When, in the judgment of the Board of Elders, a man in this membership, or in special cases a non-member, is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the said board to call and conduct a Council of Ordination after the approval of the church has been obtained by vote. The council shall consist of at least six ordained Christian ministers, and, if possible, one lay delegate

from each fundamental church invited to participate. At least six churches must be represented by a minister or lay delegate.

(2) The Council of Ordination shall thoroughly examine the applicant regarding his personal Christian experience, call to the ministry, educational training, doctrinal belief, reputation, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service. The applicant shall give evidence of his agreement with those provisions of the Constitution of this church with respect to doctrine, independence of the local church, and scriptural qualifications for church leadership.

(3) Upon completion of the examination of the applicant, a two-thirds majority vote by the Council of Ordination shall be required to recommend his ordination to the church. When so recommended, a public ordination service shall be arranged by the Council of Ordination in consultation with the pastor or other representatives of the church and the applicant.

(4) The minutes of the Council of Ordination and of the public service shall be incorporated into the records of church meetings. A certificate of ordination and a copy of the minutes shall be provided by the church for the newly ordained minister.

#### **Section B – Discipline of Ordained Ministers**

(1) The Board of Elders shall have the power to discipline even to the revoking of the ordination credentials of any minister ordained under this Constitution, if the said minister is found guilty of doctrinal or moral defection after an impartial hearing conducted in the spirit of *1 Cor. 13*.

(2) The minister under discipline shall have the privilege of appealing to the congregation within sixty days after the decision of the board

#### **Section C – Licensing Men to the Gospel Ministry**

(1) The church, upon the recommendation of the Board of Elders, may issue a license for stated ministerial duties for a period of one year, to be extended for a longer period, at the discretion of the elders. The license is to be signed by the pastor and the church clerk.

(2) The applicant for such license shall meet the following requirements:

- a. He must be a member of this church.
- b. He must have at least one year of Bible training acceptable to this congregation.
- c. He must demonstrate evidence of a call to the Gospel ministry.
- d. There must exist a valid need for the license.

(3) This license may be revoked for cause by the Board of Elders in accord with the provisions of Section B.

### **ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS**

#### **Section A – Amendments to these By-Laws, Except Articles II, III, IV.**

These By-Laws may be amended to a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present, with the exception of Articles II, III, IV, at an annual or special meeting called for that purpose, provided that such amendment is presented in written form at least one month previous to the meeting and by public announcement as provided in Article VII, Section E.

**Section B – Amendments to By-Laws, Articles II, III, IV.**

Amendments of Articles II, III and IV shall require a unanimous consent of the entire voting membership, either present at a meeting called for that purpose or responding by written absentee ballots received prior to the meeting. Meetings called for this purpose will be by writing to the voting membership at least one month previous to the meeting and also by public announcement as provided in Article VII, Section E.

**ARTICLE XIII – ADOPTION AND TRANSITION**

**Section A – Adoption of By-Laws**

This Constitution and By-Laws is hereby adopted by the members of South Side Bible Church on October 26, 1978 and all other constitutions, by-laws and administrative procedures are hereby declared null and void.

**Section B – Transition Period**

A transitional period between the time of adoption and the next annual meeting shall be recognized during which the existing Board of Deacons under the former constitution will be designated by the Church Council. This board shall administer the provisions of this Constitution and by-laws insofar as possible in view of time and other limitations.