

**CONSTITUTION**  
**of the**  
**CLEVELAND BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Brooklyn, Ohio**

***Article One: Name***

The correct legal name of this church is the Cleveland Bible Baptist Church. The church is commonly known as the Cleveland Baptist Church.

***Article Two: Purpose***

The Cleveland Baptist Church is organized to establish and maintain religious worship of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, according to His Holy Word, the Bible. Such religious worship includes, but is not limited to:

1. The evangelization of the world through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. The building up of believers in the Christian faith through the preaching and teaching of God's Holy Word.
3. The administration of the biblical ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.
4. The fellowship of God's people.
5. The building, maintaining, and operation of religious ministries for the purpose of religious worship including, but not limited to, the following: churches, parsonages, bus ministries, preschools, schools, Bible institutes and colleges, tape ministries, print ministries, radio stations and programming, television stations and programming, rescue missions, Bible camps, cemeteries, nursing homes, retirement centers, and ordaining and licensing men to the Gospel ministry.
6. Any other religious ministries which God may lead the church to establish, maintain, and operate for the furtherance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to aid in equipping Christians to propagate that gospel message.

The Cleveland Baptist Church is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes which is inclusive in Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or subsequent revisions).

***Article Three: Statement of Faith***

**Concerning the Scriptures:** We believe that the Holy Bible was written inerrant in its original languages by men divinely inspired, and it is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction (II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:21); that it has God for its author, salvation for its end (II Timothy 3:15), and truth without any mixture of error for its matter (Proverbs 30:5,6); that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us (Romans 2:12); and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried (I John 4:1).

- By "the Holy Bible" we mean that collection of sixty-six books from Genesis to Revelation which does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but IS the very Word of God<sup>1</sup>.
- By "inspiration" we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:19-21) in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> We believe also that God has preserved His Word to the English-speaking people in the King James Version, first published in the year 1611. Because of that act of preservation, we possess in our language the inerrant, infallible Word of God. This 1611 King James Version shall be the only Bible that we as a church will use for all worship and teaching.

<sup>2</sup> Concerning other modern translations: The King James Version was translated from the text commonly referred to as the Majority Text, or Textus Receptus. We realize that most current modern versions, with the exception of the King James Version, are derived

**Concerning the true God:** We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God; an infinite, intelligent, perfect Spirit and personal Being; the Creator, Preserver, and Supreme Ruler of the Universe (John 4:24); inexpressibly glorious in holiness (Exodus 15:11) and all other perfections, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love (Mark 12:30); that in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19); equal in every Divine perfection (John 10:30), and executing distinct, but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Ephesians 2:18).

**Concerning the fall of man:** We believe that man was created by the special act of God, as recorded in Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7. We believe that man was created in a state of holiness, under the law of his Maker, but through the temptation of Satan, he voluntarily transgressed and fell from this holy state (Genesis 3:6-24) in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners (Romans 5:19), not by constraint, but choice (Isaiah 53:6), being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin (Ephesians 2:13) without defense or excuse (Ezekiel 18:19-20).

**Concerning the way of Salvation:** We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace (Ephesians 2:8), through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God (John 3:16) Who pre-existed (John 8:58) and Who, by the appointment of the Father, and Who, by the Holy Spirit was conceived and born of the virgin Mary, freely took upon Him man's nature, yet without sin (Philippians 2:6,7); honored the Divine law by his perfect obedience (Hebrews 1:8), and after a miraculous ministry, by His death made a full atonement for our sins (Isaiah 53:4,5); that having risen from the dead bodily He is now enthroned in heaven (Hebrews 1:8), to reign in eternal sovereignty and uniting in His wonderful Person the tenderest sympathies with Divine perfections, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate and all-sufficient Saviour and Lord (Hebrews 7:25).

**Concerning justification:** We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ (John 1:16) secures to such as believe in Him is *justification* (Acts 13:39); that *justification* includes the forgiveness of sin (Romans 5:9), and the promise of eternal life on the principles of righteousness (Romans 5:17); that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood (Romans 4:4,5); by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God (Romans 5:19); that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity (Romans 5:1, 2).

**Concerning the freeness of Salvation:** We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel (Isaiah 55:1); that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith (Romans 16:25, 26); and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth (John 5:41) but his own inherent depravity and voluntary aggravated condemnation (John 3:19).

**Concerning grace in regeneration:** We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated or born again (John 3:3); that regeneration consists of giving a holy disposition to the soul (II Corinthians 5:17); that it is effected, in a manner above our comprehension, by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with Divine truth (John 3:8), so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel (I Peter 1:22-25); and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life (Ephesians 5:9).

**Concerning repentance and faith:** We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God (Mark 1:15); whereby, being deeply convinced of

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from different manuscript families. We believe that these manuscripts have been corrupted and therefore not a worthy or sufficient manuscript for translation. While there are similarities, there are also great differences between the Majority Text and these other texts; and these differences are sufficient enough to cause doctrinal dissension.

our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ (John 16:8), we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy (Luke 18:13); at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour (Romans 10:9-11).

**Concerning God's purpose of grace:** We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners (II Timothy 1:8, 9); that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of men, it comprehends as well as embraces all the means in connection with the end (II Thessalonians 2:13, 14); that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable (Exodus 33:18, 19); that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of His free mercy (I Corinthians 4:7); that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree (II Timothy 2:10); that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel (I Thessalonians 1:4-10); that it is the foundation of Christian assurance (Romans 8:28-31); and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence (II Peter 1:10, 11).

**Concerning sanctification:** We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness (I Thessalonians 4:3); that it is a progressive work (Proverbs 4:18); that it is begun in regeneration (I John 2:29); and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers throughout their earthly life, by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer (Philippians 2:12, 13).

**Concerning the perseverance of the saints:** We believe that all real believers endure unto the end (John 8:31); that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors (I John 2:19); that a special Providence watches over their welfare (Romans 8:28); and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation to the exclusion of their works (Philippians 1:6).

**Concerning the resurrection:** We believe that Jesus Christ was crucified and died upon the cross according to the Scriptures (I Corinthians 15:1-4); that He was buried in a tomb not far from the place of crucifixion; that He arose physically and bodily from the grave on the third day, which was Sunday or the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1-8); that He appeared physically to His disciples and to as many as 500 brethren at one time, showing Himself alive by many infallible proofs (I Corinthians 15:5, 6; Acts 1:3); that He forever lives in His glorified body and is seated at the right hand of God the Father to make intercession for the saints (I Peter 3:22; Hebrews 7:25); that because He lives we, too shall live eternally with Him (John 14:1-3, 19); that if we as saints die prior to the rapture, He will raise us up and upon our resurrection He will transform our bodies into new and glorified bodies (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:44-51); that there will be a resurrection for the unjust and all men shall stand before Christ in judgment for their sin (Revelation 20:14, 15).

**Concerning the return of Christ:** We believe that Jesus Christ shall rapture the church according to the plan of God and it shall not endure the tribulation; that it is imminent, the next event on God's prophetic calendar (I Thessalonians 4:16-18); that upon the catching away of the church, which is the bride of Christ, the earth shall endure seven years of tribulation judgment while the saved shall rejoice in heaven at the marriage supper of the Lamb; that at the end of the tribulation period, all souls in heaven shall return bodily and physically with the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall establish His world-wide reign for one thousand years, and we shall rule and reign with Him; that when those thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed from his prison and a solemn separation shall take place; that in one last battle Satan, evil, and his forces shall be eternally vanquished and the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment and the righteous to endless joy; that this judgment shall fix forever the final state of men in heaven and hell, on principles of righteousness (Revelation 4:1-20:15).

**Concerning the harmony of the law and the Gospel:** We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government (Romans 3:31); that it is holy, just, and good (Romans 7:12); and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin (Romans 8:8); to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church (Romans 8:2-4).

**Concerning a Baptist church:** We believe that the visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers (I Corinthians 1:1-13), associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel (Acts 2:41, 42); that it is the only commissioned authority to observe the ordinances of Christ (I Corinthians 11:2); governed by His laws (Matthew 28:20); and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word (Ephesians 4:7); seeking to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:20); that its only Scriptural officers are bishops (or pastors) and deacons (Philippians 1:1), whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the epistles to Timothy and Titus; that Jesus Christ, after his baptism by John the Baptist, founded and established the church and it is the only organization which has been promised Divine perpetuity (Matthew 16:16-18) and thus we identify ourselves as Baptists; that subjecting itself to the authority of the Holy Scriptures and the authority of Jesus Christ, its Chief Shepherd, and then the authority of the pastor (or bishop) as its undershepherd it is autonomous, independent, and democratic in its government (Matthew 18:15-18; I Timothy 3:15).

**Concerning baptism and the Lord's Supper:** We believe that both Christian baptism and the Lord's Supper are each a memorial, a symbol, and a command to observe (Romans 6:3) only to the authority of a gospel church. We believe that Christian baptism is immersion in water of a believer only (Acts 8:36-39) in the authority and name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19), to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful picture, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour and with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:4); that it is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and the Lord's Supper. We believe that the sacred use of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine is the partaking of the Lord's Supper and is to commemorate together the death of Christ (I Corinthians 11:26); that it should always be preceded by prayer and solemn self-examination (I Corinthians 11:28); that it is specifically instituted to each local body and the members only of that given Baptist church should participate. We further believe that each member within that particular body should individually decide whether he is deemed worthy to partake.

**Concerning the Lord's Day:** We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, for it commemorates the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead (Acts 20:7); that it is the focal point of all our public and private worship; that in so doing we are adhering to both the example and the instruction of the New Testament church, thus making it a Christian institution.

**Concerning the Family:**

1. We believe that God created mankind male and female with the command and purpose to be fruitful, to multiply, and to replenish the earth. Accordingly, God ordained marriage exclusively as one male and one female becoming one flesh. (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 7:2; Ephesians 5:22-32).
2. We believe children, the natural fruit of God's design of marriage, are a heritage of the Lord, to be taught spiritual and moral values by their parents, who are to rear them with loving discipline following the example and instruction of the Lord. (Genesis 33:5; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Psalm 78:4-7; Psalm 127:3-5; Psalm 128:3-6; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:1-4; Hebrews 12:7-10).
3. We believe that God designed the marriage union of life and have provided for intimate sexual relations exclusively between husband and wife within the bonds of marriage; sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage, including fornication, adultery, incest, sodomy, bestiality, among others alluded to in God's Word, are a sin. We believe acts that defile God's human creation, such as gender modification, through

medical procedures or by appearance, and participation in the sexual degradation of others through pornography, are attacks against the family unit, are against the will of God, and are sins (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:18-32; I Corinthians 6:6-10; 7:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:3-5; I Thessalonians 4:8).

4. We believe in the sanctity of human life. We believe human life begins at conception, and from conception through elderly adult years should be respected as a creation of God. We believe abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, suicide, assisted suicide, and other similar acts are acts of murder and therefore against the will of God (Genesis 1:27; Exodus 20:13; Leviticus 19:32; Job 12:12; Psalms 139:13-14; Isaiah 44:2, 24; Jeremiah 1:5; Romans 9:20-22; I Timothy 5:1-2).

**Concerning Christian education:** We believe that Christianity is true enlightenment and the beginning of wisdom and instruction (Proverbs 1:7); that in Jesus Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Matthew 28:20; Colossians 2:3); and that all sound learning is therefore a part of a Christian heritage (Deuteronomy 4:1, 5, 9, 13, 14); that the new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for truth and knowledge; that instruction and training are inherent qualities of the furtherance of the Gospel and the church should establish appropriate programs to accomplish the same (II Timothy 2:2).

**Concerning government and social service:** We believe that every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ dominant in his own life and society (Luke 10:25-27); that social government is ordained of God (Romans 13:1-7, Titus 3:1); that Christians should subject themselves to this minister as long as it does not conflict with the authority of our Sovereign God and His Word; that the Christian should do all he can to promote justice and righteousness in our society and government so all may be benefited to live spiritually and righteously before God. Knowing this, we are obligated to speak out against the horrific social sins of our day denounced in Scripture whether by command or precept including, but not limited to, homosexuality, abortion, drunkenness, immorality, et cetera.

**Concerning Ecclesiastical separation:** We believe that throughout history there are many who claim salvation, yet denounce its scriptural tenets either in teaching or application; that the Holy Scriptures admonish both the believer and the church to practice separation. Therefore we will not participate in any ecumenical program which promotes or allows diverse faiths to come together for the purpose of worship or evangelism. We believe in total, biblical separation from unbelievers and from all forms of heresy and apostasy. We are to: try them (I John 4:1), mark them (Romans 16:17), rebuke them (Titus 1:13), have no fellowship with them (Ephesians 5:11), withdraw from them (II Thessalonians 3:14), receive them not (II John 10, 11), have no company with them (II Thessalonians 3:14), reject them (Titus 3:10), and separate from them (II Corinthians 6:17).

#### ***Article Four: Church Covenant***

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized (immersed) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. We strive, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love: for the advancement of this church in Scriptural knowledge and holiness; to promote its spirituality and prosperity; to sustain its worship by regular attendance at all its stated services, and to submit to the discipline; to give it sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin; to support the church in the manner outlined in the Scripture for the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations. We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to seek the salvation of our families and friends; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all gossiping, backbiting, and unrighteous anger; to abstain from the

sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and from all questionable practices, indulgences, and all appearance of evil; to be set for the defense of the Gospel and to be zealous in all our efforts to win the lost to Christ. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like faith and practice where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## ***Article Five: By-laws***

### **I. MEMBERSHIP**

- A.** Qualifications for membership: The membership of the church shall consist of persons who can meet the following qualifications:
1. They have publicly confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.
  2. They have been baptized by immersion in water after their salvation by this church or another fundamental Baptist church holding like doctrine.
  3. They agree with the Statement of Faith of this church.
  4. They willingly enter into the Church Covenant and agree to abide by the church constitution and by-laws.
- B.** Procedures for membership: People may join this church upon a majority vote of the membership in one of four ways:
1. *Baptism* - having acknowledged Christ as Saviour and willing to follow the Lord in Scriptural, New Testament baptism, which is immersion after salvation.
  2. *Transfer of letter from a church which is in agreement doctrinally* - the person must be able to give evidence of their salvation experience, testimony that they have received Scriptural baptism, and upon request, their former church is willing to send a letter stating they have been a member in good standing.
  3. *Statement of faith* - one who has been away from church for an extended period and is not recognized as a member of their former church, or one whose former church is no longer in existence will be considered for membership in accordance with evidence of their salvation experience and testimony of their Scriptural baptism.
  4. *Restoration* - when a person is removed from membership either by discipline or inactive church attendance in accordance with the proper procedure outlined in this Constitution, that person upon his repentance and desire to be reunited with the church, can be presented for membership once again into this church body.
- C.** Duties of membership: Members of this congregation, in accordance with the church covenant, shall endeavor to promote the church by their attendance, ministry, walk or conduct, and their financial contributions. All members are to understand the doctrinal position of the church and upon uniting with this body are in agreement with the church's stated doctrinal positions. It is also expected that if any child who becomes a member in accordance with the provisions hereby stated should, upon his eighteenth birthday, accept the full responsibilities as a member of this church and understand the doctrinal position of this body and find himself in accordance with this church covenant.
1. Members of the Cleveland Baptist Church recognize and accept the Headship of Jesus Christ over His church and the direction of the pastor as the undershepherd and overseer of the church.
  2. Membership in this church does not confer any property rights, any contractual rights, or any civil rights upon the members. However, members should exercise the privilege of voting on certain matters as specified in the church constitution and by-laws.

3. Members of this church should faithfully recognize that all internal matters of the church are ecclesiastical matters to be determined exclusively by the church in accordance with the Word of God, the church constitution, and the church by-laws.
- D.** Privileges of membership: We believe the Scriptures teach us that joining a local body is privileged duty. While obediently placing ourselves under the authority of Scriptural leadership we are also placing ourselves in a real sense under the umbrella of God's protection. Voting privileges are granted to those members who are eighteen years of age and older. Opportunities to serve our Saviour through various church ministries are always available and encouraged.
- E.** Removal of membership: Church membership may be terminated upon:
1. *Death*
  2. *Transfer* - a member leaving this church for good and proper reasons (upon request) may be granted a letter stating his standing as a member to be presented to another church in doctrinal agreement.
  3. *Member request* - this body shall comply with any person who wishes that his name be removed from membership, but in accordance with this action would be unable to provide a letter of his good standing to another church.
  4. *Inactivity* – Except for reasons listed below members who have not attended any regular worship services of the church during a period of six months will be automatically removed from membership without notice (Hebrews 10:25; I John 2:9). The only exceptions shall be for members who wish to continue as church members and meet one of the following conditions:
    - ❖ Members residing out of town on a temporary basis (e.g., college students, military personnel, retirees).
    - ❖ Members residing out of town and serving as church planters, evangelists, missionaries.
    - ❖ Members who are physically unable to attend church services (e.g., shut-ins).
    - ❖ Members who present good cause to be absent, subject to approval of the pastor.
  5. *Exclusion* - See Discipline of Members
  6. *Multiple Membership* -- A member who joins another church while still a member of this church shall be automatically terminated from the membership of this church, without notice.

## II. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- A.** Purpose --- Church discipline is not a tool of vengeance or animosity, but we are admonished in God's Word to practice church discipline. In matters where this action is deemed necessary, it is important to remember that the aim or goal is for the good of the individual. Church discipline is designed to bring God's blessings upon the church and to bring the believer back into alignment with God's Word, so that an individual may also receive our Lord's blessings upon his life.
- B.** Definition --- Church discipline is that procedure which shall be taken 1) after people have taken Scriptural steps to resolve serious wrongs between individual members, or 2) as a result of serious sins against the church body as a whole. These would be defined as public sins [sins known by the church or the general public], holding and persistently propagating false doctrine, or blatant disregard and refusal to abide by the church covenant in both spirit and practice. Church discipline shall conform to the Scriptural pattern of Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 5 & 6.
1. The wronged party shall follow Matthew 18:15-17. In order to localize the problem, the offended brother must avoid discussing the problem with others. He should seek to tell the offending brother his fault between the two of them alone. The idea should be to work out the issue between them and avoid drawing others into it unnecessarily.
  2. Should this fail and there is not reconciliation or restoration, the offended brother should seek out two (and no more than three) mature and discreet church members to explain the issue. They will in turn, accompany the offended brother and serve as witnesses and counselors in another attempt to resolve the problem with the offending brother.

3. In the event the offender(s) fails to “hear” (come in accord with) the offended party, the individual seeking restoration may bring him before the church.
4. A written account must be submitted to a Discipline Council. This Council is to be comprised of the pastor, a deacon, and a member of the pastoral staff, who shall make one final attempt at accord. In the event no accord is reached due to the attitude and actions of the accused member, the Discipline Council may place the member “Under Discipline.”
5. A member “under discipline” is automatically released from any office or position, cannot speak at business meetings, and is deprived of his right to vote.
6. The Discipline Council will give a summary of their investigation of the matter to the deacons of the Cleveland Baptist Church at a duly called discipline meeting. If the member “under discipline” so desires, he may also voice his cause at that time. If at this point there is no reconciliation or restoration, the deacons shall then have the option of voting to exclude the accused from church membership. The deacons shall have the authority to speak for the church body in matters of Church Discipline and Removal of Church Members. Exclusion requires a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of deacons present for this meeting.
7. A statement of the exclusion, including reasons and admonitions, will be presented to the excluded member. The pastor shall take the responsibility to read this statement of exclusion to the church body, if the deacons deem it necessary.
8. An excluded member can be received back into the membership only after repentance and public confession of the sin(s) and following the procedure as previously stated in these by-laws.

**C. Procedure for sins against the church body**

1. The name of a member accused of sins against the church body (along with written charges signed by two or three members) must be presented to the pastor. The pastor shall have the responsibility to see that the charges are investigated. If the charges are true, he has the responsibility to seek repentance and reform of the accused.
2. If the accused refuses these helps, he shall be placed “Under Discipline.” If he chooses, he may appear before a Discipline Council to answer the accusations. If this hearing does not prove satisfactory, subsequent procedures described in section C numbers 5 & 6 above, shall be followed.
3. In the event the accusation is not true and this sin(s) is deemed not to exist, the accused shall be exonerated in a manner deemed appropriate by the pastor in accordance with the situation.

If the unrepentant offending brother is terminated from church membership, all further contact by church members with the excluded former member must be conducted in a spirit of meekness and for the sole purpose of restoration (family and work relationships excepted).

**III. CHURCH ORGANIZATION**

**A.** The government of this church is vested in the membership.

**B.** The officers of this church shall be pastor, deacons, and trustees.

**1. The pastor**

The pastor is appointed by God and is God’s gift to the church (Ephesians 4:11-13).

- a) Duties of the pastor shall be the Scriptural oversight of the church.
- b) Qualifications of the pastor are those given in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- c) The pastor shall have oversight of the Scriptural life, all services, and outreach of the church. He shall be ex-officio member of all church groups, Sunday school classes, and ministries. The Pastor shall act as moderator at all meetings of the church. The Pastor shall serve for an undesignated period of time.
- d) The pastor shall have authority to hire all staff members or to dismiss them.
- e) In the case of prolonged sickness, mental illness, or death, the deacons can appoint a staff member to the position of interim pastor, who shall assume the responsibilities and



obligations of the Pastor until the church shall come to a conclusion about calling a succeeding pastor.

- f) In calling a pastor, the former pastor, if able, should assist the church in finding and calling his successor. If unable to do so, the following procedure shall be followed:
  - (1) Five deacons shall be selected to form a Pulpit Committee to search for Scripturally qualified candidates to fill the vacant office. They will select names of candidates for the congregation to consider.
  - (2) One candidate shall be considered at a time.
  - (3) When selected, the candidate shall be invited to preach to the church and meet with the Pulpit Committee and the full assembly of deacons. The deacons shall have the right to question the candidate about important doctrinal positions, Biblical philosophy, and his Christian testimony and character.
  - (4) Upon recommendation of the deacons of a candidate for pastor of the church, the Pulpit Committee shall announce at church services for two immediately preceding Sundays that a special business meeting will be held for the specific purpose of prayerfully considering whether the candidate has been called of God to be the pastor of the church. The candidate shall be called by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of members present and voting at the duly called business meeting. This vote shall not exceed the space of three weeks from recommendation.
  - (5) Voting shall be by secret ballot.
  - (6) A pastor accepting a call shall be admitted into membership in accordance with the church constitution.

## 2. Deacons

- a) The qualifications of a deacon are those given in Acts 6:1-6 and I Timothy 3:8-13. The deacons are to be spiritual leaders of the church and are expected to set the proper example in worship and service.
- b) The purpose of the deacon is to support and faithfully assist the pastor, as requested under his authority, in his oversight of the church.
- c) They shall faithfully assist the pastor in administration of the church ordinances.
- d) They shall faithfully assist the pastor in the church's evangelistic endeavors and the visitation of the sick.
- e) Deacons are to be elected by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present to vote at duly called business meeting upon their recommendation from the current deacons to the membership. Deacons shall be elected as deemed necessary due to replacement of vacant positions or upon growth of the membership.

## 3. Trustees

- a) A corporate officer of trustee shall be elected to be responsible for the legal business transactions of the church. The Cleveland Baptist Church Trustees shall exercise only the following specific powers:
  - (1) To purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church.
  - (2) To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church, to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and the use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness, and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges.
  - (3) To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation, if such action is mandated by a vote of the church membership.

- b) Trustees shall be selected only from the membership upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present at a duly called business meeting. The church shall select these men with great consideration to those who live a separated and godly life.
  - c) The trustees shall be comprised of the pastor and at least five duly elected men.
4. Financial Board
- a) The pastor, deacons, and trustees shall comprise a financial advisory board and shall make the major business decisions of the church.
    - (1) They should meet periodically to stay informed of the fiscal solvency of the church.
    - (2) They shall meet annually when the new church budget is presented and adopted.
    - (3) Special meetings will be called when large business transactions are to be considered
  - b) The pastor, who may also require the assistance of a business manager, shall make the weekly financial and operational decisions to direct this ministry.
5. Special meetings
- a) All deacons and/or trustees meetings shall be called by the pastor. The pastor may have regularly scheduled meetings with the Deacons and or Trustees. Ample notice will be given for all deacons/trustees meetings either through church announcements or other means of communication.
  - b) Special meetings may be called by the pastor when urgent business may need to be discussed. These require forty-eight (48) hours notice, either verbally or written.
  - c) All meetings will attempt to adhere to Robert's Rule of Order, unless otherwise commanded or directed in Scripture or biblical principles.

C. Term of Office

1. Pastor

- a) The term of office of the pastor, as a man of God called to be the undershepherd of the Cleveland Baptist Church, shall be continuing.
- b) The pastor shall continue in office until one of the following conditions is met:
  - (1) *Death*
  - (2) *Resignation.* If the pastor feels led of the Lord to resign his position, he shall give the church one month's notice, or less by mutual consent.
  - (3) *Disciplinary Removal.* Should the pastor in some way bring reproach to the office, to the church and to His Savior, by his conduct or through a change in his doctrinal position the deacons of Cleveland Baptist Church are charged with an orderly process of investigation of charges and then presenting their findings before the church at a duly called special business meeting. The pastor shall be given opportunity to respond to accusations brought against him at this time. All discussion of this matter at the meeting shall be relevant to the accusation raised and shall be conducted in a spirit of meekness. The pastor shall be removed from office by a three-fourths majority vote of those members present and voting at this special business meeting.

2. Deacons / Trustees

- a) The term of elected officers of the church shall be as the church sees fit.
- b) They shall continue in office until one of the following is met:
  - (1) *Death*
  - (2) *Resignation*
  - (3) *They become carnal in mind, uncooperative in work, or unwilling to perform their duties as outlined in this document.*
  - (4) *Disciplinary removal* as outlined in Section II, letters C & D.

3. Staff

- a) All paid staff members are appointed by the pastor; they shall serve in their given responsibilities as long as the pastor deems them fit for their position. Staff can be removed from office at the pastor's discretion.

- b) All paid staff should be willing to change rolls within the ministry if the pastor deems that move is necessary to make the church function in a more productive way.

**D. Indemnification Policy**

1. The pastor, deacons, trustees, church staff members and employees shall be indemnified to the fullest extent by law from any action which may arise while performing their duties pursuant to their positions and any obligations which may occur.
2. This church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any persons in these positions against any liability asserted against him or her in such capacity, or arising out of his or her status.

### ***Article Six: Church Meetings***

The work of the ministry of the Cleveland Baptist Church may be conducted in many different ways in many different places, as the Lord leads. However, official meetings shall be as follows:

1. *Regular Church Services*: Cleveland Baptist Church shall conduct regular church services on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and during the mid-week.
2. *Special Church* --- Cleveland Baptist Church shall conduct church services for special meetings that scheduled by the pastor to promote the spiritual welfare of the church. These may include but are not limited too Revivals, Seminars, Conferences, and Missions Conference.
3. *Business Meetings* --- Cleveland Baptist Church may call business meetings as necessary to conduct relevant business that pertains to the church. These meetings may be called to hear annual reports or review and approve the church budget or to deal with other business outlined in this document. Any regular church service may be considered a special church business meeting for the purpose of voting in new members.
4. *Special business meetings* may be called by the pastor, providing the meeting is announced at two consecutive Sunday morning church services. The exception to this rule shall be at the pastor's discretion to deal with pressing church business matters.

### ***Article Seven: Adoption of Constitution***

This constitution, including all of these articles, shall be approved by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote at a business meeting, providing prior notice has been given two weeks in advance. It shall become binding immediately upon approval and shall supersede any and all previous by-laws and constitutions. Any future amendments or additions to this agreement must be approved by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of deacons and a subsequent three-fourths (3/4) majority of church members.

**BY-LAWS**  
**of the**  
**CLEVELAND BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**of Brooklyn, Ohio**

**Section 1 --- Business Meetings**

- A quorum shall consist of members present at the duly called business meeting.
- Only members eighteen years of age and older shall have the right to vote at any business meeting.
- A simple majority shall decide all matters of church business, except those matters otherwise specified in this constitution.
- Every church business meeting shall be conducted decently and in order, each member shall demonstrate a spirit of meekness and Christian courtesy.

**Section 2 --- Books and Records**

- ❖ The church shall keep correct and complete books and records of (1) all organizational documents of the church, (2) the church roll, (3) all financial records, and (4) all church minutes.
- ❖ All books and records shall be maintained at the church building.
- ❖ All such books and records shall be open to inspection by church members at any reasonable time.

**Section 3 --- Tax Exempt Provisions**

1. **Private instrument.** No part of the net earnings of the Cleveland Baptist Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, officers, staff, trustees, or other persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered, and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of church purposes.
2. **Political involvement.** No substantial part of the activities of the Cleveland Baptist Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.
3. **Dissolution.** Upon the dissolution of the Cleveland Baptist Church, the trustees shall, after making payment for all liabilities of the church, dispose of the remaining assets of the church to organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or subsequent revisions), according to the trustees discretion. Assets must be distributed only to organizations which agree with the church's purpose and Statement of Faith.
4. **Racial nondiscrimination.** The Cleveland Baptist Church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy with regard to all church ministries and shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and other persons on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

## Section 4 --- Ordination

One of the purposes of the Cleveland Baptist Church is to ordain and license men for the Gospel Ministry.

1. *Qualifications for ordination.* The qualifications for the office of pastor are set forth in the Word of God in **1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9**. If a church member believes that he meets these qualifications, gives evidence of the genuine call of God to be a minister of the Gospel, and that calling is recognized by the leadership of the church, that man shall be eligible for ordination.
2. *Procedures for ordination*
  - a. The church must recognize the calling of God and must see a reason for ordaining the man.
  - b. The pastor and the candidate shall meet with a council of fellow-ordained and like-faith ministers that have the approval of the pastor. These men will examine the candidate in the following areas.
    - i. Salvation
    - ii. Call to preach
    - iii. Doctrinal positions
    - iv. Baptist convictions
    - v. Marital status
    - vi. Support of his wife and children to this calling
  - c. When the council is satisfied with the candidates' call and qualifications, they shall recommend him to the church.
  - d. The candidate shall be presented to the church at a duly called business meeting whereupon the candidate's ordination shall become official upon a majority vote of the members present.

February 6, 2018

\*This version of the Constitution and By-laws was revised and adopted by Cleveland Baptist Church on Sunday, October 16, 2005. Concerning the Family was revised and adopted by Cleveland Baptist Church on December 26, 2013.