

**DOCTRINAL STATEMENT,  
CONSTITUTION,  
and  
BY-LAWS  
of  
IDYLLWILD BIBLE CHURCH**

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# **IDYLLWILD BIBLE CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the basis of a clear public profession of faith, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into a covenant with one another as one Body in Christ.

We commit, therefore, to live our lives together in Christian love; to work for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and service; to promote its spiritual growth through diligent attention to doctrine, worship, edification, education, and the observance of the ordinances of Water Baptism and the celebration of Communion; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the financial support of this ministry for Christ's sake; and to partner with God to advance the Gospel throughout the world. Further, we will give Christ's church sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin.

We commit to maintain personal devotions and a Christ-centered focus within our families; to teach our children about the life, words, and works of Jesus Christ; to seek the salvation of our friends, families, and acquaintances; to live with spiritual wisdom and Biblical understanding in this world; and to be just and honest in all our dealings whether they be seen or unseen.

We commit to watch over one another in Christian love, praying for one another and seeking the highest good for fellow believers. We commit to aid one another in sickness and crisis; to be slow to take offense and quick to seek reconciliation; to flee the temptation to gossip, slander, or falsely accuse fellow believers, knowing the grievous destruction that comes from such sin. We shall strive to be obedient always to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ as we are so enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit. We will with His help refuse to condone or be involved with all practices, habits and forms of worldly activity that would oppose the clear teaching of Scripture. We will also seek to refrain from those things that might cause a brother or sister to stumble, or might hinder a person from making a faith-decision in Christ Jesus.

We further determine that when we move from the fellowship of the Bible Church, we will as soon as possible unite with another church where the spirit and convictions of this covenant are being carried out. In the event there is no such church, we shall seek with the Lord's help to establish one.

# THE DOCTRINAL STATEMENT OF IDYLLWILD BIBLE CHURCH

## Section A. - THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

1. We teach that the Bible is God's own written revelation of Himself, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Cor. 2:7-14; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
2. We teach that the Word of God is an objective, logical, purposeful revelation (1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim. 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. We teach the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture.
3. We teach that the Bible is the only infallible rule for faith and practice (Matt. 5:18, 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13, 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
4. We teach that God the Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to mankind (2 Pet. 1:20-21) without error (Matt. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16).
5. We teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation to be found. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17, 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20), it is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Furthermore, mankind never stands in authority over Scripture; Scripture forever stands in authority over mankind.

## Section B. – GOD

We teach that there is one living and true God (Deut. 6:4; Is. 45:5-7; 1 Cor. 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in His nature/essence (Phil. 2:6), yet eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience.

### **God the Father**

We teach that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Ps. 145:8-9; 1 Cor. 8:6). He is the creator of all things (Gen. 1:1-31; Eph. 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps. 103:19; Rom. 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all mankind (Eph. 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph. 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chr. 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Hab. 1:13; John 8:38-47). He is perfectly impartial toward all persons when judging their works and activities (1 Pet. 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph. 1:4-6). He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all who come to Him; and He becomes, through spiritual adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:5-9).

## **God the Son**

1. We teach that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine attributes, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).
2. We teach that God the Father personally created all things according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).
3. We teach that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine nature, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-man (Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9).
4. We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness. These two aspects of Christ's nature are absolutely essential when describing Him (Mic. 5:2; John 5:23, 14:9-10; Col. 2:9).
5. We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He is God incarnate (John 1:1,14); and that the purpose of the incarnation is to reveal God, redeem sinful people, and rule over God's kingdom (Ps. 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 7:25-26; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
6. We teach that, in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God, assumed the place of a Son, and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Phil. 2:5-8).
7. We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious (endured for someone other than self), substitutionary, propitiatory (satisfied God), and redemptive (John 10:15; Rom. 3:24-35, 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:24).
8. We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin. A believing person is declared righteous, given eternal life, and is adopted as a full and complete heir into the family of God (Rom. 3:25; 5:8-9, 8:15; 1 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18).
9. We teach that our justification is made sure by Christ's literal and physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of God the Father. From there He now intercedes as our Advocate, High Priest, and Mediator (Matt. 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Rom. 4:25, 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1).
10. We teach that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom. 1:4, 4:25, 6:5-10; 1 Cor. 15:20, 23).

11. We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the Church, (which is called His “body” and His “Bride”) unto Himself at the rapture, and, returning with His Church in glory, He will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20).
12. We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all of mankind (John 5:22-23):
  - a. Believers (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10)
  - b. Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matt.25:31-46)
  - c. Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15)
 As the mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), the head of His body the Church (Eph. 1:22, 5:23; Col. 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matt. 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

### **God the Holy Spirit**

1. We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine person possessing all the attributes of personality and deity that the Father and the Son possess. This would include intellect (1 Cor. 2:10-13), emotions (Eph. 4:30), will (1 Cor. 12:11), eternity (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10), omniscience (Isa. 40:13-14), omnipotence (Rom. 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4, 28:25-26, 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; and Jer. 31:31-34 with Heb. 10:15-17).
2. We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will over all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Matt. 1:18), the writing of the Old and New Testament Scriptures (2 Pet. 1:20-21), and in the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).
3. We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17, 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is the Church (1 Cor. 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and conforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22).
4. We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, who baptizes all believers into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers for service, and seals believers until the day of redemption (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13).
5. We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to the writing of God's revelation, the Bible. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and is enabled by Him to understand and discern the spiritual truths and content of the Scriptures (1 Cor. 2:10-16). It is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit, and thus be guided into all that is God's truth. (John 16:13; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 5:18; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; 1 John 2:20, 27).
6. We teach that the Holy Spirit is sovereign in bestowing and administering His spiritual gifts to the Church for its common good and effective working. The Holy Spirit



glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by actions or displays that draw attention to an individual rather than to Christ and the Church. The Holy Spirit does glorify Christ by carrying out His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; 2 Cor. 3:18).

### **Section C. - MANKIND AND SIN**

1. We teach that God personally and directly created mankind in His image and likeness. Mankind was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Gen. 2:7, 15-25, 3:1-10; James 3:9).
2. We teach that God's intention in the creation of mankind was that all should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live their lives within the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for mankind in the world (Isa. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11).
3. We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, humanity lost its innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable them to be reconciled to God on their own, mankind is hopelessly and eternally separated from God. Mankind's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through personal faith in the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).
4. We teach that because all of mankind was essentially "in" Adam when he sinned (Rom. 5:9), a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all people, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All people are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18, 5:10-12).

### **Section D. – SALVATION**

We teach that salvation is completely of God by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ Jesus alone. This salvation rests entirely upon the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ, and the merits of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merits or works (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7, 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

#### **Regeneration**

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given to the sinner (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). Regeneration is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation (John 5:24). Genuine spiritual regeneration is evidenced by the righteous thoughts, words, and actions of the Christian. Good works will be true salvation's proper evidence and fruit (Matt. 7:20; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:10). The ability to do good works will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his/her life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Eph. 5:17-21; Phil. 2:12b; Col. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the character of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29). This conformity is fully realized when the believer is glorified at Christ's second coming (Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

## **Election and Choice**

One of the most persistent debates in the history of the confessing church deals with the question of divine election and human free-will. The question goes like this: Does God choose sinners to be saved and then provide for their salvation? Or does God provide the way of salvation that sinners must choose for themselves?

1. We teach that divine election is a doctrine clearly taught in Scripture. Election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, sanctifies, and glorifies (John 15:16; Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:28-33; Eph. 1:4-11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; Rev. 13:8, 17:8). This choosing of sinners by God is not based on anything that the sinner has done, or will do. It is based solely upon His sovereign grace and mercy (Eph. 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet. 1:2), thus completely removing any and all grounds for boasting (Eph. 2:8-9).
2. We teach that God's sovereign election of sinners for salvation operates in perfect harmony with all of His other attributes. God is being perfectly just and perfectly gracious when He elects. There is no conflict, for as Paul observes in Romans 9, the Potter is free to do with the "clay" whatever He wishes (Rom. 9:11-24). Every aspect of a sinner's salvation harmonizes with who God is in His person, and exalts Him, points to Him, and glorifies Him (Eph. 1:6, 11, 14; John 17:1-5).
3. We teach that in the Bible, sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of a person to repent, turn to God, and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Josh. 24:14-15; Eze. 18:23, 32; 33:11; Matt. 11:27-28, 23:37; Luke 13:34; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:9-10, 13; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Rev. 22:17). These passages repeatedly admonish people (sinners) to turn from false gods and choose the true God. They are an appeal to sinners to "choose" Christ...to repent and turn to Him in saving faith.

How these two sides of God's truth reconcile, is impossible for us to understand fully. God however does not share our struggle. Election and choice are fully reconciled in His mind. His sovereignty in choosing (Rom. 9) and the sinner's responsibility to repent, confess and believe (Rom. 10) are clearly taught. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come to Him in faith AND all who come to Him in faith the Father will receive (John 1:12-13, 6:36-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:7-8). It is our duty to acknowledge both of these truths and joyfully accept them by faith.

## **Justification**

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Rom. 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Isa. 55:6-7; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 11:18; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10) and confess Christ as Savior and Lord (Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of the individual sinner (Rom. 3:20, 4:6; Eph. 2:8-9). It involves the act whereby God places the penalty of our sin onto Christ, (also called "imputation") (Col. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:24) and includes the imputation of Christ's righteousness onto us (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). This means that God is both "*just and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus,*" (Rom. 3:26).

## **Sanctification**

1. We teach that every believer is sanctified (meaning "*set apart*") by God through justification and is therefore declared to be holy, and identified as a saint. This

sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with practical sanctification (see #2). This “*positional*” sanctification has to do with the believer's eternal standing before God, and not his or her present walk (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30, 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:11, 3:1, 10:10, 14, 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2).

2. We teach that there is by the work of the Holy Spirit, a “*practical*” sanctification that a believer realizes as they mature and grow in their relationship with Christ. The believer increasingly becomes in “practice” what they are already by “position.” Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more, an accurate reflection of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Rom. 6:1-22, 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:3-4, 5:23).
3. In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict. The new creation we are in Christ is doing battle daily against the flesh. Yet adequate provision is made through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to enable the believer to live a God-honoring life. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. While eradication of sin is not possible, the Holy Spirit does enable the believer to say no to sin and yes to righteousness (Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Phil. 3:12; Col. 3:9-10; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

### **Security**

1. We teach that all the redeemed once saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24, 6:37-50, 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10, 8:1, 31-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25, 13:5; 1 Pet. 1:5; Jude 24). Jesus said, “*My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand,*” (John 10:27-28).
2. We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance and security of their salvation. However, clearly forbidden is the use of Christian liberty or security as an occasion for sinful living (Rom. 6:15-22, 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).
3. We teach that salvation is first and fundamentally a matter of the heart. It is possible for someone to make a convincing *profession* of faith with their lips, yet not be in *possession* of Christ in their heart. Only God truly knows the human heart (1 Sam. 16:7). The Apostle John will declare that those who do not remain in Christ, prove they never belonged to Him (1 John 2:19). With sobering words Jesus says, “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven,*” (Matt. 7:21).

### **Separation**

1. We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments (Josh. 24:14-15; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).
2. We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us, and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, we the saved should live so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also teach that God commands us to be separated from all religious apostasy and sinful practices (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9:10-11).

3. We teach that believers should be separated to our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:11-12; Heb. 12:1-2) and affirm that the God-honoring Christian will reflect the teaching and character of Christ (Matt. 5:2-12), as well as a continual pursuit of obedience to the Word of God (John 15:10-14; Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

## **Section E. - THE CHURCH**

### **Function and Composition**

1. We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately joined by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the Church (1 Cor. 12:12-13), the Bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-8) of which He is the Head (Eph. 1:22, 4:15; Col. 1:18).
2. We teach that the formation of the Church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His Church at the rapture (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).
3. We teach that the Church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, and made up of all true believers in Christ from Pentecost to this present age (Eph. 2:11-3:6). The Church is distinct from Israel (1 Cor. 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-6, 5:32).
4. We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament (Acts 14:23, 27, 20:17, 28; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1) and that the members of Christ's Church are directed to actively participate in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Heb. 10:25).

### **Church Leadership**

1. We teach that the one, supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are Elders, also called bishops, pastors, pastor-teachers (Acts 10:28; Eph. 4:11) and Deacons, all of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1Pet.5:1-5). See "*Article VII-Government*" for a fuller explanation regarding church leadership.
2. We teach that these leaders lead as servants of Christ (1 Tim. 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Heb. 13:7, 17).

### **Responsibilities**

1. We teach the importance of discipleship (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matt. 18:5-14), and the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Scripture (Matt. 18:15-20; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess.3:6-15; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16).
2. We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). We teach that it is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its Elders and their accurate

interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The Elders should determine all matters of membership, policy, discipline, care, and government as directed by the Word of God (Acts 15:19-31, 20-28; 1 Cor. 5:4-7,13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

3. We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Eph. 4:13-16), by instruction in the Word (2 Tim. 2:2, 15, 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and by advancing and communicating the Gospel to the entire world (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).
4. We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service in and through the church. (1 Cor. 15:58; Eph. 4:12; Rev. 22:12).

### **Spiritual Gifts and Service**

1. We teach the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purposes in the world. Toward that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. Some of these gifts are in the form of persons given to the church for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:7-12). Other spiritual gifts, (being distinct from “spiritual offices” or “the fruit of the Spirit”) are special abilities for service, given by the Holy Spirit, to each member of the body of Christ as He sovereignly determines (1 Cor. 12:11 & 18). These gifts are always given for the benefit and advancement of the church, and never solely for the benefit of an individual believer (Rom. 12:5-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31, see especially verse 7; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

#### **A word about our practice at IBC**

Within the larger Body of Christ there are deeply held yet widely divergent perspectives concerning the nature, number, and use of spiritual gifts. Within Christ’s Church, the practice of the “sign gifts” (tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles, and healing) can be divisive. Such division does great harm to the relational atmosphere of a church, and more importantly to the testimony of the church (John 17:20-23) and its witness to an unbelieving world. It is therefore the practice of IBC in all gatherings, both formal and informal, not to promote the exercise of the “sign” gifts. The preservation of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3) is of greater importance than the promotion of any one person’s or group’s perspective on this subject.

2. We teach that regardless of one’s personal perspective concerning the spiritual gift of healing, God does hear and answer the prayer of faith offered on behalf of the sick and afflicted. As with all prayers, God answers in His own time, in accordance with His own perfect will (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 1 Cor. 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; John 5:14-15).

### **Section F. – ANGELS**

#### **Holy Angels**

We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than mankind, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Ps. 8:5, 103:20-21; Luke 2:9-14; Heb. 1:6-7, 14; Rev. 5:11-14, 19:10, 22:9).

### **Fallen Angels**

1. We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. Satan incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezk. 28:11-19). In so doing, he took numerous angels with him in his rebellion (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:1-14), and introduced sin into the human race by the temptation of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1-15).
2. We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isa. 14:13-14; Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:9-10), the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:20), and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezk. 28:11-19; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

### **Section G. – PHYSICAL DEATH AND THE ETERNAL STATE**

1. We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Rev. 6:9-11), and that at death the immaterial spiritual nature of all redeemed persons passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8). The redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with Him (2 Cor. 5:8), eventually to be clothed with a new body perfectly suited to an eternal glorified life with Christ in heaven (1 Thess. 4:13-17; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 15:35-44, 50-54).
2. We teach the bodily resurrection of all mankind; the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Rom. 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Cor. 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Dan. 12:2; John 5:29; Rev. 20:13-15).
3. We teach that at death the immaterial spiritual nature of the unsaved person is kept under Divine punishment (Luke 16:19-26). All unsaved persons will eventually be clothed with a body perfectly suited for an eternity separated from God (John 5:28-29), they shall each one appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15), shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41-46), and shall be cut off from the life and presence of God forever (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:41-46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

### **Section H. – CHRIST’S RETURN AND LAST THINGS**

#### **A word about specific details within the scope of End Time events**

There exists within Christ’s Church a diversity of perspectives concerning the timing, order, and specific details of many End Time events. Even the most gifted and sincere Bible scholars can differ significantly in their conclusions about this amazing area of doctrine. Preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3) demands that differences of perspective be allowed to co-exist in healthy tension at IBC. The intent in this section is to present the major End Time events to which Scripture speaks and which IBC would teach. The specific details of End Time doctrine and the chronology that connects the events together, demands careful study by every Christian. To gain a better understanding of how the Bible Church approaches the details of End Time doctrine, please consult the IBC Position Papers titled, “*End Times Chronology*” and “*The Rapture of the Church*” that have been prepared by the Elder Team. These are available upon request through the church office.

#### **The Rapture of the Church**

We teach the rapture of Christ’s Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18), often referred to as the “blessed hope” of the believer (Titus 2:13).

**The Tribulation Period**

We teach that a time of unprecedented righteous judgments from God will be poured out upon the earth and the unbelieving world (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 6-19).

**The Millennial Reign of Christ**

We teach that Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matt. 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:9-11; 2:29-30) and establish His Messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Rev. 20:1-7). The Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, and righteousness (Isa. 11; 65:17-25; Ezk. 36:33-38).

**The Judgment of All Who Have Rejected Christ**

We teach that Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10). Christ will raise up and judge the unbelieving of all ages at the Great White Throne Judgment (John 5:22; Rev. 20:11-15).

**Heaven and the Believer**

We teach that Christ has prepared a dwelling place, a heavenly city for all the redeemed of all the ages, where they will enjoy fellowship forever with God and one another (John 14:3; Rev. 21, 22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled all things according to the Scriptures, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28) so that in everything the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Cor. 15:28).

# **PREAMBLE**

We the members of the Idyllwild Bible Church, Idyllwild, California, recognizing that the Word of God sets forth a Divine plan of local church organization, do upon this basis ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

## **ARTICLE I - NAME, STRUCTURE, AND CHARACTER**

### **Section A. - Organizational Name and Status**

The name of this organization is Idyllwild Bible Church (also referred to hereafter as "the Bible Church," or "the church," or "IBC"). We are a non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the state of California. We are not affiliated with any specific church denomination. We are affiliated with the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, an organization that exists to provide assistance to independent churches of like faith and conviction.

### **Section B. - Independence and Autonomy**

It was the purpose of the original incorporators that IBC shall be an independent and autonomous organization, adhering to the essential doctrines of the Christian faith as set forth in the Holy Bible.

### **Section C. - Nondenominational Character**

In accordance with New Testament example and teaching, it was the original purpose of this church that it shall remain free from denominationalism. Therefore, it shall avoid identification with denominations or associations of churches by means of its name or by the observance of traditions peculiar to such denominations or associations. (1 Cor. 1:11-13; 3:1-9)

### **Section D. - Fellowship with Other Local Churches**

This church shall maintain fellowship with other local churches. It may participate and cooperate with other churches in ways that will not jeopardize or compromise its doctrine, purpose, or testimony.

## **ARTICLE II - PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES**

God called Idyllwild Bible Church into existence to bring glory to Himself. To achieve this purpose, we are committed to helping people discover a loving personal relationship with God—a relationship in which together, we grow to become all that He wants us to be. We desire to help His people *worship* God *rightly*, *lead* their homes *spiritually*, *serve* in their church *effectively*, *proclaim* Christ *boldly*, *display* Christian character in the community *consistently*, and *support* God's work around the world *faithfully*. (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 3:20-21, 4:11-13, 4:35, 5:22-6:4; John 15:5,8; Matt. 5:16, 28:19-20; Mark 12:30; Heb. 6:1; Rom. 5:8, 12:5-8; 1 Cor. 2:11, 9:22; 10:31; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:12, 3:15, 4:10.)



The following is an elaboration of the major thoughts and ideas presented in this Purpose Statement:

### **The glory of God**

Ephesians 3:20-21 makes the glory of God the ultimate end and purpose of mankind and the Church. The passage reads, *"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be GLORY in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever."* (See also 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Matthew 5:16, as well as many others.)

### **Worship God rightly**

The Christian life as the Bible presents it, is a life deeply rooted in the soil of love...a love expressed first by God toward the sinner (Rom. 5:8), and then freely given back to God by the forgiven sinner in the form of sincere worship and obedience. Jesus' answer to the question concerning which command of God is the greatest said, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength,"* Mark 12:30. In doing this we worship God rightly.

### **Lead their homes spiritually**

Mutual love and submission between husband and wife (Eph. 5:22-25), obedience of children to their parents, and respect among all family members (Eph. 6:1-4) are marks of a home that is under the lordship of Christ. Indeed, Christian marriage and the family are to be reflections to the world of Christ's relationship to His Church (Eph. 5:32-33). Helping families keep a Christ-centered focus is an ongoing goal of the ministries provided through IBC.

### **Serve in their church effectively**

Every Christian is in possession of at least one spiritual gift personally given by the Holy Spirit so that the Christian can serve others in the name and power of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:11; 1 Peter 4:10). We are committed to helping Christians discover and deploy their spiritual gifts for the glory of God and the good of others.

### **Proclaim Christ boldly**

Every Christian is admonished to *"...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..."* 1 Peter. 3:15. The Apostle Paul said, *"I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some,"* 1 Cor. 9:22. We desire to cultivate a "redemptive awareness" within all who call IBC home for we are mindful that Jesus said, *"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."* John 4:35.

### **Display Christian character in the community consistently**

It has been said, "Your actions speak so loudly that I can't hear what you are saying." What a sober reminder for every Christian! We are committed to helping followers of Jesus at IBC consistently live in such a way that with or without words they are effective witnesses of the life-changing power of Jesus Christ. *"Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us."* 1 Peter 2:12

### **Support God's work around the world faithfully**

God expects every Christian to be a "globally-minded Christian." Jesus said, *"...go and make disciples of all nations..."* Matthew 28:19-20. Evangelism is not only around the corner, but around the world! We are committed to cultivating a "Great Commission mindset" within all who attend the Bible Church.

## **ARTICLE III – ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH**

We recognize two ordinances for the New Testament church: the regular celebration of Communion, and the one-time observance of Water Baptism (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Matt. 28:19.) Both are expressed commands from the Lord Jesus to every true believer in Him. It is inappropriate for anyone who has not experienced salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone to participate in either of these ordinances. Furthermore, neither Communion nor Baptism is to be understood as a means of salvation or making one's salvation more secure. These ordinances are empty ritual for anyone not united to Christ by faith. They are also inappropriate to anyone too young to understand redemptive truth.

### **Section A. - THE LORD'S TABLE OF COMMUNION**

The word "communion" means that the participants are walking in fellowship with Christ (1 John 1:6-10). It is a memorial of Christ's death on our behalf, and our identification with His atonement at the cross. Communion shall be observed on a regular basis as determined by the leadership of the church. The Scriptures are clear concerning one's personal preparation for this observance (1 Cor. 11:17-34). Careful examination of one's life is in order to safeguard against taking the cup in an unworthy manner (1 Cor. 11:27). Because Communion is for true followers of Christ, parents should be discerning as to their child's participation, especially if there is any question as to the child's relationship with Jesus Christ. Likewise, let all persons be fully knowledgeable that the Communion Table conveys no saving power, no evangelistic objectives, and must not be viewed as a "good work" that might lead to salvation. It is for those who have received Jesus as personal Savior and are living consistently in a manner reflecting this saved relationship (Eph. 4:1). It is also understood that Christ is present in the believer and not in the elements. The bread and the cup are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ.

### **Section B. - BELIEVER'S BAPTISM**

Baptism is an act of obedience on the part of one already saved through faith in Christ. In accordance with New Testament observations, baptism should follow soon after conversion. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward reality by one who has identified with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As such, infant baptism is precluded. Indeed, parents must exercise keen discernment when considering their child's participation in baptism. Baptism shall be administered by immersion (except in those cases where this may not be possible). Those seeking baptism shall make their desire known to the Pastor or Elders, and shall be given teaching to prepare them for this sacred "one time" observance (Acts 8:36-39; 10:47-48).

## **ARTICLE IV – MARRIAGE**

### **Section A. - DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE**

As a matter of belief, doctrine and religious practice, IBC reserves the term "marriage" for the covenant relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

## **Section B. – HUMAN SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE**

1. We teach that God sovereignly and intentionally created each individual human being to be a male or a female (Gen. 1:27 Gen. 5:1-2; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6). Therefore anyone who seeks to adopt a gender other than one's physiological/genetic birth gender is in conflict with God's creative intent and is therefore immoral and to be understood as sinful in God's sight (Deut. 22:5).
2. We teach that God intended sexual intimacy to be enjoyed only within the context of the male to female marriage relationship; and that all other sexual relations outside of the male to female marriage relationship are personally destructive, sinful and forbidden by God (Heb. 13:4; Gen. 1:28, 2:24; Lev. 18:1-30; 1 Cor. 7:2-5; Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Jude 1:7).
3. We teach that marriage is ordained and instituted by God and according to the Scriptures can only exist and be fulfilled between one genetic man and one genetic woman (Gen. 2:21-24; Mark 10:2-12; Matt. 19:3-11; Eph. 5:21-33; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12).
4. We teach that marriage is a picture of the relationship of Christ and the Church and is to be a lifelong covenant relationship between a man and a woman based on love, respect, mutual submission and personal sacrifice. Divorce is permitted, as well as remarriage following a divorce when the circumstances of the divorce are consistent with Scriptural guidelines (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:3-11; Eph. 5:21-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Mal. 2:14-16; 1Cor. 7:8-16; 2 Cor. 5:17).

## **Section C. – SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE**

Only when persons associated with IBC make a marriage request, and their request conforms to Sections A and B of this Article, meets the Facility Use Policy guidelines, and has been approved by the IBC Elder Team or its pastors, can the marriage be performed on IBC property.

# **ARTICLE V - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

## **Section A. – THE PURPOSE OF MEMBERSHIP**

**1. Membership is essential to the orderly administration of the church.** The church is to be a faithful steward of the material and human treasures that God has entrusted to it by developing and maintaining effective structures and organization. The secular world recognizes the importance of organization and structure as it lays up earthly treasures. How much more should the church, whose goal is to lay up treasures in heaven, seek to do the same? (John 6:27; Matt. 6:19-21). 1 Cor. 14:40 says, "But all things should be done decently and in an orderly manner." Membership plays a vital role in helping a church accomplish that good end.

**2. Membership helps to more clearly identify those who are of faith in Jesus and those who are not.** Moving through the process of church membership can never conclusively reveal who is or is not a Christian, and it certainly is NOT a means or requirement for salvation. However, the membership process provides tangible criteria that is helpful when determining whether someone should be treated as a professing Christian or not. This is helpful because Scripture places a level of accountability and expectation upon a professing Christian that is not in place for a non-Christian. Membership helps church members and leaders relate to one another biblically and consistently in a spirit of unity, which is an incredibly powerful witness to the world (John 17:20-23; Eph. 4:1-6).

**3. Membership provides a consistent means for educating people about the nature, distinctives, and functioning of this church.** Pursuing membership at IBC will expose the Christian (perhaps for the first time) to important doctrines and helpful instruction relevant to the life of every growing Christian. Membership is yet one more way the IBC family seeks to “admonish everyone and teach everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ,” (Colossians 1:28).

**4. Membership promotes involvement.** Membership provides a way for people to take that critical growth step from being “in the crowd,” to being “part of the congregation.” Only a member has a voting voice in the major decision-making aspects of the life of the church. As well, the membership process itself conveys to anyone seeking membership, that serving in the Body and exercising one’s spiritual gifts is a clear and reasonable expectation. Membership also helps insure that all who are serving, are approaching their service from the same doctrinal and philosophical foundation since all went through the same process.

**5. Membership provides helpful legal protection to the church.** Membership as a requirement for entering most fully into all aspects of IBC church life provides some measure of legal protection for the church since every member has agreed voluntarily and publically to place themselves under the Doctrinal Statement, By-Laws, and Constitution of IBC.

## **Section B. - REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of Idyllwild Bible Church shall consist of those who fully comply with the membership requirements set forth by the Elder Team.

1. Every member shall give clear evidence in word and by lifestyle, of a personal faith relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. These persons will sincerely desire to live a godly life that is obedient to the Scriptures and exemplary in all respects.
2. While there are doctrinal matters that are not essential to one’s salvation relationship to Christ or one’s relationship to His Church, the following doctrines are viewed as primary and non-negotiable, and must be embraced with full conviction by all who desire membership at IBC:

### **a. Inerrancy of Scripture**

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, and infallible (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 5:18; John 16:12-13).

### **b. Trinity**

There is one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deut. 6:4; 2 Cor. 13:14).

### **c. Deity of Christ**

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful mankind (John 1:1-2; John 1:14; Luke 1:35).

#### **d. Atonement of Christ**

The Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice (Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 1:7).

#### **e. Salvation by Grace**

Salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins (Eph. 2:8-10; John 1:12; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

#### **f. Bodily Resurrection of Christ**

Our justification is made sure by Christ's literal, physical, resurrection from the dead (1 Peter 1:3-5; Acts 2:24; 1 Cor. 15:3-4).

These are the primary doctrines of a saving faith and must be embraced by anyone desiring membership at IBC. This does not minimize the importance or the need for the other stated doctrinal convictions that IBC teaches (See Doctrine pg. 6-15). Therefore, committed to preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:2), those who become members of IBC agree by signed statement (contained in the membership application material) that they will not intentionally undermine the stated doctrinal position of the church in any area, even though their personal convictions may differ.

3. Since water baptism is a biblical command, every Christian applying for membership will be expected to fulfill this command as part of the membership requirement if this has not yet been part of their experience. (See Article III, for a description of baptism and its practice at IBC.)
4. There is only one kind of membership in IBC, that being "full membership," with all the rights and privileges that accompany it. One may apply for membership at age 18. Children of parents who are members of IBC are not automatically members of the church. Children of existing members must apply for membership upon turning 18 if they desire to fully participate in those aspects of church life in which membership is required, (for example: participating in a matter that requires a membership vote).
5. IBC does not allow dual membership. Those who are members of another church, and consider IBC their "second home," are warmly welcomed. However, being an active participant in one church is a significant obligation for the average Christian. For this reason, only those with no other membership affiliation will be considered for membership at IBC.
6. The Elder Team will gladly receive a "letter of transfer of membership" from other churches of like faith, but a letter of transfer does not constitute membership at IBC.
7. When a member chooses to live in a manner inconsistent with the requirements of membership at IBC, and church discipline efforts as presented in Article VII of this Constitution have proven ineffective, a member will be removed from membership. The congregation does not vote on matters of membership removal. A decision by the Elder Team (those serving in "active" status) as outlined in Article VIII, Section B. (7) g. is required to implement a member's removal from membership.

- Members who are consistently absent in their attendance of services (an unexplained pattern of absence in excess of three months) shall be removed from the membership of the church by a decision by the Elder Team (those serving in “active” status) as outlined in Article VIII, Section B. (7) g. In such matters, concerted effort to encourage serious commitment to the Lord and His local church shall be made by the Elders. The church office shall prepare an updated directory of members annually.
- Letters of transfer to other churches shall be provided as requested by departing members in good standing.

### **Section C. – THE PROCEDURE FOR MEMBERSHIP**

All who desire membership at IBC are required to follow the procedure outlined below:

#### **Step #1 – Initial Contact**

After expressing the initial desire to become a member of IBC, one is given a membership packet, including the membership application. As well, the applicant will be provided with some additional supplemental material dealing with what the Bible teaches about the local church and one’s involvement in it. The applicant will be informed as to when the next IBC membership orientation meeting will be held.

#### **Step #2 – IBC Membership Orientation Meeting**

Prospective members will be asked to attend this informational meeting to learn more about the importance of membership in the local church and the distinctives of membership at IBC. Applicants will be given the opportunity to ask any questions they may have. At this time prospective members will turn in their completed IBC membership application.

#### **Step #3 – Meeting with the Elders**

After the IBC membership orientation meeting, the applicant will meet with two or three Elders for an informal time of question and answer concerning the membership application. At this time applicants will have opportunity to share their testimony as well as ask any remaining questions they may have about membership.

#### **Step #4 – Intentions Made Known to the Congregation**

Following the Elder Interview, the applicant’s intent to become a member of IBC is announced from the pulpit and in print through the bulletin, on two successive Sundays. This is done as an added protection for the church, allowing anyone to come forward who might have information concerning a prospective member that if not addressed could prove harmful to the church.

#### **Step #5 -Formal Presentation before the Congregation**

As the final step in the process, during a Sunday morning service, those who have fulfilled Steps 1-4 will be formally presented to the congregation as new members of IBC.

### **Section D. - RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS**

All members of IBC are expected:

- To participate in the ministry of the church in such measure as talents, spiritual gifts, and circumstances shall allow (1 Peter 4:10). Such service shall be voluntary and

determined in cooperation with the pastoral staff, Elders, Deacons, and the leaders of the various ministries of the church. IBC encourages all members to think creatively and be alert to new areas of ministry opportunity where their gifts might be fully utilized.

2. To be involved consistently in the regular public services of the church (Heb. 10:25).
3. To cultivate Christian love for other members, meeting their needs, encouraging their spiritual growth, seeking to live and serve humbly and charitably (Phil. 2:1-4).
4. To give financially to the work of IBC according to the guidelines of Scripture: proportionately, cheerfully, and consistently (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:9, 9:6-15).
5. To maintain a personal devotional life that includes Bible study and prayer (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Thess. 5:16-18).
6. To abstain from anything that brings one's testimony into question (1 John 2:15; 2 Cor. 6:14-18), and yet seeking always to win the unsaved to faith in Christ (Rom. 10:14-15; 1 Cor. 9:19-23).
7. To work in a spirit of cooperation and with loving submission to the Board of Elders and the pastoral staff. Should this no longer be possible, it is better for a member to withdraw their membership and unite with another fellowship where their convictions can be fully expressed, rather than remain and cause division. The Elders have the responsibility to confront members or non-members whose attitudes or conduct are inconsistent with a Christian testimony or when the unity and effective ministry of the church is threatened. Such matters are sufficient cause for church discipline (Matt. 18:15-17). See Article V, Section D. 6.
8. To resolve disputes with others in a biblical, equitable, and charitable way. In the unlikely case of members who are unable to resolve a dispute among themselves, all members agree to the following:
  - a. The Bible commands all followers of Jesus to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the context of the church (Romans 12:17-21; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Matthew 18:15-20).
  - b. Therefore, it is agreed that any claim or dispute that cannot be resolved privately shall be settled by biblically-based mediation and, if this proves ineffective, then legally binding arbitration. One or both of these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim between members. Members expressly waive the right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision. The Elder Team (those in "active" service) will oversee this process, the goal of which is God-honoring reconciliation.

## **ARTICLE VI - CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

1. In Matthew 18:15-20 the Lord Jesus outlines a God-honoring procedure for dealing with sin in the life of an individual who professes Christ as Savior and Lord and has identified with a local congregation of believers. In brief, the procedure is as follows:
  - a. Any Christian who becomes aware of another brother's or sister's sin is responsible to confront the sin **in private** with the individual (Matt. 18:15). If repentance follows, the one who cared enough to confront, has served their brother or sister and the matter is concluded.

- b. If the sinning individual does not respond to this loving effort of correction, the confronting Christian is to take **one or two other mature Christians** with them and “try again.” This is not only a loving attempt to bring an end to the sin, but it also confirms that the sinning believer has been properly confronted and has not repented. If repentance follows this second effort, the matter is concluded (Matt. 18:16).
  - c. If the attempt by two or three fails to bring repentance, the sin is brought before the **church** (Matt. 18:17). In this instance the whole church is responsible to lovingly and fervently plead with the sinning person to repent. If the sinning individual repents, the matter is concluded.
  - d. If none of the above efforts have resulted in repentance, the fourth, final, and most regrettable action called for by Jesus, is to formally and publicly **remove** the individual from the fellowship of the church. This person is to be treated as one who is no longer part of the faith community of IBC, having demonstrated by word and/or action that they are in opposition to the clear teaching of Scripture, or by extension the teaching of Scripture as reflected in the Constitution and Doctrinal Statement of IBC (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; Titus 3:10-11). The purity and testimony of the church is maintained, and the unrepentant individual is released to the grievous and inevitable consequences that result from sin. When the opportunity presents itself, the ongoing responsibility of the congregation is to keep calling the sinner to repentance, knowing that the goal of all discipline is restoration (Gal. 6:1).
2. Matters of discipline that lead to the involvement of the congregation at large shall be overseen by the Elder Team. A decision by the Elder Team (those serving in “active” status) as outlined in Article VII, Section B. (7) g. is required when taking disciplinary action. The congregation does not vote on matters of church discipline. If it becomes evident that a member or non-member is determined to live in moral sin or doctrinal deviation despite clear instruction from the Word of God, and diligent attempts at correction and restoration have failed, it is the duty of the Elders to follow the guidelines of Scripture by removing the unrepentant person from the church and a member from membership (Matt. 18:15-17; Titus 3:10-11).
  3. When it is necessary to bring a disciplinary matter to the congregation, the Elder Board shall inform the church in a manner that it deems most appropriate. The congregation will be directed by the Elders to lovingly pursue the sinning person, pleading with him or her to repent before the fourth step of discipline becomes necessary. An unrepentant individual shall subsequently be publicly dismissed from the fellowship of IBC and a member removed from membership.
  4. The goal of all church discipline is the restoration of the sinning person to a godly life (Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Cor. 5:5 and 2 Cor. 2:6-11). Any member or non-member removed from the church for disciplinary reasons may be reinstated to fellowship upon the observed evidence of genuine repentance, a willingness to abide under the authority of Scripture, and the provisions of the IBC Constitution (Gal. 6:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:6-7; 7:10). Reinstatement is granted by a decision of the Elder Team (those serving in “active” status) as outlined in Article VII, Section B. (7) g.
  5. Members of IBC who come under church discipline as defined in this Article forfeit the right to resign from membership. Resignation from membership is only possible by members who are in good standing.



## ARTICLE VII – GOVERNMENT

### **Section A. – Nature, Function, and Authority of Administration**

The church functions on the basis of a congregational government, since the church body has ultimate authority in installing church officers. However, for efficiency of church administration, the congregation recognizes that it delegates its authority to the Elder Team, except for major decisions involving Constitutional changes, major building projects, the annual budget, and changes or additions to the pastoral staff. In these matters, the congregation will make ultimate determinations at called business meetings. In all other matters, the Elders, with prayerful discernment, will act according to what is most beneficial to the church body. The Elders are free to consult with the Deacon Team on items needing broader representation; however, final authority remains with the Elders.

### **Section B. – Elders**

- (1) **Qualifications** - Because IBC church government invests the Elders with administrative authority and the shepherding ministry of the church, it must be emphasized that the Christian character and maturity of the Elder is crucial to the health of the church body. The office of Elder is available to men only. Any man who is to be considered for an Elder role must be a member of Idyllwild Bible Church. An Elder shall manifest the qualifications described in 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9, recognizing that no man perfectly fulfills these qualifications. However, an Elder is to continually aspire for growth in these areas of qualification, and he must have a genuine desire to serve (1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:1-3).
- (2) **Appointment** - It is the Holy Spirit who prepares men for leadership roles in the church. This being said, the Holy Spirit's choices will be expressed through human agency. An Elder is placed in office by congregational vote. This vote is in fact an affirmation more than an election. A man can be suggested by members of the congregation for consideration as an Elder; a man can make personal application born out of his desire to serve; or the Elder Team may have observed a man long enough to come to the conviction that this person would be an asset to the church in an Elder capacity. The Elder Team oversees a rigorous interview and background examination of the Elder candidate. Upon successful completion of this examination, the Elder candidate's name will be presented to the congregation in both written and verbal form on three successive Sundays. Upon completion of this requirement, the candidate can be presented to the congregation for affirmation by congregational vote through secret ballot. There will be one potential Elder in each position on the ballot. He may be either affirmed or rejected by the congregational vote. The potential Elder must be affirmed by 85% of the ballots cast. If there are no potential candidates qualified to serve as an Elder, the Elder Team will wait upon the Lord to supply the need, rather than lower the standard.
- (3) **Term of Service** - An Elder's term shall consist of three consecutive years of service (called "active service"), after which he is required to step out of active service for a minimum of one year. An Elder on leave is not considered a voting member on any item requiring a vote by the Elder Team. The Elder on leave may be asked to return to active service for an additional three-year term following each year of leave. An exception can be made to the three-year term limit to allow an Elder an extension of his term of service, when doing so is in the best interest of the church body. This extension can be for as long as the Elder Team deems necessary, after which the Elder must take a leave of absence for one year before returning to active service. The extension must be recommended by the Elder Team and approved by the

congregation at the Annual Business Meeting for each year of the extension. While a term of service is three years, an annual congregational vote of affirmation is still required.

- (4) **Evaluation and Discipline** - The Elder Team shall periodically assess the strengths and needs of the Team. Should it become necessary, any Elder who is consistently in disagreement with the general consensus of the Team, or finds it difficult to be a cooperating member of the Team, or causes a spirit of strife and unrest in the work of the Team, shall of his own volition remove himself as an Elder. If in the opinion of the Elders, a fellow-Elder needs to be relieved of his office, the principles of Matt. 18:15-20, 2 Thess. 3:14-15, and 1 Tim. 5:19-20 should be considered as guidelines. This does not require congregational action. A majority of all the Elders (including those not in "active service" status) is required for removal of an Elder from the Team.
- (5) **Composition of the Elder Team** - The Team shall be composed of those men who are qualified and have been approved by the congregation. While the number of Elders may vary depending upon the needs of the congregation, the number of elders engaged in active service shall never be less than three. The lead pastor is automatically a member of the Elder Team. Other qualified pastoral staff may be asked to serve as the needs of the church dictate.
- (6) **Responsibilities of Elders** - Without abuse to the authority invested in the Elder Team by the congregation, it is declared that the Elders responsibilities shall include but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Legal responsibility for the corporation of the church.
  - b. Final authority in the interpretation of the Constitution, By-Laws, and Doctrinal Statement of the church.
  - c. Spiritual care of the church, including but not limited to instruction of the Word, equipping of the believers for "the work of the ministry," visitation of the sick and elderly, and the meeting of special needs that arise in the lives of church members (Eph. 4:12). The Elders extend, enhance, and support the pastors and staff in their ministry to the flock. The Elders shall at all times remain open and sensitive to the needs of the members of the church, willing to encourage and give spiritual guidance. They shall truly seek to shepherd the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3), which includes effective communication at all levels of church life.
  - d. Overseeing the ministry and affairs of the church in accordance with the policies and practices that have been established for the church. The Elders will also create new policies as needed to enhance the effectiveness of the church.
  - e. Responsibly delegating leadership to committees and individuals qualified to lead the various ministries within the church.
  - f. Providing oversight to the Deacon Team. The Elder Team will provide an Elder to sit on the Deacon Team as its representative to help ensure effective communication between the respective Teams. The chairman of the Deacon Team can be a serving Elder, but this is not required.
  - g. Acting on all matters or policies pertaining to staff. This will include, but is not limited to, performance reviews, job descriptions, compensation, and benefits.
  - h. Being actively involved in the missions program of the church, advising and giving direction to the Missions chairperson and the Missions Team. Their leadership and counsel will also be available to any other church committee or ministry.

- i. Interviewing prospective new members after applications are completed. Two or three Elders will be involved in the interview process. Upon completion of the membership requirements, the Elders shall schedule with pastors a service for receiving the new members formally into the fellowship of the church (See Article V, Church Membership).
- j. All matters of church discipline. The Elder Team handles confidential matters and sensitive issues, and they shall not be required to report in detail to the congregation information that might prove harmful to the church Body.
- k. Safeguarding the church's "Purpose" (See Article II) diligently, and own the vision of the church deeply. The Elders are ultimately responsible before God to promote and protect the spiritual welfare of the church, and to oversee the plans and programs of IBC.

**(7) Elder Team Meetings -**

- a. The Elder Team shall meet at least once a month to coordinate its efforts (unless extenuating circumstances prevent this), and as often as necessary to conduct business and oversee the spiritual affairs of the church. Members of the congregation are welcome to express their views and are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Elders at an appropriate time.
- b. Minutes of all Elder Team meetings shall be maintained.
- c. The Elder Team shall be self-organizing. That is, the Elder Team shall determine for itself how to most effectively carry out its responsibilities.
- d. A chairman of the Elder Team, other than the Lead Pastor, shall be selected each year. He will oversee operation of the Elder Team and officiate at the Business Meetings of the church.
- e. Each year, the Elder Team shall select officers in such manner as to comply with any legal requirements associated with IBC's articles of incorporation in the State of California. This may include, but is not limited to, a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The President shall be designated as the person to receive and service legal papers on behalf of IBC.
- f. A majority attendance of active Elders constitutes a quorum for meetings.
- g. The Elder Team will strive toward unanimity in all matters. Where this is not possible, 75% agreement of those present is acceptable for the decisions that are made, or a majority of the entire Team (whichever is greater), unless specified otherwise in this document. Any vote may be taken by open or closed ballot, at the discretion of the chairman.
- h. Any action of at least 75% of the Elders, at other than a called meeting shall always be as valid and effective in all respects as if passed at a called meeting.

**Section C – Deacons**

The Bible presents a form of church government that allows for the creation of a second office in addition to that of Elder. The Deacon Team enables the Elder Team to fulfill its duties by assuming responsibility for countless tasks that minister to people and church life on a more material, physical, and practical level. The word 'deacon' comes from the

Greek word 'diakonos' meaning 'servant,' and this perfectly describes those who fill this office. They are servants who minister to the body of Idyllwild Bible Church. The Deacon Team is comprised of both men and women who meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

- (1) **Qualifications** - The guidelines for the men and women who serve as Deacons are given in 1 Tim. 3:8-13 with helpful insight also provided by 1 Pet. 3:1-6 and Titus 2:3-5. This office is available to men and women who are members of Idyllwild Bible Church. The office requires spiritual maturity, a willingness to serve, a sensitive heart, and a desire to meet many of the physical and practical needs of the Body of Christ. The spirit of service pictured in Acts 6:1-7 should characterize the one who holds this office.
- (2) **Appointment** - Deacons are placed in office by a congregational vote. A man or woman can be suggested by members of the congregation for consideration; an individual can make personal application born out of a desire to serve; or the Deacon Team or the Elder Team may have observed a person long enough to come to the conviction that they would be an asset to the church in a Deacon capacity. However, it is the Elder Team that ultimately selects those whom it will recommend to the congregation for service as a Deacon. The Elder Team oversees a rigorous interview and background examination of the candidate. Upon successful completion of this examination, the Deacon candidate's name will be presented to the congregation in both written and verbal form on three successive Sundays. Upon completion of this requirement, the candidate can be presented to the congregation for affirmation by congregational vote through secret ballot. There will be one potential Deacon in each position on the ballot. They may be either affirmed or rejected by the congregational vote. The potential Deacon must be affirmed by 85% of the ballots cast. If there are no potential candidates qualified to serve in this office, the Elder Team will wait upon the Lord to supply the need, rather than lower the standard.
- (3) **Term of Service** - A Deacon's term shall consist of three consecutive years of service (called "active service"), after which he/she is required to step out of active service for a minimum of one year. The Deacon on leave may be asked to return to active service for additional three-year terms following each year of leave. An exception can be made to the three-year term limit to allow a Deacon an extension of his or her term of service, when doing so is in the best interest of the church body. This extension can be for as long as the Elder Team deems necessary, after which the Deacon must take a leave of absence for one year before returning to active service. The extension must be recommended by the Elder Team and approved by the congregation at the Annual Vision and Planning Meeting for each year of the extension. While a term of service is three years, an annual congregational vote of affirmation is still required.
- (4) **Evaluation and Discipline** - The Deacon Team shall periodically assess the strengths and needs of this Team. Should it become necessary, any Deacon who is consistently in disagreement with the general consensus of the Team, or finds it difficult to be a cooperating member of this Team, or causes a spirit of strife and unrest in the work of this Team, shall of their own volition remove themselves. If in the opinion of the Deacon Team further action is required, the matter will be given to the Elder Team. This does not require a congregational action.

(5) **Composition** - It would be to the advantage of the church to have as Deacons men and women who have had experience in the various areas of responsibility that involve them. However, since the Deacon Team has the freedom to tap all resourceful persons in the church for help when needed, this is not a requirement. There is no requirement that there be equal representation of men and women on the Deacon Team. The number of Deacons serving at any time will be determined by the needs of the congregation and those qualified to serve. The Chairman of the Deacon Team may be an Elder but this is not required.

(6) **Responsibilities of Deacons** - Without abuse to the authority invested in this Team by the congregation, it is declared that the Deacon Team's responsibilities shall include but are not limited to the following:

- a. The Deacon Team will serve under the authority of the Elder Team. It shall at any time be free to bring matters to the Elder Team for counsel and direction.
- b. This Deacon Team, or those it designates, shall manage the financial record keeping and the handling of church monies.
- c. This Deacon Team shall implement care for the poor, sick, or otherwise needy through the management of the Benevolence Fund, and will oversee any ministries that are specifically responsible for benevolent care.
- d. This Deacon Team shall respond in times of bereavement and loss as is appropriate to the specific situation, or as directed by the church staff or Elders.
- e. This Deacon Team will be responsible for the regular preparation of communion, as well as overseeing preparations for baptism services as required.
- f. This Deacon Team will coordinate the efforts of the Fellowship Tent, the Visitor Welcome teams, the Ushers ministry, and the food service needs for events that have this element as part of the program.
- g. This Deacon Team shall exercise supervision of all church property, buildings, and other real assets that belong to IBC. This shall include regular maintenance and janitorial care of the facilities. On behalf of the church they shall obtain all needed insurance and maintain documents of all insurance, corporation, and properties, and shall assess insurance annually to be certain of adequate coverage and compliance.

(7) **Deacon Team Meetings** –

- a. The Deacon Team shall meet at least once a month to coordinate its efforts (unless extenuating circumstances prevent this), and as often as necessary to conduct the business of the church. Members of the congregation are welcome to express their views and concerns to any Deacon.
- b. Minutes of all Deacon Team meetings shall be maintained.
- c. The Deacon Team shall determine for itself how to most effectively carry out its responsibilities.

- d. The Deacon Team chairman shall be selected by the Elder Team. The chairman need not be an Elder. The Chairman will oversee operation of the Deacon Team and represent the Deacon Team at the Business Meetings of the church.
- e. There will always be an Elder who represents the Deacon Team at the Elder Team meetings, providing a vital communication link between the respective Teams.
- f. A majority attendance of active Deacons constitutes a quorum for meetings.
- g. The Deacon Team will strive toward unanimity in all matters. Where this is not possible, 75% agreement of those present is acceptable for the decisions that are made, or a majority of the entire Team (whichever is greater), unless specified otherwise in this document. Any vote may be taken by open or closed ballot, at the discretion of the chairman.
- h. Any action of 75% of the Deacons, at other than a called meeting, shall always be as valid and effective in all respects as if passed at a called meeting.

## **ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

**Section A. - The Annual Business Meeting** – The date, time and place of this meeting of the membership shall be determined by the Elder Team and announced in the Sunday morning worship service and in the bulletin two weeks prior to the meeting. The agenda of this meeting shall include approval of the minutes of any special meetings and the previous annual business meeting, affirmation of Elders and Deacons, presentation of the previous year’s financial statement, the approval of the operating budget for the coming year, and any other matters deemed necessary or appropriate. Minutes of the Annual Vision and Planning Meetings shall be maintained.

**Section B. - Special Meetings of the Membership** - In addition to the Annual Vision and Planning Meeting, the operations of the church may require special meetings. Such meetings may be held at any time by request of the Elder Team, or by written request to the Elders from twenty-five percent (25%) of the voting members of the congregation. The call of such a meeting and its purpose must be announced at the Sunday morning service on two consecutive Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. Records of these announcements must be kept with the regular minutes of the Annual Vision and Planning Meeting.

**Section C. - Quorum** - A quorum at the Annual Vision and Planning Meeting or Special Meetings of the membership shall be twenty-five percent (25%) of all voting members. A simple majority constitutes a decision unless stipulated elsewhere in this document. When less than fifty percent (50%) of voting members are present, a two-thirds majority of those members present shall be required to pass any measure unless stated otherwise in this document.

**Section D. - The Meeting Chairman** - The Chairman of the Elder Team shall preside at the Annual Vision and Planning Meeting, and all Special Meetings. In the event of his absence, the Elder Team shall appoint a Chairman for the meeting.

## **ARTICLE IX – CHURCH MINISTRY and MINISTERS**

The type, nature, and number of ministries that are part of Idyllwild Bible Church are many. There are worship services, Bible study classes, community outreach efforts, prayer gatherings, children's and youth ministries, home and foreign mission programs, and special events, to name just a few. While each effort may differ in focus or form, all exist to promote the stated Purpose of Idyllwild Bible Church (See Article II).

While the term “minister” has historically been understood to refer to persons who are designated as the called “pastors” in the church who often receive financial compensation, we prefer to view all members of IBC as “ministers.” Every Christian has been given by the Holy Spirit spiritual gifts that they are to exercise for the benefit and promotion of the entire church (1 Cor. 12:4-7). Thus the phrase, “every member a minister” is appropriate at IBC whether the role is teaching, preaching, administrating, serving, helping or another of the Holy Spirit’s giftings given expressly to advance the cause of Jesus in the world.

All ministries of IBC, regardless of whether they take place on church property or elsewhere, are subject to the following guidelines:

1. Every ministry claiming affiliation in any way with the IBC, or using IBC property, must be functioning with the knowledge and approval of the Elder Team or its designated representative (for example, a pastor, staff member, or other ministry leader).
2. The leader over a ministry is accountable to the Elder Team or to its designated representative.
3. The curriculum selected for use in any ministry must have the approval of the Elder Team or its designated representative.
4. Any person who serves in a ministry leadership role, whether over adults or children, must comply with the policies that have been defined by the Elder Team for the specific area in which a person will serve.
5. Any person who serves in a ministry that involves children or youth must submit to the screening requirements and child protection policies established by the Elder Team.
6. All monies received through any ministry of IBC must be handled in accordance with the established accounting procedures of the church to ensure the highest level of financial integrity (see Article XII, Finances).

## **ARTICLE X - CHURCH STAFF**

### **Section A – The Lead Pastor**

- (1) **Qualifications of a Lead Pastor** – The lead pastor shall be a man, and he shall give evidence of the call of God upon his life to the Gospel ministry. He shall give evidence from his life and testimony that is consistent with the Scriptural qualifications governing a church leader (1 Tim. 3 & Titus 1 and elsewhere). He shall have read the Doctrinal Statement, Constitution, and By-Laws of IBC, and signify in writing his agreement with and willingness to support their provisions. If married, consideration will be given to the candidate’s wife in a manner consistent with the membership procedures of the church.

(2) **The Calling of a Lead Pastor** –

- a. The Elder Team shall appoint a “Search Committee” of sufficient size and composition to effectively handle initial job-posting strategies and preliminary investigations of all potential candidates. Pastoral candidates whom the Committee pursues will receive a more in-depth questionnaire that will provide information concerning, but is not limited to, background, family, education, training, experience, spiritual qualifications, and doctrinal convictions. A visit to a candidate’s present ministry is advisable if there is opportunity.
- b. The Search Committee shall review potential candidate applications and questionnaires, and shall present selected candidates to the Elder Team for consideration.
- c. The Elder Team shall conduct a more thorough investigation of potential candidates in a manner that it deems most effective.
- d. When a potential candidate has been identified, he shall be invited to speak at a minimum of two Sunday services and meet with any other groups or persons the Elder Team deems important to the selection process. When the Elder Team is unanimous in its selection of a candidate, he shall be presented to the congregation as the potential new “Lead Pastor.” Only one candidate at a time shall be presented to the congregation.
- e. A special congregational meeting shall be convened to vote on the calling of the Lead Pastor candidate. An 85% majority of voting members present is required to call the candidate.

(3) **The Duties of a Lead Pastor** – The Lead Pastor shall be under the authority and supervision of the Elder Team, and is directly accountable to the Elder Team. The call to serve as Lead Pastor automatically includes him as a member of the church and the Elder Team. He has one vote on the Elder Team. He shall, in cooperation with the Elder Team, assume significant responsibility for the care, protection, and spiritual leadership of the congregation. He is to shepherd the Body of Christ, teach and preach the Scriptures, cast vision, and provide administrative oversight for the church. He will provide spiritual guidance and/or referral as needed for members of the church. He is responsible to oversee the formal worship services of the church. His supervision of other church staff shall be done as it most effectively benefits the church. In conjunction with the Elders, he shall exercise physical, emotional, and spiritual care for the members, and through preaching, teaching, and the ministry of encouragement, shall seek to equip believers in keeping with Eph. 4:12-16. He is free to attend any church function or meeting. While the Lead Pastor’s compensation shall be defined and suggested by the Elder Team, the congregation ultimately affirms the compensation package by formal vote at the time of calling. Any adjustments thereafter shall be recommended by the Elder Team and affirmed by the vote of the congregation at any called business meeting.

(4) **The Termination of a Lead Pastor** –The relationship between the Lead Pastor and the church shall be continuous until dissolved by either, giving sixty (60) days written notice (or less by mutual consent). Termination of the Lead Pastor does not require a congregational vote. If, after prayerful consideration it is deemed necessary to terminate the relationship between the Lead Pastor and the church for reasons other than doctrinal or moral defection, a majority vote by the Elder



Team (those serving in “active” status,) ((see also Article VII, Section B, (7) g.)) is required. The Elder Team’s actions shall be considered authoritative and binding. A special meeting of the congregation shall be called to inform the Body of this decision. At this specially called meeting, the Elders will report to the congregation any pertinent information that led them to the termination decision.

In the event of doctrinal or moral defection, the Lead Pastor’s services and membership may be terminated immediately by majority vote of the Elder Team (those serving in “active” status as per Article VII, Section B, (7) g. (See Article VI, Church Discipline for additional information.) The Elder Team’s actions shall be considered authoritative and binding. A special meeting of the congregation shall be called to inform the Body of this decision. At this specially called meeting the Elders will report to the congregation any pertinent information that led them to the termination decision.

## **Section B – Associate Pastoral Staff –**

(1) **Qualifications of an Associate Pastor** – The associate pastor’s qualifications are the same as for the Lead Pastor. The Associate Pastor shall be a man, and he shall give evidence of the call of God upon his life to the Gospel ministry. He shall give evidence from his life and testimony that is consistent with the Scriptural qualifications governing a church leader (1 Tim. 3 & Titus 1 and elsewhere). He shall have read the Doctrinal Statement, Constitution, and By-Laws of IBC, and signify in writing his agreement with and willingness to support their provisions. If married, consideration will be given to the candidate’s wife in a manner consistent with the membership procedures of the church.

### (2) **The Calling of an Associate Pastor** –

a. The Elder Team shall define a strategy that it believes will be most effective in identifying, contacting, investigating, interviewing, and presenting a potential candidate to the congregation. A visit to a candidate’s present ministry is advisable if there is opportunity.

b. When a potential candidate has been identified, he shall be invited to participate at a minimum of two Sunday services in a manner consistent with the role he is being considered for. He will meet with any other groups or persons the Elder Team deems important to the selection process. When the Elder Team is unanimous in its selection of a candidate, he shall be presented to the congregation as the potential new “Associate Pastor” over those areas he is responsible for. Only one candidate at a time shall be presented to the congregation.

c. A special congregational meeting shall be convened to vote on the calling of the Associate Pastor candidate. An 85% majority of voting members present is required to call the candidate.

(3) **The Duties of an Associate Pastor** – The Associate Pastor shall be under the direct oversight and supervision of the Lead Pastor, with ultimate authority and supervision being provided by the Elder Team. While the call to serve as an Associate Pastor automatically includes him as a member of the church, it does not automatically include him as a member of the Elder Team. He may be invited to serve in an Elder role if and when the Elder Team shall determine.

The Associate Pastor is responsible to carry out the job description that he was given when he accepted the call. Should the job description be changed or modified over time, diligence in fulfilling the job description is expected.

While the Associate Pastor's compensation shall be defined and suggested by the Elder Team, the congregation ultimately affirms the compensation package by formal vote at the time of calling. Any adjustments thereafter shall be recommended by the Elder Team and affirmed by the vote of the congregation at any called business meeting.

- 4) **The Termination of an Associate Pastor** –The relationship between the Associate Pastor and the church shall be continuous until dissolved by either, giving sixty (60) days written notice (or less by mutual consent). Termination of the Associate Pastor does not require a congregational vote. If, after prayerful consideration it is deemed necessary to terminate the relationship between the Associate Pastor and the church for reasons other than doctrinal or moral defection, a majority vote by the Elder Team (those serving in “active” status,) ((see also Article VII, Section A.)) is required. The Elder Team's actions shall be considered authoritative and binding. A special meeting of the congregation shall be called to inform the Body of this decision. At this specially called meeting, the Elders will report to the congregation any pertinent information that led them to the termination decision. In the event of doctrinal or moral defection, the Associate Pastor's services and membership may be terminated immediately by majority vote of the Elders (those serving in “active” status as per Article VII, Section A.) ((See Article VI, Church Discipline for additional information.)) The Elder Team's actions shall be considered authoritative and binding. A special meeting of the congregation shall be called to inform the Body of this decision. At this specially called meeting, the Elders will report to the congregation any pertinent information that led them to the termination decision.

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

The Elder Team is responsible for the creation of any additional paid staff positions. A paid staff position may be either full-time or part-time. Such positions, regardless of title, shall be created as need dictates and finances permit.

- (1) **Qualifications of Additional Paid Staff** – It is the expectation of all paid staff that he/she is living a life consistent with a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and in keeping with the spirit of the Church Covenant that appears at the front of this document. All paid staff shall be a member in good standing at IBC. Only a man may fill a paid staff position wherein the job description requires providing leadership or teaching to a mixed audience of men and women. There is no “Additional Paid Staff” position that automatically includes appointment to the Elder Team.
- (2) **The Calling of Additional Paid Staff** – When the need arises and finances permit, the Elder Team shall define the procedures for identifying and calling an individual to fill a paid staff position. These procedures will include but are not limited to preparation of search strategies, job description, qualifications, questionnaires, and salary range. The creation of additional committees to facilitate the search process will be at the discretion of the Elder Team. A congregational vote is required in the hiring of all additional staff, with the exception of clerical/secretarial or janitorial personnel. These are positions filled at the discretion of the Elder and/or Deacon Teams.

When a potential candidate has been identified, he or she will visit IBC as often as the Elder Team shall determine, and demonstrate expertise as is most appropriate for the position under consideration. If opportunity permits, a visit to the potential candidate's current place of ministry is advised. The potential candidate shall meet with any other groups or persons the Elder Team deems important to the selection process. When the Elder Team (those serving in "active status") are unanimous in their selection of a candidate, this person will be presented to the congregation for consideration (with the exceptions mentioned above). Only one candidate at a time will be presented to the congregation. A special congregational meeting is convened to vote on the calling of the additional staff candidate. An 85% majority of voting members present is required to call the candidate.

(3) **The Duties of Additional Paid Staff** – The Elder Team shall oversee the creation of a job description consistent with the position being filled. The paid staff shall be under the ultimate authority of the Elder Team, with supervisory authority being carried out by the Lead Pastor and/or other persons/positions as defined in their job description. A paid staff person's compensation shall be defined and suggested to the congregation by the Elder Team. The congregation ultimately affirms the compensation package by formal vote at the time of calling. Any adjustments thereafter shall be made by the Elder Team and affirmed by the vote of the congregation at any called business meeting.

(4) **The Termination of Additional Paid Staff** – The relationship between additional paid staff and the church shall be continuous unless a limited term is defined in the job description. If either party wishes to dissolve the relationship, sixty (60) days written notice (or less by mutual consent) is desirable. Termination of additional paid staff requires a majority vote of the Elders serving in "active" status (see Article VII, Section B, (7) g.). The Elder Team's actions shall be considered authoritative and binding. Termination does not require a congregational vote. The termination decision will be communicated with the congregation as the Elder Team deems most appropriate.

In the event of doctrinal or moral defection, the Additional Paid Staff person's services and membership may be terminated immediately by majority vote of the Elders serving in "active" status (see Article VII, Section A). See Article VI, Church Discipline for additional information. The Elder Team's actions shall be considered authoritative and binding. Termination does not require a congregational vote. A special meeting of the congregation shall be called to inform the Body of this decision. At this specially called meeting, the Elder Team will report to the congregation any pertinent information that led them to the termination decision.

## **ARTICLE XI– THE CHURCH AND MISSIONS**

To insure the ongoing activity of the Bible Church in the cause of The Great Commission, (See Article II) the following guidelines are in effect:

1. A Missions Team shall be maintained. Those desiring to serve in this capacity in accordance with Missions Team policy and needs, shall determine the Team's size and composition.

2. The Missions Team shall always have as one of its members, a member of the Elder Team, in order to ensure a close relationship between the Team and the Elder Team.
3. The Team shall operate by the guidelines established in the Idyllwild Bible Church Missions Policy. This document is on file in the church office. The policy outlines in detail the philosophy and operating procedures of the Missions Team.
4. The Missions Team shall faithfully carry out the Missions Policy; this includes (but is not limited to) regular communication with IBC's missionaries, administering funds designated for missions, as well as performing an annual review of every missionary supported by the church. The annual review helps to ensure that each missionary continues to function in a manner consistent with the purposes and convictions of IBC, and enables the Team to regularly be apprised of financial needs.
5. The Missions Team shall maintain and review its policies in an effort to assure accountability and effective operation.
6. While the Missions Team has primary responsibility for the Missions Policy, the Elder Team may direct the Missions Team in developing or amending the Missions Policy.
7. The Elder Team must approve the Missions Policy as well as any revisions or amendments to the Policy.

## **ARTICLE XII – FINANCES**

### **Section A. - General Financial Guidelines**

1. Idyllwild Bible Church is organized exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes, including for such purposes the making of distributions to organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or of the corresponding section of any future Federal tax code).
2. No part of the net earnings of IBC shall personally benefit or be distributed to its members, officers, or other private persons. However, the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in compliance with section 501(c)(3) purposes.
3. The financial program of IBC and its sub-organizations shall be supported through the free-will offerings and gifts of those desiring to be financially involved with this ministry. Such giving is a form of worship; it should be done proportionally, cheerfully, and consistently out of obedience to God's Word (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:9, 9:6-15).
4. The Deacon Team shall oversee the finances of the church. Actual record keeping and handling of church monies shall be the responsibility of the Deacon Team and those it designates. A printed accounting of church funds shall be made available to any church member in good standing upon request. The Deacon Team shall regularly communicate with the congregation concerning the financial position of the church. The Deacon Team shall also provide the Elder Team with Financial Statements no less than quarterly. Records of personal financial giving to the church are confidential, and are available only to those whose ministry duties require this information.

5. All monies received through any ministry of IBC must be handled in accordance with the established accounting procedures defined by the Deacon Team. All cash and non-cash gifts that are tax deductible shall be receipted in January for the previous year.
6. The fiscal period is from January 1 to December 31. At least one week prior to the Annual Vision and Planning Meeting, the Elder Team, in cooperation with the Deacon Team, shall publish a Financial Statement for the previous year and a Proposed Budget for the coming year to the IBC membership for review. This budget shall include all expenses that can reasonably be anticipated. At the Annual Vision and Planning Meeting the Financial Statement for the previous year and the Proposed Budget for the new fiscal year shall be presented for vote and adoption.
7. Any non-budgeted expenditures in excess of \$500.00 must be approved by the Deacon Board or the Elder Team, and any non-budgeted expenditures in excess of \$1,000.00 must be approved by the Elder Team. Also, any combination of non-budgeted expenditures that exceeds \$3,000 in a fiscal year must be approved by the Elder Team.
8. Idyllwild Bible Church shall seek to avoid indebtedness. No individual or committee shall borrow money in the name of IBC without the approval of the Elder and Deacon Teams and a formal vote of the membership at a meeting called for that purpose.
9. Nothing contained in this document shall require the Elder Team to accept or receive any money or property of any kind if it shall determine that receipt of such money or property contradicts the Purpose of Idyllwild Bible Church (See Article II).

**Section B. - Benevolence Fund** – Idyllwild Bible Church, in the exercise of its religious and charitable purposes, shall establish a Benevolence Fund to assist persons in financial need. The following guidelines shall apply:

1. The Bible Church welcomes contributions to the Benevolence Fund. However, suggestions as to how the funds shall be used will be deemed “advisory only” due to the legal restrictions associated with designated funds. (See “Designated Funds” below.)
2. The administration of the Benevolence Fund, including all disbursements, is subject to the direct oversight of the Deacon Team and/or those whom it may assign as its representatives.

**Section C. - Designated Funds** – Tax law restricts the ability of the Bible Church to receive gifts or contributions from a donor who designates the gift to a specific individual or organization. For this reason:

1. The Bible Church shall accept contributions only for those individuals or organizations that are “approved projects” of the church. Approved projects are those that have been designated as such by the Elder Team.

2. Donors wishing to make contributions to individuals or organizations that are not approved projects of IBC should make those contributions directly to the individual or organization.
3. Any change in the use of designated funds for purposes other than those for which they were designated, must be approved by the Elder Team, and when possible be accompanied by written approval from the donor(s) or their representative. If the donor(s) or their representative provide written refusal for a change in use, the donation shall be returned.

**Section D. - Fund Raising** – Because fund raisers can take a variety of forms, no policy can adequately address every possibility. Therefore, any fund raising activity or project which involves the name or the property of Idyllwild Bible Church requires the presentation of a written proposal to the Elder Team detailing the specifics of the fund raising activity or project. Any fund raising activity or project must be approved by the Elder Team.

## **ARTICLE XIII – CHURCH PROPERTY**

### **Section A. - Property Title**

1. The title of all property belonging to Idyllwild Bible Church, both real and personal, shall be and remain vested in that portion of the membership that shall remain faithful to the original purposes stated in Articles I, II, and III of this Constitution, and in Article V of the Statement of Incorporation, which is a separate legal document.
2. No member or group of members shall have any individual control rights in the assets or operations of this Corporation as a result of holding a deed or title in IBC property.

### **Section B. - Acquisition and Sale of Property**

1. Idyllwild Bible Church shall have power to acquire and hold property, both real and personal, for the general purpose of the church. All property so acquired shall be in the name of the church. The church may purchase property and collect rent or other income from such property.
2. No real property expenditures can be committed for or purchased by IBC in an amount in excess of \$5,000.00 per annum, non-cumulative, without the approval of the Elder Team, and approval by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership present at a meeting called for this purpose.

### **Section C. - Use of Church Property**

1. All properties belonging to the Church (except those being leased or rented to other individuals or organizations until needed) shall be available to the membership for purposes consistent with the Doctrinal Statement, By-Laws, and Constitution of the Church as reflected herein, and shall be subject to the Facility Use Policy and approval by the Elder Team, or its official designee.

2. The Facility Use Policy of IBC, as defined by the Elder Team and available in the church office, shall provide specific guidelines for facility use.
3. The Pastor(s), Elders, Deacons, and their designated representatives shall have access at all times and under all circumstances to all properties owned by the church in order to inspect the premises for compliance with church policy and operations.
4. IBC properties and facilities are immediately available for use in the event of a community emergency or national disaster, subject to oversight by the Elder Team or pastoral staff.

## **ARTICLE XIV – ORDINATION and LICENSING**

**Section A. – Ordination** – The New Testament church is observed “laying on hands” upon persons who were engaged in vocational ministry (see Acts 13:1-3, 1 Timothy 4:14, 5:22; and 2 Timothy 1:6), thus formally acknowledging their fitness and readiness to serve. Ordination refers to the recognition by the Elder Team of a man’s call to vocational ministry (Eph. 4:11), his preparation as a spiritual shepherd (Acts 20:27-32), and his qualifications to serve (1 Timothy 3:1-10; Titus 1:5-9). Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office. Ordination through IBC is subject to the following guidelines:

1. The applicant must be a man, a member of IBC, and shall have presented a written request to the Lead Pastor.
2. The Elder Team, after consideration of the request, and upon unanimous recognition of the man’s call and qualification, will organize an Ordination Council.
3. The Ordination Council, comprised of representatives from churches of like faith and practice, after examining the candidate according to their agreed standards, can make a recommendation that the candidate be ordained to the Gospel Ministry.
4. IBC will recognize the applicant’s ordination in a public service.
5. The Elder Team may revoke the ordination credentials of any minister ordained under this Constitution, if the minister in question is found guilty of moral or doctrinal defection resulting in discipline in accordance with the procedures outlined previously in Article VI.

**Section B. – Licensing** – The ministerial license is recognized by the State of California, and is issued by the local church to a man called to a ministry within that church. The license allows the one serving in a ministerial role to perform functions consistent with that role such as weddings and funerals. Licensing may also be required in order for the minister to comply with certain tax laws. Licensing through IBC is subject to the following guidelines:

1. The applicant must be a man, a member of IBC, and shall have presented a written request to the Lead Pastor.
2. The Elder Team, after consideration of the request, and upon unanimous recognition of the man’s call and qualification, will grant the license.

3. The license is to be evaluated and reissued on a yearly basis and is considered void if the licensee leaves the ministry of Idyllwild Bible Church.
4. The Elder Team may revoke the ministerial license if the minister in question is found guilty of moral or doctrinal defection resulting in discipline in accordance with the procedures outlined previously in Article VI.

## **ARTICLE XV – AMENDMENTS**

The IBC Constitution was created to serve the people of this church, not for the people to serve the Constitution. Therefore, it is recognized that from time to time amendments to the Constitution will be needed to provide the best possible working document for the church.

### **Section A. - Questions to Consider Prior to any Amendment:**

1. Is the proposed change biblical and in keeping with the Purpose of the church?
2. Does the amendment serve the whole membership or merely the special interests of some?
3. Has the Elder Team prayerfully and carefully considered the proposed amendment, discussed its ramifications, and sought the counsel of those who would be most affected by the change?
4. Will the amendment serve the congregation as well in the future as it appears that it will today?
5. Will the proposed amendment protect the membership from allowing any individual to gain financial or material control of this non-profit corporation?
6. Could the proposed amendment be manipulated, misunderstood, or rendered ineffective because of poor wording or careless assumptions?

### **Section B. - Amendment Requirements**

1. All amendments for this non-profit Corporation shall be in keeping with biblical principles, and in consideration of the laws of the land.
2. Amendments to this Constitution can be made by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership present at a meeting called for this purpose, with the exception of Articles I and II. The Doctrinal Statement, and Articles I and II may not be amended without a ninety-percent (90%) consent of the entire membership of the church.
3. Any proposed amendment must be made available in written form and announced publicly to the congregation at the Sunday morning services at least three (3) weeks prior to any meeting addressing the proposed amendment.

## **ARTICLE XVI – DISSOLUTION**

- (1) Dissolution of Idyllwild Bible Church requires a recommendation from the Elder Team and a 75% majority vote of the membership present. Business meetings called for the purpose of dissolution must be announced at least 30 days prior to the meeting.
- (2) In the event of dissolution of IBC, its assets shall be distributed as follows: after all indebtedness has been paid, and a consideration of responsibility to existing missionary commitments has been made, such remaining funds shall be disbursed according to the prayerful determination of the Elder Team. Such distributions shall be made to entities that are one in faith and practice with Idyllwild Bible Church.



- (3) No individual person associated with IBC shall personally benefit financially through this dissolution process, except for those considerations made in Article XIII, A. 2, above.
- (4) If for any reason distribution cannot be made as stated, then responsibility for distribution will be transferred to the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, an Illinois Nonprofit Corporation.

(Adopted by the people of Idyllwild Bible Church, February 2016)