

CONSTITUTION OF  
COVENANT BAPTIST CHURCH  
SANTA CLARITA, CA

**ARTICLE 1: Name**

The name of this church is Covenant Baptist Church (CBC), Santa Clarita, CA.

**ARTICLE 2: Goal of this Constitution**

The goal of this Constitution is to identify the purpose of CBC and to outline its priorities and procedures, making for a well-ordered church (1 Cor. 14:40 and Col. 2:5).

**ARTICLE 3: Purpose of CBC**

The purpose of CBC is to glorify God (Eph. 3:21) by conducting the following:

- A. Public worship in accordance with the revealed will of God, the Bible;
- B. Proclamation of the whole counsel of God, both law and gospel, for the edification of believers and the evangelization of the lost;
- C. Active involvement in evangelism and missions/church-planting, locally, nationally, and abroad, either on our own or in cooperation with other like-minded churches.

**ARTICLE 4: Covenant**

- A. Our New Covenant Confidence

God has graciously and sovereignly entered into a New Covenant with His people (Jer. 31:31-34; 32:40; Heb. 8:7-13; 10:16-17; 13:20-21). He has done this through the work of Jesus Christ (Heb. 8:6). Christ's obedience and blood infallibly secure all of the benefits of the New Covenant for His people (Matt. 26:26-28; Heb. 13:20-21). By making us members of the one body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27), the New Covenant lays upon us responsibilities, not only to God, but also to each other. In this covenant God writes His law upon our hearts and causes us to walk in His ways (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:27). Thus, both the direction of our obedience and our ability to obey spring from the work of Jesus Christ and are gracious gifts of God. Christ purchased for us the Holy Spirit, by whose gift of faith we obey, not to establish our own righteousness before God, but to express our gratitude for grace. We confess that we were guilty before God (Eph. 2:1-3), that He has been gracious to us in Christ (Eph. 2:4-10), and that we owe Him gratitude (Col. 1:12). We show Him gratitude through our obedience. CBC exists on the basis of this New Covenant

and as a local expression of the power and grace of God in that covenant. In our church covenant we expressly renew the New Covenant, confessing both our joyful faith in the God of that covenant and our willing embrace of its obligations. These New Covenant obligations require that we love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. By the grace of that covenant and in accordance with God's law written on our hearts, we dedicate ourselves to the following commitments as tokens of gratitude for grace lavished upon us in Christ (Eph. 1:8).

#### B. Our New Covenant Commitments

1. We agree to worship the one, true, and living God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), who has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We will declare His glory to the nations and have no other gods before Him.
2. We agree to worship God in His appointed way, only through the mediation of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We will exclude from our worship anything that He has not appointed. We will observe the sacraments or ordinances of the New Covenant, baptism and the Lord's Supper, not forsaking but carefully and conscientiously attending all the meetings of the church, except where legitimately hindered, practicing regular private devotions as well as family worship, and uniting with another faithful church when we move from this place.
3. We agree not to use the name of the Lord our God lightly or to take it upon ourselves carelessly. Instead, we will adorn the triune name of God we have taken upon ourselves in baptism and labor with zeal for the fame of His name and gospel of His beloved Son.
4. We agree to cease from our own works on the Lord's Day, Sunday, unless they are works of necessity or mercy. We will sanctify the day by consistently attending the meetings of the church, fellowshiping with one another in our homes, performing acts of mercy, and engaging in private devotions and family worship.
5. We agree to honor and obey, within the bounds of Scripture, all our superiors, whether in family, church, state, or business; and, if we be superiors, to deal reasonably and lovingly with our subordinates and thus to teach them by word and example to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. We promise to resist the spirit of our age, especially with regard to the ordinance of marriage—as wives, respectfully submitting to our husbands and, as husbands, tenderly loving our wives as Christ loved the church; including upholding the historical definition of marriage as the union of one genetically born man and one genetically born woman.
6. We agree to avoid whatever tends to destroy us or our neighbors and to engage vigorously in all lawful endeavors to preserve our own lives and the lives of others. We will walk together in brotherly love, caring for one another, bearing one another's burdens, watching over each other, faithfully admonishing one another, promptly repenting when we have sinned against one another, and not abusing our Christian liberties to our own harm or that of our brethren.
7. We agree to possess our bodies in holiness as vessels joined to Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, to avoid all uncleanness of thought, speech, or <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>action, and

- to bear witness against the uncleanness and sensuality of our age.
8. We agree to be diligent in our callings, in order that we may provide for our own households, avoid theft of time, money, or goods, give tithes and offerings to the church, provide for the needy, and support the advancement of the gospel.
  9. We agree earnestly to promote truth among men, to avoid anything that would prejudice the truth or injure our neighbor's good name, to promote the unity of the Spirit by our words and prayers, and to avoid all gossip as undermining such unity.
  10. We agree to be fully content with our own condition in life, to delight in the advancement of our neighbor, to avoid envying him or coveting anything that is his, and to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

### **ARTICLE 5: Confession of Faith**

We confess that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the word of God written and the only infallible authority for the church. Our understanding of the major doctrines of the Bible is contained in *The Second London Confession of Faith – 1677/89* (2<sup>nd</sup> LCF). The 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF serves as our doctrinal statement, subordinate to the infallible authority of Scripture. This church maintains a position of full subscription to the Confession and requires the same of all its office-bearers.

### **ARTICLE 6: Membership**

#### A. Basis

Though the *word* membership is not found in the New Testament, the concept is. The New Testament doctrine of church membership is based on at least five biblical considerations:

1. The church at Jerusalem could be numbered (Acts 2:40-41, 47).
2. The church at Jerusalem could be joined (Acts 5:11-13; 9:26-28).
3. The duties of the pastoral ministry (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17).
4. The mutual duties of Christians and pastors (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13).
5. The discipline of the church (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 2:6).

#### B. Prerequisites

1. A credible profession of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Jer. 31:33-34; Acts 2:41; 9:26-27; 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 26:2).
2. Baptism by immersion in accordance with the command of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20) and the practice of the New Testament church (Acts 2:41). See also 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 28:1 and 29:1-4.
3. A general understanding of the Confession of Faith and complete agreement to its formulations of the doctrines of Scripture (2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 1), the Trinity (2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 2), the Deity of Christ (2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 8:2-3), justification by faith alone in Christ alone

(2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 11), the last day judgment, resurrection, and eternal state (2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 31 and 32).

4. A willingness to promote the unity and wellbeing of the church by submitting to its government (2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 27).
5. A thorough understanding of and commitment to this constitution.
6. A letter of commendation from the applicant's previous church, if possible.

#### C. Process

1. The desire to start the membership process should be verbally expressed to an elder or a member of the Steering Committee (SCM) (see ARTICLE 7).
2. The elder or SCM will provide the interested person(s) with the Preliminary Application. Upon receiving the completed application, the elder or SCM will review it, assessing whether any answers need clarification or correction. Once the application is approved, the elder or SCM will announce the applicant(s)' name(s) to the congregation at the next church meeting and the answers will be provided to the membership. This will help the church to get to know the applicant(s) and to rejoice with them in God's salvation. At this time, the applicant(s) will be invited to partake of the Lord's Supper as "those seeking membership."
3. The applicant(s) will be provided with a copy of the church's confession and constitution. Additionally, each applicant must meet with an elder, a group of elders, or the Steering Committee to determine if they meet the necessary prerequisites for membership (Acts 9:26-27). These meetings may be conducted over several sessions, covering essential membership information as outlined in the constitution.
4. If any current member becomes aware of serious concerns regarding the applicant's meeting the prerequisites as listed in section B above, they should address these concerns directly with the applicant in private. If the applicant refuses to address known sin(s) biblically, the elder or SCM should be notified immediately.
5. Current members will have no less than one month to get to know applicants and discuss those applicants with an elder or steering committee member thereby assisting them in their task of ascertaining the spiritual state of the applicant.
6. When all requirements and timelines are fulfilled then the applicant will be provided the Consent to Fellowship form.
7. When the Consent to Fellowship form is returned a congregational vote (see ARTICLE 6) shall be conducted to receive the applicant into the membership of the church.

#### D. Requirements

1. Regular attendance at Lord's Day meetings (Exod. 20:8-11; Isa. 56:1-8; 58:1-

- 14; Jer. 31:33; Matt. 28:20; Mark 2:27-28; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 10:24-25; Rev. 1:10) unless providentially hindered due to sickness or works of necessity or mercy. Lord's Day meetings, the annual business meeting (see ARTICLE 11), and periodic business meetings (see ARTICLE 12).
2. Joyful service in the church as the need arises (Rom. 12:13; Gal. 6:10; Tit. 3:14; 1 Pet. 4:7-11; 1 Tim. 2:1-8; 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 27). Members are expected to be involved with the life and ministries of the church (2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 26:6). Though it is realized that not every member can be involved with everything nor are they expected to, members will respect the ministries of the church and do their part when opportunity arises.
  3. Cheerful and regular financial support of the church (Prov. 3:9-10; 1 Cor. 9:1-14; 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 6:6-8; 1 Tim. 5:3-18; 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 26:10).
  4. Consistent private (Ps. 1; Prov. 8:34; Matt. 6:5-15; John 17:17) and family worship (Duet. 6:6-9; Josh. 24:14-15; Jer. 10:25; Eph. 5:25-27; 6:4).
  5. Periodic pastoral oversight meetings for spiritual accountability (Acts 20:20, 28; 1 Pet. 5:2-3; 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 26:10). For a description of a pastoral oversight meeting see ARTICLE 7.

#### E. Voting

The Holy Scriptures indicates that the New Testament church had a means whereby the whole congregation expressed its mind on a given issue.

1. In Acts 6:3 the Jerusalem church was told to select seven men in their midst. This demands some way of publicly identifying these men.
2. In 2 Corinthians 2:6, Paul clearly indicates that the majority of the church membership enacted church discipline upon a brother. This indicates that church decisions demand a majority approval in order to pass the issue at hand.
3. In Acts 15:22, the church was included in the process of determining whether to send men out from the church in Jerusalem to the church in Antioch.

With these things considered, we will vote on 1) prospective officers, 2) issues of church discipline, 3) the sending out of laborers, 4) and corporate, administrative issues such as: constitutional amendments, the church calendar and yearly budget, financial expenditures outside the yearly budget, and any issue determined by the elder, elders, or the steering committee which affect the whole body (2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 26:7 and 9).

All members in good standing are expected to vote. The New Testament indicates that the local church made corporate decisions by a simple majority (2 Cor. 2:6). Therefore, all voting issues of this church will be considered passed by a simple majority approval.

Unanimity is desired in all church votes though not mandatory and not always attainable. If there are no clear biblical or constitutional reasons why the vote of the majority ought to be given the consent of the minority, then submission to the

majority will be given (Rom. 12:10, 16; 14:19; 2 Cor. 2:6; Eph. 5:21; Heb. 13:17).

Under normal circumstances, voting will be conducted via written ballot. The elder, elders, or the steering committee shall determine if, when, and how absentee ballots shall be received.

In order for a vote to stand, 75% of the members in good standing must participate. The elder, elders, or the steering committee shall determine when voting for any issue is necessary. All voting will take place at a properly called business meeting of the church as outlined in ARTICLE 11 and ARTICLE 12.

If any voting member believes either the Bible or the Constitution has been violated in the process of a church vote, he, she, or they can begin the appeal process as outlined in ARTICLE 10.

#### F. Withdrawal

Any member wishing to withdraw his or her membership must provide a letter of withdrawal to the elder, elders, or the steering committee. Letters of withdrawal must be submitted immediately upon the desire to withdraw membership. Approval is pending the consent of the elder, elders, or the steering committee. No withdrawal shall be granted to any member while under discipline, facing discipline, or with unresolved issues with the church.

#### G. Removal

There are three ways a member may be removed from membership (death, discipline, and lack of commitment):

1. **Death:** When a member of the church is removed from our midst by physical death, the elder, elders, or the steering committee shall remove his name from the membership roll. Removal from membership due to death does not require a vote of the church.
2. **Discipline:** See ARTICLE 9. Removal from membership for disciplinary purposes requires a vote of the church.
3. **Lack of Commitment:** The elder, elders, or the steering committee may suggest to the congregation the removal of any member of the church who has been absent from church meetings, without legitimate reason, for four (4) consecutive weeks. Removal from membership for lack of commitment requires a vote of the church.

#### H. Provisional Membership

Based on 2 LCF 1.6 provisional membership status may be granted in the following cases:

1. Difficult providential circumstances whereby a member is unable to meet the requirements of regular membership. Some conditions which may necessitate a provisional membership include:
  - a. Moving to another geographic area and being unable to join a local church in good conscience
  - b. Moving to another geographic area on a temporary, but extended (more than 6 months) basis (i.e., for work or educational purposes)
  - c. A woman married to an unbeliever
  - d. A man married to an unbeliever
  - e. Health reasons.
2. Minor members those who make a credible profession of faith and have been baptized but have not yet reached the age of sixteen.
  - a. Accordingly, after their sixteenth birthday, those originally received as provisional members must complete the Consent to Fellowship document followed by a vote of the membership to be received as voting members of the church.
  - b. If those originally received as minor members do not take this step upon reaching their eighteenth birthday, then, after a reasonable period of time, the elders will speak with them about the matter. If, after pastoral encouragement, they do not apply for voting church membership, the elders will recommend their removal from the membership of the church as prescribed in Section H of this Article.
3. Any person who is a member in good standing in a church of like faith and practice.
  - a. Eligible candidates include anyone who is a temporary resident of the area. Candidates must provide a letter of recommendation and approval from their home church. They shall be subject to the government and discipline of this church. Once their business is completed and they leave this area, their associate membership is dissolved. No formal resignation will be required.

Those granted provisional membership are not permitted to vote. The elder, elders, or the steering committee will determine the specific requirements of membership for those granted this status on a case-by-case basis. Except for baptized minors, provisional membership, along with its requirements, requires a vote of the church.

### **ARTICLE 7: Government**

We hold to a plural elder lead, congregational rule form of church government. CBC derives its authority to exist and function from its head, our Lord Jesus Christ. This authority is mediated through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, ministered to the church by its elder(s). CBC elects its own officers and carries out its own discipline.

- A. Headship: Jesus Christ alone is head of His church (Col. 1:18).
- B. Officers: Jesus Christ has appointed and in time will give the necessary gifts to and call certain men in order to lead and guide each local church (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-5). Christ has appointed two offices to fulfill these tasks: that of elder, overseer, or pastor and that of deacon.

1. Description

- a. Elders/Overseers/Pastors (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 20:17, 28; Eph. 4:11; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1, 2; 4:14; 5:17, 19; Tit. 1:5, 7; Jms. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-5).
- 1) Qualifications: 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5 and full agreement with this constitution and full subscription to the 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF.
  - 2) Number: The Scriptures indicate that local churches ought to have a plurality of elders (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:1-5). Though a church may exist and function with one elder (or with no elders), because of the normative precedent in the New Testament, prayer to Christ for a plurality of elders ought to be offered by the church until such is attained. After a plurality is obtained, we will add elders as <sup>[T]</sup>~~[SEP]~~needed and provided by Christ (Acts 6:1-4; Eph. 4:11).
  - 3) Responsibilities:
    - a) Preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17): All elders must be able to teach. However, some elders are more equipped for preaching and public ministry than others.
    - b) Ruling (1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17)
    - c) Shepherding/oversight (1 Pet. 5:2-3): All elders will be responsible to be available to the members of the church for biblical counseling. Also, all elders will be responsible to conduct pastoral oversight meetings with the members of the church. A pastoral oversight meeting involves a pastor or pastors meeting with all the members of the church on an individual or family basis at least once per year for accountability, counseling, and prayer.
- b. Deacons (Acts 6:3-4; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13).
- 1) Qualifications: 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and full agreement with this constitution and full subscription to the 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF.
  - 2) Number: The Scriptures indicate that the local church ought to have a <sup>[T]</sup>~~[SEP]~~plurality of deacons (Acts 6: 3-4; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). Though a church may exist and function with one deacon (or with no deacons), because of the normative precedent in the New Testament, prayer to Christ for a plurality of deacons ought to be offered by the church until such is attained. After a plurality is obtained, we will add deacons as needed and provided by Christ (Acts 6:1-4).
  - 3) Responsibilities:
    - a) General service to the church: This includes the upkeep of the public place of worship and the administration of service by the members.
    - b) General administration of funds: This includes keeping books on



total offerings and individual offerings, as well as monthly and annual accounting, and assisting the elder(s) with the annual church budget.

- c) Misc.: Anything that would help the elders to concentrate upon more pastoral matters (Acts 6:4).

## 2. Appointment

As the need arises, the elder(s), deacon(s), and/or steering committee will ask the members of the church to prayerfully look out among themselves for a man or men qualified to fill the appropriate office(s). This will be done at the discretion of the elder, elders, or steering committee and will be called an advisory ballot. The name of a man or men may be suggested to the congregation by the elder(s), deacon(s), and/or steering committee. This advisory ballot will be taken in writing. If the advisory ballot indicates that the congregation is substantially unified, the elder, elders, or steering committee may call for a vote of the church. All candidates for office (except when the church constitutes itself) must have been members for at least six months before being considered for either office.

- a. Nomination: The members of the church select the man or men for the office(s) (Acts 6:3). This will be done through a properly conducted vote of the church (see ARTICLE 6). This point of the process is called nomination.
- b. Investigation: Once selected to fill either office, the candidate will undergo a two-month period of personal, domestic, and ministerial testing in accordance with 1 Timothy 3:10.
- c. Confirmation: At the end of the two-month period, the church shall vote on the candidate(s). Once the candidate has been voted into office, an ordination to office will be conducted.
- d. Ordination: The elders appoint the man to the office(s) (Acts 6:1-5; 1 Tim. 4:14). This will be conducted before the congregation with prayer and laying on of hands. This church reserves the right to call in pastors from other churches to assist it in the ordination of any of its officers. The elder(s), deacon(s), and/or steering committee will propose an ordination council to the congregation if the need arises. All ordination councils comprised of members outside of this church must be approved by a properly conducted vote of the church.
- e. Duration: All appointments are indefinite. The elder(s), deacon(s), and/or steering committee will examine proposed resignations individually. Disqualification occurs when the standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, or 1 Timothy 3:8-13 are not upheld or when full agreement with this constitution and full subscription to the 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF can no longer be affirmed. If any elder desires to serve elsewhere in a ministerial capacity, the church shall be informed at the annual business meeting or at a properly called periodic business meeting. Permission to be released must be secured by a properly conducted vote of the church.

## 3. Remuneration

The elder(s), with the assistance of the deacon(s) and/or steering committee, shall discuss among themselves who ought to be remunerated and the amount

of that remuneration (1 Cor. 9:9-11; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). They shall then present a proposal to the congregation at a properly called business meeting of the church to be voted upon by the church. Any changes in remuneration will be presented to the church for discussion and vote. This will normally be done at the annual business meeting.

4. Confirmation

- a. In order to ensure that the office bearers are upholding the biblical and constitutional standards for qualifications, the elder(s) shall conduct yearly confirmation meetings with each officer. The results of these meetings will be brought before the church at the annual business meeting in the form of a brief letter. If the church is ever left with only one elder, the deacons or steering committee shall conduct the confirmation meeting with the sole elder and give the report to the church. Along with this, the members are encouraged to go to office bearers as members with concerns and use pastoral visitations for counsel on these matters. All annual confirmation reports will be received into the official documents of the church by a properly conducted vote of the church.
- b. Upon a motion of the Church and a properly conducted vote of the church the elder(s) will be interviewed by a board of three pastors from three sister churches to ensure that he/they are maintaining a full subscription view of the Confession and are still fully committed to this Constitution. The elder(s), deacon(s), and/or steering committee will propose the board members to the church at the annual business meeting. Approval of the proposed board members requires a properly conducted vote of the church. The results of these interviews will be brought before the church at the annual business meeting in the form of a brief letter. All annual confirmation reports will be received into the official documents of the church by a properly conducted vote of the church.

5. Special situations:

- a. If CBC is ever in the position of having one pastor and no deacons, a temporary steering committee will be formed of at least three male members of the church. The purpose of the steering committee is for accountability for the pastor and assistance in the administration of church affairs that would normally be handled by pastors and/or deacons. The pastor will propose the committee members to the congregation at a meeting of the church. Approval of the proposed steering committee requires a properly conducted vote of the church. Once the church acquires a plurality of elders or a deacon or deacons, the steering committee will be dissolved immediately.
- b. If CBC is ever in the position of having no elders and no deacons or no elders and only one deacon, a temporary steering committee will be formed of at least three male members of the church. The purpose of the steering committee is for the administration of church affairs that would normally be handled by pastors and deacons. The church will meet to discuss prospective committee members. Approval of the steering committee requires a properly conducted vote of the church. Once the church acquires a plurality of elders or deacons, or one elder and one deacon, the steering committee will be

dissolved immediately.

### **ARTICLE 8: Sacraments**

A sacrament or ordinance is a commanded act, ordained by Jesus Christ while on the earth, recorded in the New Testament, a means of grace to those with true faith in Christ, and to be obeyed by His churches until He comes in glory to judge the living and the dead. We hold that there are two sacraments or ordinances for the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

#### **A. Baptism**

Only believers or confessed disciples are proper candidates for baptism. Baptism will be conducted accordingly, by immersion, "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19), to confessed disciples. The local church alone has authority to baptize. We will baptize new believers and those coming into membership who have not been baptized accordingly.

#### **B. The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for local churches to participate in (Matt. 28:20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF 28 and 30). Local churches alone have the authority to administer the Lord's Supper. It is for the members of local churches. We will allow the Lord's Supper to be taken by our members in good standing and to members in good standing of other biblical churches. We view the Lord's Supper as a means of grace to all believers in Christ who partake. We will participate in the Lord's Supper on a weekly basis for the spiritual nurture of our souls.

### **ARTICLE 9: Discipline**

Biblical church discipline shall be carefully conducted by each member according to the Scriptures. The elder(s) should be contacted if any member thinks that an issue may be worth considering for public discipline. If there are no elders in the church, a deacon(s) or steering committee member should be contacted. The elder(s), and in the case of the absence of elders, the deacon(s) or steering committee, shall administrate any discipline that necessitates public disclosure of a non-repentant brother or sister. There are two types of discipline we will conduct:

#### **A. Formative Discipline**

Formative discipline involves the use of all the means ordained by God to discipline or develop our souls unto godliness.

1. Personal: The Word of God (Psa. 1; Pr. 8:34; Jn. 17:17); prayer (Matt. 6:5-15; Luke 18:1); fasting (Matt. 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; 1 Cor. 7:5[NKJV]); and the mortification of sin (Matt. 18:8-9; Rom. 8:13; 1 Pet. 2:11)
2. Reciprocal: member to member (Rom. 12:10; 14:19; 15:7, 14; 1 Cor. 12:25; Gal. 5:13; 6:2; Eph. 4:2, 32; Phil. 2:3; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:18; 5:11, 15; Heb. 3:12, 13; 10:24; Jms. 5:16; 1 Pet. 4:9-10), people to pastors (1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17) and pastors to people (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-3).

## B. Corrective Discipline

Corrective discipline involves the use of all the means ordained by God to discipline our soul against sinfulness.

1. Personal sins (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 2:6; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14)
2. Public sins (Matt. 18:15-17; Rom. 16:17-19; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 2:6; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Tim. 4:7; Titus 3:10)

Corrective discipline will be applied after the elder(s), deacon(s) or steering committee have presented the case to the voting members and upon a properly conducted vote of the church. Discipline shall be removed by a properly conducted vote of the church.

Public, corrective discipline may take any of the following forms: verbal censure (Matt. 18:17; Rom. 16:17-19; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Tit. 3:10); verbal censure with the removal of some membership privileges (2 Thess. 3:14-15); or excommunication—the removal of a person from the communion of the saints or church membership (Matt. 18:17; Rom. 16:17-19; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; Tit. 3:10). The specific passages to be applied will be determined by the elder(s), deacons(s) or steering committee. Any censures placed upon an excommunicated person will depend on the reasons for discipline on a case by case basis.

This church reserves the right to publicly censure non-members in accordance with Romans 16:17-19. All public censures of non-members must be approved by a vote of the church.

## **ARTICLE 10: Process of Appeal**

In the case that members believe they have been treated unjustly by the church or her elder(s), either in points of doctrine or administration, the process of appeal below shall be followed.

- A. In cases of public discipline enacted by the church or unresolved issues of discipline
  1. A written appeal is to be made to the church and presented to the elder(s) by the appealing party. If the elder(s) is/are convinced that the appeal has merit, he/they

- will take the appeal to the church for discussion. If the elder(s) is/are convinced that the appeal does not have merit, the appealing party has the liberty to drop the matter or proceed to step 2 below.
2. An appeal is to be made to the association of churches or (if CBC does not belong to an association of churches) to the Confirmation board (see ARTICLE 7). If an appeal is made to the association of churches, the appealing party must follow the appeal process of the Constitution of the association. If this option is pursued, the elder(s) must inform the congregation of the appeal.
- B. In cases of a member's perceived doctrinal deviation from the Bible or 2<sup>nd</sup> LCF and/or perceived practical deviation from the Constitution by the elder(s)
1. A written appeal is to be made to the elders(s). Due diligence is to be given in order to clear up any perceived compromises in the elder(s) by the elder(s). If the appealing party is not satisfied with the elder's(s') response, he has the liberty to proceed to step 2 below.
  2. A written appeal is to be made to the church and presented to the elder(s) by the appealing party. The elder(s) will take the appeal to the church for discussion.
  3. The church will present the case to the association of churches or the Confirmation board for advice.
  4. After receiving and considering advice, if the church believes the appeal has merit, the elder(s) will be confronted by the church. If the elder(s) acknowledge(s) the doctrinal and/or practical deviation, he/they should be rebuked before all (1 Tim. 5:20). Depending on the gravity of the deviation(s), the elder(s) may have to step down from his/their office. This will be determined by a properly conducted vote of the church.

### **ARTICLE 11: Annual Business Meeting**

On a designated day in December of each year, the church shall hold its annual business meeting. All members are expected to attend. It will be conducted by the elders with the assistance of the deacon(s), or the steering committee and appointed members, if necessary. In the case where the church has no elders, the deacons and/or steering committee will conduct the meeting. The budget and church calendar for that year will be presented by one of the church officers, steering committee or an appointed delegate, and be discussed and voted on by the congregation. The elder(s) shall give pastoral reports concerning the past and current year. The deacon(s) or steering committee will present a financial report. The financial report will include an account of the previous year's expenditures and the budget for the next year. All reports must be voted on by the church to be placed in the church records. An Annual Business Meeting packet (i.e., agenda, calendar, budget, confirmation letters, etc.) shall be prepared by the elder(s) or deacon(s) and/or steering committee and handed out to the members of the church at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

### **ARTICLE 12: Periodic Business Meetings**

When necessary, the elder(s), deacon(s), or steering committee shall call for a meeting of the church. All members are expected to be present at these meetings. These types of meetings are necessary at times to deal with important issues related to the government of the church.

#### **ARTICLE 13: Corporate Status**

This church will be organized under the Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law exclusively for religious purposes in accordance with the laws of the state of California. Both its organization and operations are exclusively for religious purposes. This corporation is a member-type non-profit religious corporation.

#### **ARTICLE 14: Ecclesiastical Association and Accountability**

This church reserves the right to join confessional, Reformed Baptist associations of churches. Our affiliation with these associations is voluntary and must be approved by the church through a congregational vote. We relinquish no local autonomy by this affiliation. The benefit of belonging to an association is cooperation and accountability.

#### **ARTICLE 15: Amendments**

Amendments to the Constitution will be written by the elder(s), deacons(s), or steering committee and presented to the church in written form. All members are expected to understand the proposed amendment thoroughly. If the proposed amendment is not clear to a member, it is the responsibility of that member to approach an elder(s), deacon(s), or steering committee member for clarification. An amendment(s) must be passed by a properly conducted vote of the church.

#### **ARTICLE 16: Limitations**

This document does in no way pretend to be exhaustive or infallible. Issues not covered in the Constitution will be handled by the elder(s), deacon(s), or steering committee as the occasion demands.

#### **ARTICLE 17: Dissolution**

Upon the liquidation, dissolution or abandonment of this organization, its assets, remaining after payment or provision of payment of all debts and liabilities, shall be distributed to a non-profit organization organized and operated for religious purposes.