

PREAMBLE

We, the members of West Madison Bible Church, hereby adopt the following constitution. This constitution is neither a substitute for nor a supplement to the Word of God. It is simply a systematic review of the doctrines taught at West Madison Bible Church and is a guide to help in the application of Biblical principles to church polity. The Word of God shall be the first and final authority on all church matters. Any issue whereon this constitution is silent shall be governed by the clear statement of the Word of God.

ARTICLE ONE – CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with each other as a local assembly of the Body of Christ.

We determine that by the power of the Holy Spirit our lives shall be balanced through faith in every area of life. We shall prayerfully seek the salvation of our loved ones and acquaintances. We will endeavor to walk in a manner that honors the Lord Jesus Christ and avoid participation in activities that would bring reproach upon His Name.

We determine to walk together in Christian love and humility. We will work for the advancement of this church by being faithful in worship, by giving regularly and cheerfully to the financial support of this ministry, and to the spread of the Gospel in our community and throughout the world.

ARTICLE TWO – DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST UNBELIEF, MODERNISM, AND RELIGIOUS APOSTASY, THIS DOCTRINAL STATEMENT IS NEVER TO BE CHANGED OR AMENDED.

I. The Scriptures:

We believe in the Divine verbal, plenary, infallible inspiration of the Scriptures and that the Bible is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

- A. By the "Bible" we mean that completed 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 (Prov. 30:5-6; II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:19-21; Rev. 22:18-19).
- B. By "completed collection" we mean that the Bible is the final revelation of the will of God to man, and that no other writings have ever been nor will ever be inspired or needed (Ps. 119: 160; Is. 8: 20; Jn. 12: 48; Rev. 22: 18-19).

II. The True God:

We believe there is only one living, true, and eternal God; an infinite, intelligent, spiritual Being; the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love (Gen. 1: 1; Is. 43: 10-11, 44: 6, 45: 21-22; Rev. 4: 8-11).

A. We believe in the Trinity; one God consisting of three Persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit; one in substance and equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Matt. 28: 19; Jn. 1: 1; II Cor. 13: 14; I Pet. 1:2; I Jn. 5:7)

1. Essence of God:

- a. God is spirit (Jn. 4:24; II Cor. 3: 17).
- b. God is self-existent (Ex. 3: 14, 6: 3; Jn. 5: 26; I Tim. 1:17).
- c. God is immense or infinite (Is. 66: 1; Jer. 23:24).
- d. God is eternal (Gen. 21: 33; Ps. 90: 2; Is. 57: 15; Heb. 13: 8).

2. Attributes of God:

- a. God is holy. Holiness is foremost in rank among the attributes of God. His throne is established on the basis of holiness (Ps. 47: 8, 89: 14, 97:2; Ezek. 39: 7; I Pet. 1: 15-16; Rev. 4: 8).
- b. God is righteous. He is just in all of His dealings with mankind (II Chron. 12: 6-7; Neh. 9: 33; Dan. 9: 14; II Tim. 4: 8; Rev. 16:5).
- c. God is immutable. He is eternally unchangeable (Ps. 102: 26-27; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13: 8; Ja. 1: 17).
- d. God is omnipotent. He is capable of doing whatever He wills, but He never acts contrary to His Word (Gen. 17: 1; Num. 23: 19; Dan. 4: 35; Matt. 19: 26; Heb. 6: 18; Rev. 19: 6).
- e. God is omniscient. He knows everything (Ps. 147: 5; Is. 46: 10; Heb. 4: 13).
- f. God is omnipresent. He is everywhere: He fills the universe (Ps. 139:7-10; Jer. 23: 23-24; Acts 17: 27).
- g. God is goodness. He is love, mercy, grace, and benevolence (Ps. 145: 9, 15-16; Matt. 5: 45; Mk. 10: 18; II Cor. 13: 11; Ja. 5: 11; I Jn. 4: 8, 16).

B. We believe in the absolute Deity of Jesus Christ, existing from eternity past co-equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit; that as man He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, and yet as perfect, sinless man He never ceased to be perfect God; that man's redemption was accomplished through His substitutionary, sacrificial death upon the cross; that

He arose from the dead bodily on the third day according to the Scriptures; that He ascended into heaven where He is now exalted at the right hand of God the Father as our Great High Priest fulfilling the ministries of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate; and that He will personally return for His church at the end of the age (Jn. 1: 1-3, 14; I Jn. 5: 20; Is. 7:14; Matt. 1: 18-25; Lk. 1: 35; Phil. 2: 5-11; Rom. 3: 24-25; I Pet. 3: 18; I Cor. 15: 4; Jn. 20: 26-29; Acts 1: 9; I Tim. 2: 5; Heb. 7: 25, 9: 24; I Jn. 2:1; I Cor. 15: 51-53; I Thess. 4: 13-18).

C. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same substance and nature; that He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; that He regenerates, instantly baptizes into one Body, indwells and seals unto the day of redemption, and imparts spiritual gifts at His discretion to all who become children of God by faith in Jesus Christ; and that He empowers, guides, comforts, teaches, sanctifies, and fills the child of God who daily yields to Him (Acts 5: 3-4, 9; Rom. 8: 14; Eph. 4: 30; Jn. 1:1, 16:11, 6: 63; II Cor. 3: 6; I Cor. 12: 13; Eph. 1:13, 4: 30; I Cor. 12: 7-11; Acts 1: 8; Jn. 16:13, 14:16, 14:26; I Pet. 1: 2; Rom. 6:13; Eph. 5:18).

III. The Creation:

We believe in the Biblical account of creation: all of God's creative acts took place in six, twenty-four hour days (Gen. 1&2; Ex. 20:11; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3; Ps. 33:6,9).

IV. The Origin and Fall of Man:

We believe that man was created in the image of God and is, therefore, an eternal spiritual being; that the first man (Adam) was created in innocence, but by voluntary disobedience to the revealed will of God he became a sinful creature and the father of a fallen race, universally sinful in both nature and practice; and that all mankind is alienated from God by sin, abiding under the wrath of God, and having no means of justifying himself before God (Gen. 1:27, 2:7, 3:1-13; Rom. 5:12-19; Jn. 6:36; Rom. 1:18-32; Eph. 2:1-2).

V. The Devil and Demons:

We believe in the distinct personality of Satan; that he was created by God a holy and perfect being, but through pride rebelled against God and became the great adversary of God and his people; that he is the leader of all evil spirits or demons who seek to possess or control the lives of unbelievers and influence the lives of believers; that he is the deceiver and god of this present world system; that anything that he does is strictly limited by the permissive will of God, Who overrules all Satan's wicked devices for good; that he was defeated and judged at the cross of Christ and his eternal judgment in the lake of fire is certain; that when we appropriate by faith our spiritual position in Christ, we are able to

resist and overcome him by putting on the whole armor of God, by the blood of the Lamb, and through the power of the Holy Spirit (Is. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-17; 1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 2:2; Acts 5:16, 16:16-18; II Cor. 4:4; Job 1:6-12, 42:10; Jn. 16:11; 1 Pet. 5:9; Ja. 4:7; Eph. 6:10-17; Rev. 20:10, 12:10-11; 1 Jn. 4:4).

VI. Salvation by Grace Through Faith:

We believe that man's salvation is by grace through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ; that salvation is neither merited nor secured in part or whole by any virtue or work of man; that it is extended to the whole world on an individual basis; that God requires man to repent of his sins and to entrust himself by faith to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; that Christ has saved us from the penalty of sin, is saving us from the power of sin, and will save us from the presence of sin when He comes again; that this salvation is eternal in its duration; and that the believer is created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Rom. 3:21-26; Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:25; 1 Jn. 2:2; Acts 26:20, 16:31; Col.

2:13-14; Rom. 6:6; Rev. 21:3-4, 27; Jn. 10:27-29; Eph. 2:10; Titus 3:8).

VII. The Second Coming of Christ:

We believe in the personal, visible, glorious return of Jesus Christ; that the exact time of his return is unrevealed but always imminent; that His coming will be in the air to catch away all believers, both living and dead, before the seven year tribulation period; that during the tribulation the believers in heaven will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive rewards for the things done in their body, while at the same time God will pour out His wrath upon the unbelieving inhabitants on earth; that Jesus Christ will return with His church at the close of the tribulation period to judge the living nations and to literally establish His glorious Kingdom upon earth for one thousand years; that Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit during Christ's millennial reign, after which Satan will be loosed for a little season to deceive the nations and lead them to battle; that Satan and all people whose names are not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life will then be cast into the lake of fire for eternity; that God will then establish the new heaven and the new earth for eternity (Acts 1:11; Matt. 25:13; 1 Thess.

5:2-4, 4:13-17; II Thess. 2:2-3; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 6, 8, 9, 15-16, 19:11-20:15, 21:1-2).

VIII. The Church:

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His Body; that all believers are baptized with the Holy Spirit into the one Body of Christ and that all members of His invisible church should assemble and identify themselves in local, visible churches; that the New Testament church is a local assembly of baptized believers gathered together by the Holy Spirit, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the purpose of worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching and preaching of God's Word, to observe the ordinances of the church, and to carry

out our Lord's Great Commission; that the New Testament officers of a local church are elders and deacons; and that each local church is a sovereign unit, independent of other churches and/or organizations, having the God-given right of self-government under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and is directly subject to Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; I Cor. 12:13; Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42; Matt. 28:19-20; I Tim. 3:1-13; Acts 6:1-6, 20:17-28; Phil. 1:1; I Pet. 5:2-3; Col. 1:18; I Tim. 5:17; I Cor. 14:40; Rev. 2:1-3:22).

A. We believe there are two ordinances of the church: water baptism and the Lord's Supper.

1. Water baptism is the immersion of a believer in water as a testimony of the believer's identification in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ: baptism is done in obedience to Christ's command (Acts 8:34-39; Matt. 28:19-20).
2. The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and cup as a continuing memorial of our Savior's crucified body and shed blood, until He comes again; the Lord's Supper should only be taken by believers after careful self-examination (I Cor. 11:23-29).

B. We believe the responsibility of the church is to carry out our Lord's Great Commission:

1. To tell the "Good News" of Jesus Christ to all the world; this is the responsibility and privilege of every Christian (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:47; Jn. 20:21; Acts 1:8).
2. To baptize all converts in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19; Acts 8:35-38).
3. To teach and exhort all believers to observe the Word of God (Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:42; II Tim. 2:2).

C. We believe it is God's will for the church to be separate from the world and unto Christ, and to be separate from all religious activities that are leading people away from the faith and into apostasy:

1. From the World- "And be not conformed to this world...;" "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in Him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (Rom. 12:2; I Jn. 2:15-17; I Pet. 1:15-16; I Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19-20).

I Thess. 4:1-5, 5:22; Eph. 5:11; I Cor. 6:9-10; Rev. 21:8; II Tim. 2:19; Eph. 5:19, 4:20-24; Col. 3:2, 16-17; Ps. 101:3; Rom. 13:14).

2. From Apostasy- Unger's Bible Dictionary defines apostasy as "the falling away, or the religious defection from the faith, but not from the outward profession of it." We believe the Scriptures admonish us to separate ourselves from apostasy and not to cooperate with other churches, religious associations, and campaigns that are not Biblical in message or in practice (Rom. 16:17-18; II Cor. 6:14- 7:1; Eph. 5:6- 11; I Thess. 1:9-10; II Thess. 3:1-6, 14; I Tim. 4:1, 6:3-5; II Tim. 3:5; Heb. 13:13; II Jn. 9-11; Jude 3-4; Rev. 2:18-19; I Sam. 15:22-23).

ARTICLE THREE - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Anyone desiring membership with West Madison Bible Church must meet with the leadership committee and give personal testimony of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and of their having been baptized after salvation. Non-baptized candidates will be baptized by immersion prior to acceptance into church membership. The applicant's life must be consistent with his profession of faith and he must be supportive of the church constitution. Upon the committee's recommendation to the church and the positive response of the church to receive the applicant into membership, the applicant will become a member with full privileges and responsibilities. New members are to enter into the life of this assembly bearing their load of responsibility and sharing in the work involved (Matt. 7:15-23; Titus 3:8-11; I Jn. 4:1; II Jn. 6-11; Eph. 2:10; Gal.6:1-2).

- A. Discipline - The New Testament speaks of church discipline to members; such discipline must be directed through the leadership committee and will be carried out in the spirit of prayer, meekness, and impartiality explicitly following the example of I Corinthians 5:1-13. Any member that persists in sin will be removed from church membership until they openly repent of their sin and seek reconciliation before the church; all such persons are to be held up in prayer daily and encouraged to repent at every contact with another member of this church; restoration and edification, not excommunication, is the Scriptural purpose of church discipline (Matt. 18:15-22; Rom. 16:17; Gal. 6:1; II Thess. 3:11-15; Titus 3:10-11; Ja. 2:1).
- B. Transfer or Dismissal - Upon request, a letter to transfer membership to another church will be granted to any member in good standing. Any member that continually absents himself from church services, unless providentially hindered or having explained his intentions to the church, shall be visited and encouraged to resume church attendance; if they remain delinquent in their attendance, contact will be made to express intent to remove their name from membership (Rom. 16:17; Gal. 6:1-2; II Thess. 3:11-15).

ARTICLE FOUR - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

We recognize the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Head of the church universal and thus the Head of this local body of believers. We recognize the Holy Scriptures as our sole and infallible authority in all matters of faith and practice. According to the New Testament, the local church is subject solely and directly to the Lord Jesus Christ. This assembly is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. The Lord has given two groups of church officers to the local church; elders and deacons (Acts 6:2-4; I Tim. 3:1-13). These church officers, along with the local congregation, shall seek the will of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and in accordance with the Word of God in all its affairs.

A. Elders - The early New Testament church had several mature Christians in the local church who cared for the spiritual affairs and welfare of the church. The words "pastor, bishop, elder, overseer, and presbyter" all refer to the same office or person. While the Bible does not command a plurality of elders, it is advisable for the leadership of the local church to be provided by more than one elder. The pastor (senior elder) shall oversee all the affairs of the church. When led by the Holy Spirit and having approval from the leadership committee and the congregation, the pastor will recommend additional elders to the church to assist him. Elders shall serve this church as long as they and the church deem it wise. A call to, or the dismissal of, an elder shall be by a vote of 80% (Acts 20: 17, 28; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5-7; I Pet. 5:1-4).

1. Qualifications- God's Word very clearly lists the qualifications of an elder in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The office of an elder is worthy of double honor and should be filled in an exemplary manner. Any elder failing to live an exemplary life shall be dealt with in accordance with I Timothy 5:19-22.

a. We believe the phrase "husband of one wife" requires a man to be both inwardly and outwardly devoted to and faithful to his wife. His testimony reveals he is a "one-woman man" (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6). If a man's first spouse was sexually immoral (Matt. 19:9), or whose unbelieving spouse abandoned the marriage (I Cor. 7:15), he may serve as an elder if he meets the Biblical qualifications and is elected by the congregation. An elder is not required to be married.

2. Duties- Elders are to feed the flock of God; equip the saints for the work of the ministry; reprove, rebuke, and exhort; and do the work of an overseer, not as lord, but as an example to the believer (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:12; II Tim. 4:2; I Pet. 5:1-4).

B. Deacons - Prior to the annual business meeting the leadership committee will have selected the names of men qualified for the office of deacon. Candidates will be evaluated according to the instruction given in the New Testament (I Tim; Rom; Col; Eph). Candidates are required to have been accepted as members at least one year prior to their election to the office of deacon. Candidates will be notified before the annual business meeting that they have been nominated to the office of deacon and have 2 weeks to accept or refuse the nomination.

Nominees must have successfully completed leadership training before they can serve as a deacon. Nominees satisfying the above requirements may be placed on the ballot for the annual meeting.

A Deacon's term in office shall be three years from the time of election. To help assure continuity of leadership a number of new deacons not to create a majority serving at that time may be elected (ie. if three men are currently serving as deacons up to three men may be elected as new deacons, as there is no guarantee of re-election those up for re-election will not be included in the count to establish the number of potential new deacons). Deacons may serve consecutive terms in that office by meeting the same standards required for their original nomination. Should a deacon's position be vacated for any reason it will remain vacant until the next annual meeting. There are no special provisions for a position vacated within 6 months of the end of the deacon's term of service.

A position of deaconess is recognized in scripture, but we have no provision for nominating deaconess at this time.

1. **Qualifications** - The personal qualifications of a deacon are clearly stated in I Tim. 3:8-13. Any deacon failing to live according to these defined principles will be addressed according to the instruction given in I Tim. 5:19-22 and may be removed from the office.

2. **Duties** - Deacons are servant leaders laboring to meet the physical and business needs of the congregation. As with any leadership position in the Church a deacon is also expected to minister to the spiritual needs of the church.

C. Other Church Officers - The elders and deacons will appoint other church officers deemed necessary for the successful ministry of this church: such as treasurer, clerk, trustee, etc...

D. Meetings - All business shall be conducted in the spirit of humility and prayer. The leadership committee, consisting of the elders and deacons, shall provide leadership for this assembly. The leadership committee shall determine the agenda to be discussed prior to all church business meetings: no item will be discussed in any business meeting that is not included on the agenda.

Church business meetings will be called for by the leadership committee when major decisions must be made (budget approval, expenditures over \$1000 not already approved in the budget, missions support, election or dismissal of church officers, etc.) or when deemed necessary. The call for a church business meeting shall be at least two Sunday morning worship services in advance.

Should less time be required, all church members must be notified prior to the date of the meeting. Church members desiring a church business meeting must receive approval from the leadership committee. Should their request be denied, a petition signed by 25% of the voting membership will require the leadership committee to call for a church business meeting. All voting members must be eighteen years of age and a minimum of 50% of all voting members must be present to constitute a church quorum for the transaction of business.

All items voted upon must receive a favorable vote of 80% of the total vote (including those voting in absentia) before being adopted. The annual church business meeting will be held on the last Sunday in March except when Easter is the last Sunday in March at which time the business meeting shall be the 1st Sunday in April. The leadership committee will meet monthly to discuss the affairs of the church.

E. Pulpit Committee - Should the office of a pastor become vacant the leadership committee shall create, from among the current membership, the pulpit committee and will oversee the procedure of calling a new pastor to the church. Only one candidate at a time will be considered for the office of pastor.

F. Amendments -All recommendations of change to the church constitution shall be presented to the church, by the Leadership Committee, in written form one month prior to voting on such changes.

ARTICLE FIVE – STANDING RESOLUTIONS

I. Bible Ministry: We live in a day when the authority of God's Word is being attacked and undermined. Be it resolved that all pastors and teachers at West Madison Bible Church will only use Bible translations acknowledged as being reliable and trustworthy translations of the original text.

II. Church Ministries: In order to make the ministries of this church more effective and ensure the faithful course of this church in the future, anyone overseeing a ministry of this church must be a member or associate member of West Madison Bible Church.

III. Additional Church Ministries: In order to fulfill the Scriptural purposes of this church, additional ministries may become necessary. Every aspect of these ministries must be consistent with the Word of God and the philosophy of the church constitution.

- IV. Missions: Any missionary supported by this church must be of like faith and practice (denomination excluded). The total mission's budget shall never be less than 10% of the church's annual general income. Financial support may be terminated at any time by the leadership committee, along with church approval.
- V. Music: The music ministry of this church shall be conducted in a manner that glorifies God and ministers to the heart of man.
- VI. Dissolution: In the event of dissolution of this church, the leadership committee will appoint men from among the current deacons to oversee the sale of all church assets. The money from such sales will be used to eliminate all church debts and then be prayerfully distributed to Godly ministries as led by the Lord.
- VII Ecumenical Movement: Endeavors by various religious ministries to co-operate with unbelieving religions, or that encourage cooperation with Roman Catholicism, are contrary to Biblical teachings. West Madison Bible Church will not participate in such endeavors (Rom. 16:17-18; II Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph. 5:6-11; II Thess. 3:1-6, 14; Heb. 13:13; Jude 3-4; Rev. 2:18-29, 17:1-18, 18:1-4).
- VIII. Charismatic Movement: We believe the "ecstatic babbling in tongues" and the sensationalism of "public healing services" as practiced by churches in the charismatic movement are not a part of the Christian experience today. We will not practice these "experiences" at West Madison Bible Church (Matt. 24:23-25; Acts 2:4-11; I Cor. 14:22; II Thess. 2:8-10; Rev. 13:11-18).
- IX. Hyper-Calvinism: We reject the philosophy that eliminates human responsibility in the proclamation of the Gospel or in the reception of the Gospel (Ezek. 33:7-11; Rom. 1:16, 10:12-14; I Cor. 1:21; II Pet. 3:9; I Jn. 2:1-2; Rev. 22:17).
- X. Commitment of Leadership: To prevent the influx of spiritual liberalism and apostasy into this church, all the pastoral staff and church officers must publicly reaffirm their belief in Article II of the church constitution at the annual church business meeting.
- XI. Associate Membership: Anyone desiring to fellowship with or minister at West Madison Bible Church but does not want to remove membership from their home church, may become an associate member.- They must attend the New Member's Class, give testimony of their salvation to the leadership committee, agree to support the constitution of this church, and receive a vote of approval by the congregation. Unless providentially hindered, any member of West Madison Bible Church whose regular attendance has been disrupted for 8 weeks or more will be placed in an associate membership status until regular attendance can be resumed. Associate members cannot vote in a church business meeting, nor can they hold a church office. Contact should be initiated by the leadership committee prior to a member being moved to associate status.

XII. Marriage: Based upon the clear teaching of Scripture on marriage (Genesis2:22-24; Matthew 19:4-6; etc.), West Madison Bible Church:

- a) will only recognize and accept marriages between a man and a woman*,
- b) will only conduct marriages between a man and a woman*,
- c) will only permit church facilities to be used for the marriage of a man to a woman*.

* Man and woman is according to biological sex at birth.

