

# Constitution and By-Laws of Valley Bible Church

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### **Preamble**

Recognizing the New Testament principles governing the formation of the local church we the members, accepting our responsibilities, adopt and subscribe to this Constitution and By-Laws.

### **ARTICLE I**

#### **Name**

This organization shall be known as the VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH of LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA by which name it was incorporated on May 2, 1958 under the laws of the state of California.

### **ARTICLE II**

#### **Character**

Valley Bible Church is an independent Bible believing church composed of born-again Christians, regardless of previous denominational affiliation.

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this church shall be to seek by every possible scriptural means to carry out the commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as set forth in Matthew 28:19-20.

To accomplish this task, this church recognizes the need to evangelize the world and edify the believers here in this local assembly. When we are gathered together, our purpose will be to edify one another through teaching, fellowship, prayer and the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42.) This includes the building up of one another through the exercise of our spiritual gifts (Romans 1:11-12; 12:6.) When the believers are scattered, our purpose will be to evangelize the unsaved. We will do this through being ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor 5:20) which involves preaching the Gospel, leading individuals to commit their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ, and expressing it through water baptism.

### **ARTICLE IV**

#### **Statement of Faith**

The body of believers at Valley Bible Church, desiring to have a scriptural basis for our fellowship, a guide for our instruction and a testimony to the unsaved, do hereby set forth the doctrines to which this church subscribes and to which we require the assent of all officers and teachers.

## **SECTION 1**

### **The Bible**

We believe that the entire Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the only inspired, infallible, authoritative revelation of God to man:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Tim 3:16-17

That the Bible is inspired in the sense that holy men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of scripture. 2 Pet 1:21; Acts 1:16; 1 Cor 2:13

That this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings as they appeared in the original manuscripts. 2 Tim 3:16-17

That all scripture centers about the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work and is the mind of Christ as revealed to man. Luke 24:27; Luke 24:44-45; John 5:39; Acts 17:2-3; Acts 18:28; Acts 26:22-23; 1 Cor 2:16

That all scripture is designed for our practical instruction. Romans 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11

## **SECTION 2**

### **The Godhead**

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons - THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT - having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience:

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Matt 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3-4; Heb 1:1-3

That we, as well as everything created, are totally dependent on God for everything. Rom 11:36

## **SECTION 3**

### **God the Son**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and became man without ceasing to be God, in order to reveal God and redeem man:

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of

God, even to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:11-14; 1 John 1:1-2

That He was the creator. John 1:1-3; Eph 3:9

That He led a sinless life. Heb 4:15

That He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice. Romans 3:24-25

That our redemption is made sure by His literal, physical, resurrection from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3-5

That the Lord Jesus Christ is now seated in the Heavens, exalted at the right hand of the Father, where as High Priest for all Christians, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. Heb 9:24; Heb 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2

## **SECTION 4**

### **God the Father**

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, is related to the Lord Jesus Christ as Father, is related to Christians as Father, is related to the heavenly host as Father, and is related to the faithful in Israel as Father:

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.” Eph 3:14-16

That God the Father is the eternal Father of God the Son and the Son has elected to do the will of the Father in dependence upon God the Holy Spirit. John 17:1-26; John 5:23; John 10:38; John 20:17; Eph 1:17; 1 Peter 1:3

That God the Father has a relationship with Israel as Father of their nation. The chosen nation owes its origin and continued existence to His miraculous power and special care. As their Father, He loved, pitied, rebuked, and required obedience of His people. Exodus 4:22; Hosea 11:1; Malachi 1:1-6

That God the Father is Father of all creation in the sense that He is Father of all that is created and responsible for its existence. 1 Cor 8:6; James 1:17; Heb 12:9; Mal 2:10

That God the Father is Father to all who believe in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ in a very special and intimate sense. Only they who are saved through Jesus Christ have the privileges of children in God’s household. Only children of God can pray “Our Father” or express such endearments as “Abba Father.” John 1:12; Romans 8:14-17

## **SECTION 5**

### **God the Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit, though omnipresent from all eternity, took up His abode in the world in a special sense on the day of Pentecost, according to the divine promise, dwells in every believer, and by His baptism unites all to Christ in one body:

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” 1 Cor 6:19; John 14:16-17; John 16:7; Acts 1:8; Eph 2:22

That He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. John 16:8-11

That He testifies of Christ, seeking to occupy believers with Him and not themselves or their experiences. John 15:26; John 16:13-14

That He restrains evil in the world to the measure of the divine will. 2 Thess 2:7

That He regenerates, indwells, anoints, seals and baptizes all who are saved into the body of Christ as the point of salvation. Romans 8:9-11; 1 Cor 12:13

That He in grace, apart from human merit, bestows spiritual gifts to believers in this dispensation. Eph 4:11-16; Romans 12:4-8

That He desires to fill and control us that we might walk as spiritual in love and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Gal 5:16; Eph 5:18; Eph 4:30

That we break fellowship with the Holy Spirit through any act of mental, verbal, or overt sin and filling is restored solely by personal confession of that sin to God. 1 John 1:9; Rom 6:11-13; 1 John 2:1-2

That some gifts of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing were temporary, given to demonstrate His approval of the establishment of the church. God in this dispensation performs supernatural acts as He wills and not through an individual's possession of a supernatural gift. 1 Cor 13:8

## **SECTION 6**

### **Man**

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God: that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical but also spiritual death which is separation from God:

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ... So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him.” Gen 1:26-27; Romans 5:12

That through the first man, Adam, spiritual death has been transmitted to the entire human race of man. Rom 3:10-19; Psa 51:5

That man as spiritually dead is subject to the power of Satan. 1 John 3:8

That man in his unregenerate state can have no relationship with God and is thus devoid of any eternal home or true purpose in this life. Eph 2:1-3

That man can enter a relationship with God only through God's provision for man's sin. John 14:6

## **SECTION 7**

### **Salvation Through Christ**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and rose again on the third day for our justification, thereby reconciling all who believe on Him to a Holy and Loving God:

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” Rom 5:8-9; Rom 5:6-7; Acts 2:22-24

That man in his sinful state, separated from God, cannot fellowship with or have any access to God and is therefore devoid of any purpose in his life. John 3:5; John 3:18

That God has provided the only way to remove this sin by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place, and therefore pay for our sin. 2 Cor 5:21; Titus 3:5

That it is necessary for man to individually receive Christ by personal trust in Him as Savior and that the moment we trust in Him we pass out of spiritual death into everlasting life. John 1:12; John 5:24; Eph 2:8-9; Rev 3:20

That at the point of our acceptance of Christ we are made acceptable to God, in the same measure that God accepts Christ, loved as Christ is loved, linked to Christ and made one with Him forever. John 17:23-26; Eph 2:4-9; John 5:11-12

That we can be completely assured that we are acceptable to God and have been reborn through faith in Christ as the very day we accept Him as Savior. That the assurance is not dependent upon our feelings but on the authority of the promises in God's written Word. That we do not receive this assurance because of our worthiness, goodness, or by following man's rules; but wholly upon the testimony of God regarding the eternal purpose of God to believers, the intercession of Christ in heaven for believers, the unchangeableness of the covenants of God, the regenerating work and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who trust in Christ. 1 John 5:11-13; Heb 13:5; John 6:47; Rom 8:35-39

## **SECTION 8**

### **The Christian's Walk**

We believe that we are called by Christ to live a life that is yielded to the Holy Spirit who indwells us at the point of salvation and thus potentially overcomes the desires of our old nature:

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Eph 4:22-24; Rom 13:14; Gal 5:12-26; Col 3:1-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16

That we are given gifts at the point of salvation which enables us to be effective in service for Christ. 1Cor 12:1-3; Eph 4:11

That we will experience spiritual growth through daily prayer, Bible study, obedience to God's Word, witnessing for Christ, trusting God moment by moment for every detail of life, and allowing the Holy Spirit to control and empower our lives. John 15:7; Acts 17:11; John 15:8; 1 Pet 5:7; Gal 5:16-17; Acts 1:8

That God is a holy and righteous Father who cannot overlook the sin of His children and will when they persistently sin chasten and correct them in infinite love. 1 John 3:5-9

That apart from all human merit, God will present us faultless before His glory and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Titus 2:14; Jude 24

That God has promised rewards in His Word, according to the faithfulness of each believer in his service for his Lord, and these rewards are bestowed at the judgment seat of Christ after He comes to receive us to Himself. 1 Cor 3:9-15; 1 Cor 9:18-27; 2 Cor 5:10

## **SECTION 9**

### **The Church - The Body of Christ**

We believe that the church is composed of all who are united by the Holy Spirit to the risen and ascended Son of God, that we are all baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and that thus being members one of another, we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all sectarian prejudices and denominational bigotry and loving one another with a pure heart:

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another.” Rom 12:5; Eph 4:3-10; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 1:20-23; Col 3:14-15

That the church is God’s present means of showing forth Christ to the world and propagating the Gospel. Acts 14:27; Acts 2:32-47

That the church, made up of all born-again persons of this dispensation as the bride of Christ, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air to ever be with Him. 1 Cor 15:51-57; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Eph 5:25-27

## **SECTION 10**

### **Other Created Beings**

We believe that God created an innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings, known as angels:

That one of these angels, Lucifer, son of the morning, the highest in rank, sinned through pride thereby becoming Satan. Isa 14:12-17; Ezek 28:11-14; 1 Tim 3:16

That a great company of angels followed him in his moral fall. Jude 1:6; 2 Pet 2:4

That Satan is the originator of sin and led Adam and Eve into sin, thereby accomplishing their moral fall and subjecting mankind to his power. Gen 3:1-19; Rom 5:12-14; 2 Cor 4:3-4; 2 Cor 11:13-15; Eph 6:10-12

That Satan was defeated at the cross but still rules as “god of this world” until bound at the second coming of Christ for a thousand years. Heb 2:14; Col 2:15

That Satan will be loosed for a little season to again tempt the world and then be “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone” where he “shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” Rev 20:1-3; Rev 20:10

That a great company of angels kept their holy estate and are before the throne of God, from whence they are sent forth as ministering spirits. Heb 12:22; Luke 15:10; Heb 1:13-14; Rev 7:11-12

## **SECTION 11**

### **Things to Come**

We believe that God has revealed to His people through His written Word, and gives evidence to us through the bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, that the Christian has hope and can be assured that he will live with Christ throughout all eternity:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” 1 Thess 4:13-17

That the next event described in the Word of God is the coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself His own, the living and the dead Christians, and we will remain forever with Him in Heaven. 1 Cor 15:51-52; Phil 3:20-21

That the Lord will then allow the remaining to enter the great tribulation culminating in fearful apostasy in Israel. Matt 24:15-21; Rev 6:1-19:21 That the tribulation will be climaxed by the return of Christ to earth to reign for one thousand years. Rev 20:1-3

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Church Ordinances**

#### **SECTION 1**

##### **Communion**

We believe that we are to celebrate the communion service as a church body. We believe that it is a memorial service to bring us into remembrance of what God has done for us through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Through the elements of the bread and juice, we are to remember both the body and blood of Christ. The service will be arranged for by the elders at least once a month and led in accordance with the following scriptures: Matt 26:20-30; Mark 14:17-26; Luke 22:14-30; 1 Cor 11:18-34

#### **SECTION 2**

##### **Baptism**

Valley Bible Church shall administer baptism by immersion to all born-again believers when requested by the person. We believe that this is an act of obedience and gives an opportunity for a public profession of our relationship with Christ. We do not believe that the scriptures teach that salvation is dependent upon baptism.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Membership**

Every adult who has chosen to establish an active attendance at Valley Bible Church is considered to be a member. Attendance at Valley Bible Church means attendance at any officially recognized ministry of the church. It is understood that continued attendance indicates acceptance of the beliefs of Valley Bible Church, as stated in the constitution. Membership will be terminated when it is determined by the Elders that an individual is no longer actively attending Valley Bible Church. Membership may also be terminated through church discipline. The church membership list is the church mailing list.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Government**

The government of the church shall be vested in the Board of Elders. There will be a plurality of elders.

## **SECTION 1**

### **Elders**

Function of the elders - The elders are the overseers of the church. They are responsible to protect the doctrinal, moral and directional purity of the church (Acts 20). The doctrinal purity is concerned with ensuring that the truth is being taught. Moral purity is concerned with ensuring that the truth is being practiced. Directional purity is concerned with the great commission ( Matt 28:19-20 ) being followed. The elders possessing authority ( 1 Tim 5:17 Heb 13:17 ) may give direction when necessary in order to uphold their responsibilities but are careful not to be encumbered with the oversight of the day to day operation of the church.

Qualifications of the elders - Only such men will be recommended that have proven themselves to be an example to the congregation ( 1 Pet 5 ), meet the qualifications of 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1 , and are members in good standing.

Selection of an elder - The candidate will be selected by the Board of Elders. The names of the candidates will be made known to the membership one month prior to being confirmed by the Board of Elders. If there are any members who believe that this individual should not be selected for the office, he should first go to the candidate and lovingly express his reservation. If after having expressed his reservation, he continues to hold the same conviction, he is to share the reservation with an elder. If it is determined by the Board that what is shared is a valid reservation which would disqualify the candidate or if it is determined that the candidate lacks the support of the church, the candidate will be removed from consideration. If the candidate is not disqualified, he will be confirmed by the Board of Elders.

Term - Once selected as an elder, the elder will automatically be reviewed each year by the congregation. This review , therefore, will include all elders. This will be true unless the elder for some reason feels that he needs to remove himself from consideration.

Dismissal of an elder - If an individual has an accusation that would disqualify an elder, the matter will be handled in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.

## **SECTION 2**

### **Deacons**

Function of the deacon - The deacons are the officially recognized ministers of the church (Acts 6:1-6 Rom 16:1). They are responsible for the oversight of the day to day operations of the church. These individuals are selected for service to help organize and facilitate ministries. The deacons are subject to the elders and carry out their ministry under the authority of the Board of Elders.

Qualifications of the deacon - The candidate will be selected by the Board of Elders. The names of the candidates will be made known to the membership one month prior to being confirmed by the Board of Elders. If there are any members who believe that this individual should not be selected for the office, he should first go to the candidate and lovingly express his reservation. If after having expressed his reservation, he continues to hold the same conviction he is to share the reservation with an elder. If it is determined by the Board that what is shared is a valid reservation which would disqualify the candidate or if it is determined that the candidate lacks the support of the church, the candidate will be removed from consideration. If the candidate is not disqualified, he will be confirmed by the Board of Elders.

Term - Once selected as a deacon, the deacon will automatically be reviewed each year by the congregation. This review, therefore, will include all deacons. This will be true unless the deacon for some reason feels that he needs to remove himself from consideration.

Dismissal of a deacon - If an individual has an accusation that would disqualify a deacon, the matter will be handled in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.

## **SECTION 3**

### **Staff**

A ministerial staff member must be an elder or a deacon.

## **SECTION 4**

### **Congregation**

All decisions can be made by the Board of Elders without notification of the congregation with the exception of the following:

1. Contracts
2. Building programs
3. New ministerial staff
4. Alterations to the Constitution
5. The yearly budget

Information concerning the above five areas will be given to the congregation for their input at least 30 days prior to the Board reaching a final decision.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Congregational Meetings**

#### **SECTION 1**

##### **Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting - This meeting shall be called to hear reports and to provide information to the congregation. The meeting will be on the third Sunday of November unless another date is stipulated by the Board of Elders.

#### **SECTION 2**

##### **Special Meetings**

Special meetings - These meetings can be called at any time during the year by request of the Board of Elders with at least two weeks notice.

#### **SECTION 3**

##### **Finances**

The salaries and benefits of paid deacons or elders (staff) will be determined by a special committee made up of the elders and deacons who are not salaried. Other expenses for items not included in the annual budget shall require approval of the Board of Elders or of individuals they appoint.

#### **SECTION 4**

##### **Officers of the Corporation**

The president, secretary, and treasurer of the corporation will be appointed by the Board of Elders.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Dissolution**

No part of the assets of the corporation shall ever benefit any donor, member, director, officer of the corporation, or any private individual. No donor, member, officer of the corporation, or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporation assets.

Upon dissolution, any assets of the corporation must be distributed to one or more organizations to be named by the then governing board of the church. These organizations must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as being organized exclusively for religious purposes.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **License for Ministerial Duties**

A ministerial license shall be granted an applicant by the Board of Elders if they believe it is warranted both in respect to ministry and character. The license will remain in effect until revoked by the Board of Elders.