



The Constitution and Bylaws

of

Village Bible Church

12671 Buaro Street

Garden Grove, California

Revision A

Approved: May 20, 2007

Constitution Change Log

Revision/Date	Pages	Paragraphs	Change
Original May 18, 2003	All	All	Complete Revision
Revision A May 20, 2007	17-19	Article IX, Section 1.B	Changed “Additional Staff” to “Permanent Pastoral Staff”
	18	Article IX, Section 1.B.2.b	Expanded Duties to more clearly define “Permanent Pastoral Staff”
	19	Article IX, Section 1.B.5.c	Added a provision for extending the term of service of “Permanent Pastoral Staff”
	19-22	Article IX, Section 1.C	Added “Temporary Pastoral Staff” to Article IX, Section 1, “Our Staff”
	22-23	Article IX, Section 1.D	Added “Support Staff” to Article IX, Section 1, “Our Staff”

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**The Constitution and Bylaws Including the
Beliefs of Village Bible Church
of Garden Grove, California**

We, the members of Village Bible Church, acting upon our convictions that a New Testament local church is not dependent upon a humanly established ecclesiastical organization, but directly dependent upon the leading of the Holy Spirit, in order to constitute an independent, nondenominational, Bible-believing church, do adopt and subscribe to the following Bylaws and Beliefs.

ARTICLE I. Our Name

The name of this organization shall¹ be Village Bible Church of Garden Grove, California.

ARTICLE II. Our Purpose/Mission

The purpose of Village Bible Church is to develop a unique, family oriented church in Northern Orange County that reflects God's glory as lives are being transformed into Christ-likeness. We will² cultivate growing, intimate relationships with God and His people in a Bible-based, caring environment where we are being equipped to serve God, His Church, and the World.

ARTICLE III. Our Vision

Village Bible Church is committed to “Building Christ-focused families that disciple their community for Him.”

ARTICLE IV. Our Foundational Principles

This church is founded upon the following principles:

Section 1. The Local Church is a Fellowship of Believers

A local Christian church is a fellowship of professing believers in Jesus Christ, united by the Holy Spirit for the worship of God, for the fellowship and instruction of believers, and for the carrying on of the work of the Gospel: evangelism, discipleship, missions, and worship.

¹ Mandatory requirements in this Constitution and Bylaws are designated by the word “shall.” They constitute firm compliance requirements.

² “Will” has been used to designate a declaration of purpose or a statement of simple future tense as opposed to a requirement. Consequently, a statement with “will” does not represent a requirement on the part of the members and/or leaders of Village Bible Church.

Section 2. The Local Church is a Complete Body

Every local church is complete in itself. Being guided and enabled by the Holy Spirit, the local church has full power to perform all the functions and to do all the work that Christ has committed to His church on earth. The local church thereby controls the formulation of its Biblically based beliefs, the election of its officers, and the admission and discipline of its members. Since all belong to Christ, it is the duty of every Christian church to live in fellowship with other churches that hold the essentials of the Christian Faith. To foster and maintain this fellowship, Village Bible Church is affiliated with IFCA International.

ARTICLE V. Our Beliefs

The Christian faith is characterized by fundamental, essential truths that are fully presented in the Bible. All Christians must believe the essential truths of the faith. The Bible also presents ideas that are not essential to Christian faith. These non-essential ideas are often referred to as distinctive beliefs. Christians who hold the essential beliefs may disagree on the distinctive beliefs. The distinctive beliefs often differentiate local churches from one another.

The Beliefs of Village Bible Church are categorized as essential beliefs and distinctive beliefs.

Section 1. Essential Beliefs of Village Bible Church

A. The Bible

We believe every word of the Bible is inspired by God and is without error in the original texts and that it is absolutely trustworthy in all that it teaches (John 17:7). The Bible is the only divinely intended authority for the faith and practice of Christians. Accordingly, true Christian theology must be based solely upon Scripture.

B. The Nature of God

We believe that there is one 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).

1. God the Father

We believe that God is a personal and perfect Spirit Who is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being and attributes. He is omnipresent (Psa. 139:7-12), omniscient (Psa. 147:5), and omnipotent (Job 42:2; Matt. 19:26). As the Creator, God is Father over all creation (Mal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 12:9).

2. Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God and has always been God, but He is also perfectly man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus Christ possesses all the attributes of God: self-existence, eternal life, all knowing, all-powerful, existing everywhere, holiness, truth, love, and righteousness. We believe

that Jesus Christ died a physical death on the cross and physically rose from the dead (John 1:1; 4:6; 5:18; Col. 1:13-17; Heb. 1:3; 1:10).

3. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is real, has individual personality, has the attributes of God, and is God (Luke 1:35-37; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11). The Holy Spirit convicts people of their sins and affirms their moral goodness. He lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. The Holy Spirit is the agent of rebirth in Christians, making them part of the Body of Christ, the Church (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Eph. 1:13-14).

C. Man

We believe that God created man³, male and female, after His own image in righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures. God created both the material and the immaterial constitution of man without the intervention of another object or cause (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7, 21-23; 5:1-2; 6:6-7; Mark 10:6-7; 1 Cor. 11:8, 9; 1 Tim. 2:13). However, man has fallen from his holy state through the sin of Adam and Eve. Adam's original sin affected him and all his descendants because of the solidarity of the human race.

D. Salvation

We believe 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 Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (Eph. 2:8-10; John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

E. The Church

1. Universal Church

We believe that the universal church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2).

2. Local Church

We believe that the local church is an assembly of professed believers in one locality (Matt. 18:17; Acts 8:1, 3; 11:22, 26; 12:1, 5; 14:23, 27).

F. Angels

We believe that angels were created in righteousness by a direct act of God's will (Psa. 148:2, 5; Ezek. 28:14-15; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26), but some fell from righteousness. Angels are personal finite spirits (Heb. 1:7, 14 cf. Psa. 104:4) with great abilities, but are not all knowing, all-powerful, nor present in all places at all times.

³ In the Biblical context, "man" is used as a synonym for the human race.

G. Satan and the Demons

We believe that Satan is a fallen angel, the author of sin, and the cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10). The demons are evil angels that chose to follow Satan and are confirmed in evil (Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:28, 31; Heb. 2:16 cf. Matt. 25:41).

H. The Return of Jesus Christ

We believe in the "Blessed Hope," the imminent, personal, bodily, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Earth (1 Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 19:11-16).

Section 2. Distinctive Beliefs of Village Bible Church

A. Pretribulation and Premillennial Return of Christ

We believe in the rapture of the Church: that Christ will return before the tribulation and before the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom for His redeemed ones. We believe in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His Millennial Kingdom (1 Thes. 4:13-18; Zech. 14:4-11; Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-6; 1 Thes. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10).

B. Eternal Security

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells all the redeemed. Once saved, they are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38, 39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:5).
2. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word; which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to sin (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

C. Dispensational View of the Bible

We believe in the dispensational view of Bible interpretation. A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose. God has at different times dealt with men in different ways, according to the necessity of the circumstances, but He does this to achieve a great end: the glorification of Himself.

D. Creation

We believe that God created the world in six literal 24-hour days as stated in Genesis 1 (Gen. 1-; 2:7, 21-23; 5:1-2; 6:6-7; Deut. 4:32; Psalms 148:1-5; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6-7).

E. The Gift of Tongues

We believe that the gift of tongues in the New Testament was a “sign” that witnessed to the validity of those bearing new canonical⁴ revelation (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4). Speaking in tongues is not a sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Scripture makes it clear that all believers are baptized with the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), but not all speak with tongues (1 Cor. 12:30). The gift of tongues is a lesser gift (1 Cor. 12:8-10; Eph. 4:11-12; Rom. 12:6-8), and, as with all spiritual gifts, the gift of tongues is for the profit of all. If it is not interpreted, it is good only for personal edification. Many of the current manifestations of tongues are human induced, but it is still possible for God to originate speaking in tongues. God is sovereign.

F. Abortion

We believe that life begins at conception (Psa. 20:10; 139:13; Jer. 1:5) and that since all humans are created in God’s image (Gen. 1:26), all unborn children have intrinsic value and are to be treasured and nurtured. Willfully taking the life of an unborn child, except when the life of the mother is threatened, is reprehensible to God and against His will (Ex. 21:22-23).

G. Biblical Order between Man and Woman

We believe that there is a created order between man and woman. The man was created first, and then woman from the man (Gen. 2:18-23). The woman was created as a “helper” for the man (Gen. 2:18; 1 Cor. 11:3 ff.; 1 Tim. 2:14). The biblical order concerns functions and roles, not superiority and inferiority. We believe that there is an absolute equality of man and woman before God (Gen. 1:26-28; Gal. 3:28).

H. Marriage

We believe that marriage is a sacred union, ordained by God to be a life-long, sexually exclusive relationship between one man and one woman. Marriage has served from the beginning as the foundation for continuation of the human race (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6; Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

I. Homosexuality

We believe that homosexuality and similar deviations from the natural created order (lesbianism, transsexualism, transvestitism) are sins against God (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:25-28). Nature reveals the distinctions between male and female and the need each has for the other. Men and women are designed to complement each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

⁴ Canon is derived from the Greek word *kanon*, which signified a reed or measuring staff. The books in the Protestant Bible meet certain standards which qualify them as parts of God’s complete written revelation to man.

Section 3. Ordinances⁵ of the Church

A. Communion

Village Bible Church regularly celebrates Communion (i.e. the Lord's Supper) in obedience to Christ's command, "... do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-25), and with the desire to enter into "... a participation in the blood of Christ" and the "body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10:16). While our Communion Service is open to all those who profess Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord, we encourage participants to not take the ordinance of Communion lightly, but to partake with a clear conscience.

B. Baptism

1. The Scriptural Basis for the Observance of Baptism

The baptism of the believer after conversion⁶ is taught in Scripture both by commandment and by example (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41, 8:36-38). Therefore, water baptism administered after one has received the Savior shall be encouraged of each member of this church. Baptism is not a prerequisite for church membership, nor is it essential for salvation.

2. The Significance of Baptism

Baptism is an outward sign to the world that a believer is a follower of Jesus Christ. Baptism is a symbol of Christ's death and bodily resurrection from the dead. The believer has died to self and is now a new person living for Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit.

3. The Mode of Baptism

The preferred mode of baptism at Village Bible Church is immersion following confession of Christ as Savior.

ARTICLE VI. Our Membership

Church membership is an outward sign to the local church and community that a person is committed to the fellowship and leadership at that church. Church attendance does not have the same level of ownership, connectedness, involvement, and responsibility that church membership expects. Church membership:

- Declares a believer's unity of faith and understanding of the Scriptures with other believers at the local church

⁵ Ordinance – a ceremony, prescribed usage, or practice.

⁶ Believing that Jesus Christ is your personal Savior and Lord.

- Identifies one's willingness and readiness to be shepherded (recognize the Pastor(s) and the Elders as his or her human shepherds)
- Provides a visible expression of belonging to God
- Facilitates personal growth in Christ
- Permits individuals to hold office, to vote at church Business Meetings, and to be counted when determining a quorum at Business Meetings

Section 1. Our Membership Rules

A. Eligibility

Any person who professes Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior as described in Scripture (John 1:12; 3:16; 6:37; and Rom. 10:9-10) is considered a candidate for membership in this church.

B. How to become a Member of Village Bible Church

1. Attend Membership Classes

All applicants for church membership must attend a church membership class consisting of a minimum of four hours of instruction in our Bylaws and Beliefs. The Board of Elders may waive class attendance for special circumstances.

2. Interview with Board of Elders

After completion of the membership class (unless waived), the applicant will be interviewed by the Board of Elders. The elders will seek assurance of the candidate's salvation and acceptance of our Essential Beliefs (see ARTICLE V. Section 1).

Conviction of our Essential Beliefs is mandatory for church membership. However, acceptance of our Distinctive Beliefs (see ARTICLE V. Section 2) is not required for church membership, but it is required to be an elected officer or staff member of Village Bible Church.

3. Membership Approval

Upon recommendation by the Board of Elders, the Senior Pastor will present the membership candidates to the church at the next regular worship service. A majority vote of the members present is required for membership approval. The church clerk will record the approval or disapproval for membership in the minutes book.

C. Kinds of Membership

1. Members

Individuals, who are sixteen or more years of age and are regular attenders, are members after their membership has been approved. Members may hold office, vote

at church Business Meetings, and are counted for determining if a quorum is present at Business Meetings.

2. Associate Members

Associate members are individuals, sixteen or more years of age, who have been approved as members and consider Village Bible Church their home church, but are unable to attend the church regularly due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. military service, on the mission field, shut-ins, etc.). Associate members may vote at Business Meetings, but are not counted toward the quorum. Associate members may not hold office.

3. Junior Members

Junior members are young people, under the age of sixteen, who have been approved for membership. Junior members may not hold office or vote, and are not counted toward the quorum at Business Meetings.

D. Change in Membership Status

1. Member to Associate Member

The Board of Elders may, after careful consideration and notification of the member, change any member's category of membership from member to associate member if he/she is not attending this church regularly.

2. Associate Member to Member

The Board of Elders may also change a member's category of membership from associate member to member if the member requests it and he/she is able to attend regularly.

3. Junior Member to Member

Upon his/her sixteenth birthday, a junior member becomes a member.

E. Ending Membership

1. By Request

A member of Village Bible Church may voluntarily end membership by notifying the Senior Pastor or one of the Elders in writing or verbally. Members who at such time are subject to church discipline will not be given a letter of termination.

2. By Exclusion

A member of Village Bible Church may have his/her membership terminated by

exclusion.⁷ The act of excluding is very serious. Village Bible Church uses the procedure listed in ARTICLE VI. Section 3.D when excluding members.

3. For Neglect of Assembly

A member of Village Bible Church may have his/her membership ended due to neglect of assembly (Heb 10:25). A member absent from church gatherings, without sufficient cause, for a period of six months may be dropped from membership after notification of the member or attempt of notification.

F. Restoration to Membership

A person who has been excluded from membership at Village Bible Church may be restored to membership⁸. An excluded person shall provide assurance to the Board of Elders of having returned to all of the Scriptural principles required for membership. Upon recommendation of the Board of Elders to the church, such a person will be restored into membership by the majority vote of the members present at a meeting.

Section 2. Responsibilities of Membership

Members of Village Bible Church have responsibilities to God, their church, their community, and the world. Members should:

- Live a lifestyle that reflects their love for God and their love for their neighbors.
- Study the Bible regularly.
- Pray for the ministry at Village Bible Church, for its leaders, and for other members.
- Minister at Village Bible Church using their spiritual gifts.
- Worship together.
- Fellowship together, making Village Bible Church events a schedule priority.
- Contribute to the church and its ministries financially through regular budgeted giving and through love gifts.
- Submit to the authority of church leaders.
- Share the gospel of Christ with their neighbors and the people around them.
- Support sharing the gospel throughout the world.

⁷ The Act of Exclusion is in harmony with the commands of God (Matt. 18:15-19; 1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thes. 3:6, 14-15; Titus 3:10). We are exhorted to exclude from the fellowship of believers a person who holds a false doctrine, who walks disorderly, or who disturbs the “unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace,” (Eph. 4:3).

⁸ The act of restoration is given by New Testament teaching and by example (2 Cor. 2:6-8; 2 Thes. 3:14-15).

Section 3. Our Ministry of Church Discipline

The church is called not only to a ministry of reconciling man to God, but also to a ministry of nurturing its members. Part of nurturing includes church discipline. The idea of church discipline is totally consistent with the basic purposes of the church – evangelism and edification.

Evangelism ministers to those outside the church to bring them to faith in Christ where the edification process begins. The edification process is designed to build up believers so they can be conformed to the image and character of Christ. Church discipline as a part of the edification process, ministers to those within the body of Christ who are dominated by some area of sin so they can experience liberation from its power through fellowship with Christ.

Church discipline is broadly defined as the confrontive and corrective measures taken by an individual, church leaders, or the congregation regarding a matter of sin in the life of a believer. Discipline in the church is not punishment. It is discipline, and discipline is designed to train and restore.

A. The Basis for Church Discipline

1. Church discipline is first patterned after the fact that Jesus Christ Himself disciplines His children (Heb. 12:6). Christ has delegated the discipline of the church family to the church itself (1 Cor. 5:12-13; 2 Cor. 2:6).
2. Church discipline is based on the holy character of God (1 Pet. 1:16; Heb. 12:11). The pattern of God's holiness is an important reason for church discipline. The church should be holy like God. The church is therefore to remove sin from its membership (1 Cor. 5:6-8).
3. Church discipline is to be patterned after and based on commands found in Scripture. There are numerous passages in Scripture which both command and give the church God's directives on the how, why, when, and where of church discipline (1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18:17-18; Titus 3:10; 2 Thes. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 6:1).
4. Church discipline is for the sake of the testimony of the church in the world (1 Pet. 4:13-19). The world observes the behavior of the church. When the church acts no differently than the world, it loses its credibility and authenticity (1 Pet. 2:11-18; 3:8-16; 4:1-4).

B. The Purpose of Church Discipline

1. To bring glory to God and enhance the testimony of the church
2. To restore and build up sinning believers (Matt. 18:15; 2 Thes. 3:14-15; Heb. 12:10-13; Gal. 6:1-2; James 5:20)
3. To produce a healthy faith based on sound doctrine (Titus 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:19-20)
4. To win a soul to Christ, if the sinning person only professes to be a Christian (2 Tim. 2:24-26)

5. To silence false teachers and their influence in the church (Titus 1:10-11)
6. To set an example for the rest of the body (1 Tim. 5:20)
7. To protect the church against the consequences that occur when churches fail to carry out church discipline. (A church that fails to exercise discipline may experience loss of purity, loss of influence, loss of progress, and loss of direction.)

C. When Church Discipline is Necessary

Church discipline must be exercised with extreme care. It is not to be used based on an individual's or church's opinions or dislikes. Church discipline is based on Scripture's definition of sin. It is to be exercised in the following situations:

1. When there is a grievance between church members (Matt. 18:15-17). The saints are not to go to civil courts with matters against one another (1 Cor 6:1-5).
2. When people are causing divisions in the church (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:9-11).
3. When someone is not following the instructions of the Scriptures (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thes. 3:10-15).
4. When someone is teaching false doctrine (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18).

D. The Practice of Church Discipline

Village Bible Church uses the following procedure, patterned after Matt. 18:15-17, for administering church discipline:

1. If a member has an issue/accusation with another member, he/she is to go to that member in private to resolve the matter.
2. If the issue is not resolved in private, the accusing member takes one or two other members with him/her to the offending member to resolve the matter.
3. If the issue is not resolved with one or two other members present, the accusing member is to bring the matter to the Board of Elders. The offending party will be given the opportunity to answer the accusation.

a) The Role of the Elders in Resolving Grievances

The matter will be tried before the Elders and the Senior Pastor. The Elders act as the jury, and the Senior Pastor acts as the moderator.

b) Decision by the Elders

The decision of the Elders by written ballot shall be binding upon the parties concerned. While it is recognized that such a decision has no legal standing before the State, it does have full recognition before God (Matt. 18:18-19). If either of the parties refuses to accept the decision of the Elders, then the matter

will be referred to the church for the exclusion of that party from the membership of the church.

4. If the issue is not resolved with the Board of Elders present, the board may refer the matter to the members of Village Bible Church. The offending member will be notified in writing of any meeting to consider the accusation against him/her. The offending member will be given the opportunity to answer the accusation before the church body.
5. If the issue is not resolved before the church, the members will vote to exclude the offending member. Two-thirds of the votes of the members at the meeting is required for exclusion. A quorum of members is required at the meeting. The decision of the church will be confirmed to this party in writing. Even if the guilty party refuses to abide by the decision of the church, the innocent party should rather suffer wrong before going to a civil court to settle the matter (1 Cor. 6:7).

ARTICLE VII. Our Meetings

Section 1. The Annual Business Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting of the church is held for the reception of reports, the election of officers, the adoption of the budget, and the transaction of other business. The meeting shall be conducted according to ARTICLE VII. Section 3.

A. Date of the Annual Business Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting shall be held annually during the month of May on a date selected by the Board of Deacons.

B. Notice of the Annual Business Meeting

Notice of the Annual Business Meeting shall be given at least fourteen days prior to the meeting.

C. Annual Business Meeting Moderator

The moderator for the Annual Business Meeting is the chairman of the Board of Deacons.

D. Election of Officers

The members of the church present at the Annual Business Meeting shall elect all officers by ballot from those nominated according to the procedures listed in ARTICLE XI. Section 1. Those nominees receiving the highest number of votes are elected to office provided they receive a majority of all ballots cast. If the number of nominees for an office is equal to the number vacant positions, those nominees must receive a majority of votes affirming them to that office.

E. Adoption of the Annual Budget

1. Approval of the Annual Budget (see ARTICLE IX.Section 2.B.6.d)ii)) shall be done by written ballot.
2. The Annual Budget shall be approved by a simple majority of the ballots cast.

Section 2. A Called Business Meeting

A Business Meeting may be called at any time by request of the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons, or by a quorum (see ARTICLE VII.Section 3.B) of the members of the church. A Called Business Meeting shall be conducted according to ARTICLE VII.Section 3.

A. Notice of a Called Business Meeting

Notice of a Called Business Meeting shall be given at least seven days prior to the meeting.

B. Called Business Meeting Moderator

The Moderator for a Called Business Meeting is the Chairman of the Board that called the meeting. In the absence of the chairman, or if the meeting was called by a quorum, the members present elect their own moderator by a majority vote.

Section 3. Practices and Requirements Common to Our Business Meetings

A. Order of Business Meetings

1. *Roberts' Rules of Order* as last revised shall be the Parliamentary Manual of this church and govern in Business Meetings.
2. In case of a conflict between *Roberts' Rules of Order* and these Bylaws, the Bylaws shall govern.

B. Quorum

A quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting shall be one-third of the members of Village Bible Church who are not subject to church discipline at the time of the meeting.

C. Salary Ballots

All voting pertaining to staff salaries shall be by written ballot.

D. Absentee Balloting

Any Village Bible Church member (see ARTICLE VI.Section 1.C.1) who is unable to attend a Business Meeting may request an Absentee Ballot.

1. The petition for an Absentee Ballot shall be made to the Chairman of the Board that called the Business Meeting at least four days prior to the meeting.

2. The Board Chairman shall use his discretion in granting the petition. He should consider such factors as
 - a) The reason the member cannot attend the meeting
 - b) The need to be present at the meeting for the discussion of the issue being considered
 - c) The faithfulness of the member in attending regular Sunday morning worship services and/or church events
 3. If the petition is granted, the Board Chairman shall provide an Absentee Ballot to the requesting church member. The Board Chairman may use his judgment in the format of the Absentee Ballot and will strive to maintain the confidentiality of the member submitting an Absentee Ballot.
 4. In order to be counted, the Absentee Ballot shall be returned to the Board Chairman before the start of the Business Meeting.
- E. Method of Suspending Portions of the Bylaws for a Meeting
- Remembering the words of our Lord that the Sabbath was made for men and not men for the Sabbath, (Mark 2:27) it is likewise understood that these Bylaws were made to assist in conducting the affairs of Village Bible church and not to hinder them. Therefore, if a portion of these Bylaws (except ARTICLE II, ARTICLE IV, and ARTICLE V) hinders the conduct of business, it may be temporarily suspended for a Business Meeting by a two-thirds vote of the Members present.

ARTICLE VIII. Our Method of Amending the Constitution

Section 1. Board of Elder Approval

The Board of Elders must approve all proposed amendments.

Section 2. Membership Approval

Any proposed amendment to the Constitution must be included with the notice of a Business Meeting and requires a two-thirds vote for its adoption.

ARTICLE IX. Our Officers

Section 1. Our Staff

A. The Senior Pastor

1. Office

- a) The office of the Senior Pastor is spiritual in nature. The Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader of the church and as such his office is entrusted primarily with the spiritual welfare of the church (Eph. 4:7-11; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- b) It is the obligation of the church to recognize the divine calling of the Senior Pastor as one who has been gifted and given by the Lord to the Body of Christ for its spiritual growth (Eph. 4:11-16).

2. Duties

- a) The Senior Pastor shall seek to advance the mission of the church (see ARTICLE II), using his spiritual authority and gifts to be personally involved in and support such ministries as might accomplish those purposes (Acts 2:41-47).
- b) The Senior Pastor shall hold in trust the vision statement of the church (see ARTICLE III).
- c) The Senior Pastor shall preach the Word of God (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:1-2; Titus 1:15) in harmony with the Essential and Distinctive Beliefs of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE V. Section 1 and Section 2).
- d) The Senior Pastor shall endeavor to equip the members of the Body for ministry to and through the church (Eph. 4:11-13).
- e) The Senior Pastor shall be an example to the members of the church by keeping himself above reproach (Titus 1:7-8) in matters of conduct (1 Tim. 4:12, 16) and finance (1 Tim. 6:6-11; Titus 3:8) and by striving to fulfill the responsibilities of membership presented in ARTICLE VI. Section 2.
- f) The Senior Pastor shall lead and work with the Board of Elders in providing spiritual oversight to the congregation. Such oversight includes:
 - i) Encouraging spiritual growth in the church body (Eph. 4:11-16) by providing instruction through sound teaching and modeling godly living (1 Tim. 3:1-7).
 - ii) Guarding the congregation from those who hold to false doctrine and from those who exhibit or encourage ungodly attitudes and practices (1 Tim. 1:3-7; Titus 1:9-11).

- iii) Exercising loving discipline to those within the church body who are struggling to maintain the integrity of their faith (1 Tim. 4:1-2; Titus 1:9).
- iv) Knowing the congregation of the church.
- v) Praying for the needs of the individuals of the congregation (1 Tim. 2:1-6).
- vi) Practicing hospitality within the church body (Rom 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2).
- vii) Assimilating people into the life of the church community.
- g) The Senior Pastor is an ex officio⁹ member of all boards and committees. With the approval of the Board of Elders, he may appoint pastoral staff members to serve in the same capacity.

3. Method of Calling

a) Qualifications

The Board of Elders shall establish the qualifications of the position of Senior Pastor based on the needs of the congregation. At a minimum the Senior Pastor must:

- i) Meet the same Biblical qualifications addressed to the Elders of the church (see ARTICLE IX. Section 2.A.2.a)).
- ii) Be called and gifted as a Pastor-Teacher (Eph. 4:11).
- iii) Be a man with an upstanding reputation.
- iv) Be a graduate from a reputable accredited evangelical Christian University, Bible College, or Seminary with a Masters Degree in Bible, Christian leadership, or a comparable degree. In lieu of the Masters Degree, the Board of Elders may accept comparable ministry experience along with a Bachelors Degree in Bible from the previously mentioned institutions.
- v) Be ordained by a reputable evangelical Christian agency.
- vi) Must agree to uphold the Bylaws and Beliefs (both essential and distinctive, see ARTICLE V. Section 1 and Section 2) of Village Bible Church.

⁹ Ex officio – by virtue or because of an office.

b) Consideration of Multiple Candidates

Only one applicant shall be called to candidate at a time.

c) Interview with the Board of Elders

A candidate for Senior Pastor is examined by the Board of Elders to determine his qualifications for the position of Senior Pastor, his agreement with the Bylaws and Beliefs (both essential and distinctive, see ARTICLE V. Section 1 and Section 2) of this church, and to seek assurance of the candidate's salvation. If the examination proves contrary, then the Board of Elders will inform the church of the reasons for their decision, and a new applicant starts the candidate process.

d) Meeting with Church Boards and Committees

A candidate for Senior Pastor shall meet with the Board of Deacons and with other Boards and Committees of the church where appropriate as determined by the Board of Elders.

e) Pulpit Appearances

Upon approval by the Board of Elders, a candidate shall make at least two appearances for sermons in the pulpit of the church.

f) Voting for a Senior Pastoral Candidate

i) A written ballot of the members shall be held at a Business Meeting called by the Board of Elders (see ARTICLE VII. Section 2 and Section 3) following the completion of the candidacy.

ii) A seventy percent affirmative vote of the ballots shall be necessary to make a candidate eligible for the pastorship.

g) Compensation

A candidate receiving a favorable vote will be issued an offer/call stating the initial salary, all fringe benefits, moving allowances, etc. A committee composed of members from the Elder and Deacon Boards shall prepare the offer/call.

4. Period of Service

The Senior Pastor is elected to office by the church for an indeterminate period of time.

5. Termination of the Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor may be terminated either by resignation or dismissal.

- a) A resignation requires a ninety-day written notice unless both parties agree to a shorter notice.
- b) A dismissal requires a majority vote by written ballot of the members at a Business Meeting called by the Board of Elders (see ARTICLE VII. Section 2 and Section 3). If dismissal is approved, the Senior Pastor is immediately terminated with thirty days severance pay.

B. Permanent Pastoral Staff

1. Office

The Senior Pastor and Board of Elders shall establish permanent pastoral staff positions, as they deem necessary to further God's work through Village Bible Church. The Board of Elders will take under consideration recommendations from the other boards and ministry leaders.

2. Duties

- a) The Senior Pastor and Board of Elders shall establish the duties of each permanent pastoral staff position.
- b) Pastoral staff is differentiated from support staff in that pastoral staff is responsible for ministry involving direct teaching, leading, or training of the members of the body at Village Bible Church. Examples of pastoral staff positions include but are not limited to:
 - i) Associate Pastor
 - ii) Youth Pastor
 - iii) Children's Ministry Director
 - iv) Ministry Coordinator
 - v) Worship Team Director
- c) Each permanent pastoral staff member is responsible to the Senior Pastor and indirectly responsible to the Board of Elders through the Senior Pastor.

3. Method of Calling

a) Qualifications

The Senior Pastor and Board of Elders shall establish the qualifications of each permanent pastoral staff position. Those qualifications must include being a born again Christian and agreement with the Bylaws and Beliefs (both essential and distinctive, see ARTICLE V. Section 1 and Section 2) of this church.

b) Consideration of Multiple Candidates

The Board of Elders will determine if more than one candidate will be considered at a time for a permanent pastoral staff position.

c) Interview with the Board of Elders

Candidates for permanent pastoral staff positions shall be examined by the Senior Pastor and Board of Elders to determine their qualifications for the position, their agreement with the Bylaws and Beliefs (both essential and distinctive, see ARTICLE V. Section 1 and Section 2) of this church, and to seek assurance of their salvation.

d) Meeting with Church Boards and Committees

Candidates shall meet with other Boards and Committees of the church where appropriate as determined by the Board of Elders.

e) Pulpit Appearances

The Board of Elders will determine if the candidates are required to make pulpit appearances.

f) Approval of Candidates

i) A written ballot of the members shall be held at a Business Meeting called by the Board of Elders (see ARTICLE VII. Section 2 and Section 3) following the completion of the candidacy.

ii) A two-thirds affirmative vote of the ballots shall be necessary to fill a permanent pastoral staff position.

g) Compensation

A candidate receiving a favorable vote will be issued an offer/call stating the initial salary, all fringe benefits, moving allowances, etc. A committee composed of members from the Elder and Deacon Boards shall prepare the offer/call.

4. Period of Service

The Board of Elders sets the term of office. The term may be indefinite or mutually agreed upon by the candidate and Board of Elders.

5. Termination

A permanent pastoral staff member may be terminated either by resignation, dismissal, or completion of service.

a) A resignation requires a thirty-day written notice unless both parties agree to a shorter notice.

- b) A dismissal requires a majority vote by written ballot of the members at a Business Meeting called by the Board of Elders (see ARTICLE VII. Section 2 and Section 3). If dismissal is approved, the permanent pastoral staff member is immediately terminated with thirty days severance pay.
- c) Upon the completion of service of a permanent pastoral staff member, the Board of Elders may decide to extend the term of service if it is agreeable with the staff member.

C. Temporary Pastoral Staff

1. Office

The Senior Pastor and Board of Elders shall establish temporary pastoral staff positions (positions in which the period of service is less than six months), as they deem necessary to further God's work through Village Bible Church. The Board of Elders will take under consideration recommendations from the other boards and ministry leaders.

2. Duties

- a) The Senior Pastor and Board of Elders shall establish the duties of each temporary pastoral staff position.
- b) Temporary pastoral staff is similar to permanent pastoral staff in that temporary pastoral staff is responsible for ministry involving direct teaching, leading, or training of the members of the body at Village Bible Church, but its period of service is less than six months. Examples of temporary pastoral staff positions include but are not limited to:
 - i) Interim Pastor
 - ii) Ministerial Intern
 - iii) Youth Pastor
 - iv) Children's Ministry Assistant
 - v) Worship Team Leader
- c) Each temporary pastoral staff member is responsible to the Senior Pastor and indirectly responsible to the Board of Elders through the Senior Pastor.

3. Method of Calling

a) Qualifications

The Senior Pastor and Board of Elders shall establish the qualifications of each temporary pastoral staff position. Those qualifications must include being a

born again Christian and agreement with the Bylaws and Beliefs (both essential and distinctive, see ARTICLE V. Section 1 and Section 2) of this church.

b) Consideration of Multiple Candidates

The Board of Elders will determine if more than one candidate will be considered at a time for a temporary pastoral staff position.

c) Interview with the Board of Elders

Candidates for temporary pastoral staff positions shall be examined by the Senior Pastor and Board of Elders to determine their qualifications for the position, their agreement with the Bylaws and Beliefs (both essential and distinctive, see ARTICLE V. Section 1 and Section 2) of this church, and to seek assurance of their salvation.

d) Meeting with Church Boards and Committees

Candidates shall meet with other Boards and Committees of the church where appropriate as determined by the Board of Elders.

e) Pulpit Appearances

The Board of Elders will determine if the candidates are required to make pulpit appearances.

f) Approval of Candidates

i) The Board of Elders may appoint a candidate to a temporary pastoral staff position

ii) The appointment to a temporary pastoral staff position shall be by unanimous vote of the Board of Elders. An abstention vote is not counted as a vote.

iii) A temporary pastoral staff position may be approved in the same manner as a permanent pastoral staff position (see ARTICLE IX. Section 1.B.3.f)) under one of the following conditions:

(a) The Board of Elders can not reach a unanimous vote.

(b) The Board of Elder desires congregational approval/input.

g) Compensation

i) The compensation shall be determined by the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons.

ii) Before an offer of employment or contract can be signed the Board of Deacons must affirm:

- (a) The compensation of the temporary pastoral staff position.
- (b) That funds exist in the church budget to compensate the temporary pastoral staff position.
- iii) If no funds exist in the church budget for the temporary pastoral staff position, a church business meeting shall be called (see ARTICLE VII.Section 2) to amend the church budget.

4. Period of Service

- a) The term of service of a temporary pastoral staff position shall not be longer than six months.
- b) The Board of Elders shall not appoint an individual to consecutive terms of service in a temporary pastoral staff position.

5. Termination

A temporary pastoral staff member may be terminated either by resignation, dismissal, or completion of term of service.

- a) A resignation requires a thirty-day written notice unless both parties agree to a shorter notice.
- b) A dismissal of a temporary pastoral staff member requires the majority vote of the Board of Elders. If the staff member is dismissed, up to two weeks of severance pay may be granted. The dismissal shall take place immediately.
- c) Upon the completion of service of a temporary pastoral staff member, the Board of Elders may desire to extend the staff member's term of service. To extend the term of service of any temporary pastoral staff member (appointed by the Board of Elders or voted on by the congregation), the congregation shall vote for the staff member at a Business Meeting called by the Board of Elders in the same manner as for a permanent pastoral staff position (see ARTICLE IX.Section 1.B.3.f))

D. Support Staff

1. Office

The Senior Pastor, Board of Elders, and/or Board of Deacons shall establish support staff positions, as they deem necessary for conducting the work of Village Bible Church.

2. Duties

The Senior Pastor, Board of Elders, and/or Board of Deacons shall establish the duties of each support staff position. Support staff is differentiated from pastoral staff in that support staff is not responsible for ministry involving direct teaching, leading,

or training of the members of the body at Village Bible Church. Examples of support staff positions include but are not limited to:

- a) Custodian/Groundskeeper/Maintenance Worker
- b) Secretary/Office Administrator
- c) Administrative Assistant to the Pastoral Staff
- d) Building Contractor
- e) Sound Technician
- f) Nursery Worker
- g) Lawyer/Social Services Advisor
- h) Kitchen Coordinator/Chef
- i) Musician

3. Method of Hiring

a) Qualifications

The Senior Pastor, Board of Elders, and/or Board of Deacons shall establish the qualifications of each support staff position

b) Consideration of Multiple Candidates

The Board of Elders and/or Board of Deacons will determine if more than one candidate will be considered at a time for a support staff position.

c) Compensation

i) The Board of Elders and/or Board of Deacons shall negotiate the compensation with the support staff candidate.

ii) Before an offer of employment or contract can be signed, the Board of Deacons must affirm:

- (a) The compensation of the support staff position.
- (b) That funds exist in the church budget to compensate the support staff position.
- (c) If no funds exist in the church budget for the support staff position, a church business meeting shall be called (see ARTICLE VII. Section 2) to amend the church budget.

- iii) The Board of Elders may use the benevolent fund to hire a lawyer, social services advisor, or other counsel without the approval of the Board of Deacons.

d) Decision to Hire

The Board of Elders, and/or the Board of Deacons will make the final hiring decision for support staff.

4. Termination

A support staff member may be terminated either by resignation or dismissal.

- a) A two week written notice is encouraged in the case of a resignation, but a shorter notification period will be accepted.
- b) A dismissal requires the majority vote of the Board of Elders, and/or the Board of Deacons. If a support staff member is dismissed, up to two weeks of severance pay may be granted. The dismissal shall take place immediately.

E. Procedures for Licensing and Ordaining Pastoral Staff Members

1. License for Ministerial Duties

A license for ministerial duties will be granted an applicant when meeting the following conditions:

- a) The applicant must be a man and a member of this church.
- b) He must have at least one year of Bible training at an accredited evangelical Christian University, Bible College, or Seminary or have equivalent training.
- c) He must have presented a written request to the Senior Pastor stating the use intended for such a license.
- d) The Board of Elders, after deliberation, will make a recommendation to the church for action.

e) Congregational Approval

The approval of the majority of the members at a Business Meeting called by the Board of Elders (see ARTICLE VII. Section 2 and Section 3) is required for licensing.

2. Ordination to Christian Ministry

The church will publicly ordain a candidate for Christian Ministry and present him with a certificate if the following conditions are met:

- a) The applicant must be a man and a member of this church.

- b) He must have presented a written request to the Senior Pastor or the Board of Elders.
- c) The Board of Elders, after consideration of the request, will make a recommendation to the church that an Ordination Council be called to examine the candidate.
- d) The approval of the majority of the members at a Business Meeting called by the Board of Elders (see ARTICLE VII. Section 2 and Section 3) is required for requesting an Ordination Council.
- e) An Ordination Council hosted by Village Bible Church examines the candidate to its standards and returns a recommendation that the candidate be ordained. The council will be composed of individuals chosen by the IFCA International Preordination Committee and other Christian leaders selected by the Board of Elders in cooperation with the candidate.

Section 2. Our Elected Officers

There are a variety of elected officers at Village Bible Church. The officers are nominated according to the procedures listed in ARTICLE XI. Section 1. The duties and specific qualifications for each officer are given in the following paragraphs.

A. Elders

1. Office

The office of Elder is spiritual in nature. An Elder is a spiritual leader of the church and assists the Senior Pastor in providing spiritual oversight to the congregation.

2. Qualifications

- a) An Elder shall be a member of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE VI. Section 1).
- b) An Elder shall affirm the Distinctive Beliefs of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE V. Section 2).
- c) An Elder shall meet the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- d) An Elder shall not concurrently be a member of the Board of Deacons.

3. Election

An Elder is elected to office by the church membership at the Annual Business Meeting. Approximately one-third of the total number of Elders should be elected each year.

4. Period of Service

An Elder is elected to office for a maximum period of three years. Men may decide to serve for a one-year or two-year period due to personal reasons. Men making such decisions must inform the nominating committee prior to the election. There is no limitation to years of continuous service.

5. Ordination

The Elders are ordained¹⁰ to office. The members of Village Bible Church recognize the Elders' ministerial authority when they affirm the Elders to office, via voting, at the Annual Business Meeting.

6. Board of Elders

a) Number of Elders

The Board of Elders consists of three or more Elders.

b) Meetings

The Board of Elders will hold regular monthly meetings. The Board will also meet at the request of the Chairman, or upon request of the majority of the Board.

c) Officers of the Board

The Board of Elders will elect from among its members:

i) Chairman

ii) Vice-Chairman

iii) Secretary

iv) Officers/Committee chairmen as need requires

d) Duties

i) Work with the Senior Pastor to provide spiritual oversight of the church (see ARTICLE IX.Section 1.A.2.f).

ii) Work with the members of the church to reach others for Christ.

iii) Select and chair the nominating committee (see ARTICLE XI.Section 1).

iv) Select and chair the auditing committee (see ARTICLE XI.Section 2).

v) Authorize disbursements from the Benevolent Fund.

¹⁰ Ordain – to invest officially (as by the laying on of hands) with ministerial authority.

- vi) Authorize emergency expenditures from the Mission Fund for Missionary purposes when such disbursement does not jeopardize previous commitments.

B. Deacons

1. Office

The office of Deacon is spiritual in nature. A Deacon is entrusted with the physical welfare of the church.

2. Qualifications

- a) A Deacon shall be a member of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE VI. Section 1).
- b) A Deacon shall affirm the Distinctive Beliefs of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE V. Section 2).
- c) A Deacon shall meet the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Tim. 3:8-13.
- d) A Deacon shall not concurrently be a member of the Board of Elders.

3. Election

A Deacon is elected to office by the church membership at the Annual Business Meeting. Approximately one-third of the total number of Deacons should be elected each year.

4. Period of Service

A Deacon is elected to office for a maximum period of three years. Men may decide to serve for a one-year or two-year period due to personal reasons. Men making such decisions must inform the nominating committee prior to the election. There is no limitation to years of continuous service.

5. Ordination

The Deacons are ordained to office. The members of Village Bible Church recognize the Deacons' ministerial authority when they affirm the Deacons to office, via voting, at the Annual Business Meeting.

6. Board of Deacons

a) Number of Deacons

The Board of Deacons consists of three or more ministering Deacons and the Church Treasurer.

b) Meetings

The Board of Deacons will hold regular monthly meetings. The Board will also meet at the request of the Chairman, or upon request of the majority of the Board.

c) Officers of the Board

The Board of Deacons shall elect from among its ministering members (the Church Treasurer is excluded):

- i) Chairman who will also act as the President of the Corporation
- ii) Vice-Chairman who will act as Vice-President of the Corporation
- iii) Secretary who will also act as the Secretary of the Corporation
- iv) Assistant Treasurer as need requires. The qualifications and duties of Treasurer apply (see ARTICLE IX. Section 2.E.2 and E.4).
- v) Officers/Committee chairmen as need requires

d) Financial Duties

The Board of Deacons holds in trust all church properties. It is responsible for the negotiation of loans, the drawing up of contracts, and the arranging of financial transactions in the name of the church. With the assistance of the Church Treasurer, it is responsible for collecting, recording, and dispersing all funds of the church and preparing all books and accounts for the annual audit.

i) Consent for Special Transactions

The Board shall not sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber the real estate or other property of the church without the consent of the majority of the members at a called Business Meeting (see ARTICLE VII. Section 2 and Section 3).

ii) Prepare Church Budget

The Board of Deacons shall prepare the annual budget.

- (a) The budget shall be presented to the church at least seven days before the Annual Business Meeting (see ARTICLE VII. Section 1).
- (b) The Board shall recommend to the church membership the salary to be paid each staff member as part of the budget.

iii) Budget Increases

- (a) The Board of Deacons will strive to keep church expenses from exceeding the total budget approved by the membership at the Annual Business Meeting (see ARTICLE VII. Section 1).

- (b) If during the course of a fiscal year, the Board of Deacons predicts the expenses of the church to exceed the total congregationally approved budget by more than five percent, the Board shall obtain authorization to increase the budget from the majority of the members at a Called Business Meeting (see ARTICLE VII. Section 2 and Section 3).

iv) Disbursement of Outside Funds

Auxiliary organizations disbursing funds through the channels of the church to outside agencies or individuals shall obtain the approval of the Board of Elders to insure that such funds are not contributed to agencies unscriptural in doctrine or practice. If found unscriptural, then the contribution will be returned to the donor, if known, or if not known, it will be transferred to the Missionary Fund.

v) Non-active Funds

When a fund is designated a dead fund, the Board shall refer the matter to the church for nullification. The money in the fund will be returned to the donor(s), if known, but if not known, it will be transferred to the General Fund.

vi) Business Reports

- (a) At the Annual Business Meeting, the Board shall present a written report summarizing the transactions of the year. This report is a condensed Treasury Report prepared with the assistance of the Church Treasurer.
- (b) Copies of the Annual Business Report shall be available to individual members.
- (c) In addition to the Annual Business Report, the Board shall report its transactions when called for by a vote of the church.

vii) Financial Secretary

The Board of Deacons may appoint/hire a Financial Secretary to assist the Church Treasurer. The Financial Secretary is not a member of the Board of Deacons and is not required to be a church member.

e) Care of Church Property

The Board shall oversee the care of the church buildings and grounds.

f) Ushers

The Board of Deacons shall arrange for ushers to assist people to their seats, direct traffic and parking, and to gather all offerings.

C. Deaconesses

1. Office

The office of Deaconess is spiritual in nature. This office is entrusted with both the spiritual and temporal welfare of the church.

2. Qualifications

- a) A Deaconess shall be a member of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE VI. Section 1).
- b) A Deaconess shall affirm the Distinctive Beliefs of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE V. Section 2).
- c) A Deaconess shall meet the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Tim. 2:9-10 and Titus 2:3-5.

3. Election

A Deaconess is elected to office by the church membership at the Annual Business Meeting. Approximately one-third of the total number of Deaconesses should be elected each year.

4. Period of Service

A Deaconess is elected to office for a maximum period of three years. Women may decide to serve for a one-year or two-year period due to personal reasons. Women making such decisions must inform the nominating committee prior to the election. There is no limitation to years of continuous service.

5. Ordination

The Deaconesses are ordained to office. The members of Village Bible Church recognize the Deaconesses' ministerial authority when they affirm the Deaconesses to office, via voting, at the Annual Business Meeting.

6. Board of Deaconesses

a) Number of Deaconesses

The Board of Deaconesses consists of three or more Deaconesses.

b) Meetings

The Board of Deaconesses will meet at the request of the Chairwoman, or upon request of the majority of the Board.

c) Officers of the Board

The Deaconesses will elect from among them:

- i) Chairwoman
- ii) Officers/Committee chairwomen as need requires
- d) Duties

The specific duties of the Board of Deaconesses will be determined by the Senior Pastor and/or Board of Elders and may include such tasks as:

- i) Preparing the elements of the Lord's Supper
- ii) Assisting women candidates during baptism
- iii) Caring for those with needs
 - (a) Visiting
 - (b) Sending cards and flowers
 - (c) Arranging meals
 - (d) Organizing baby and bridal showers
- iv) Maintaining the church kitchen

D. Church Clerk

1. Office

The office of Church Clerk is spiritual in nature. This office is entrusted specifically with the keeping of records for the welfare of the church.

2. Qualifications

- a) The Church Clerk shall be a member of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE VI. Section 1).
- b) The Church Clerk shall affirm the Distinctive Beliefs of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE V. Section 2).
- c) The Church Clerk shall be able to record accurate meeting minutes.

3. Election

The Clerk is elected to office by the church membership at the Annual Business Meeting for a term of one year. The Clerk may succeed himself/herself.

4. Duties

It shall be the duty of the Church Clerk to

- a) Maintain the Membership Register of the church.

- b) Maintain the list of baptisms at the church.
- c) Record the minutes of the church at its Business Meetings. Such records to be produced and read upon request of the Chairman at a meeting of either the Board of Elders or Board of Deacons or the Moderator at a Business Meeting of the church.

E. Church Treasurer

1. Office

The office of the Church Treasurer is spiritual in nature. This office is entrusted with the handling of monies for the physical welfare of the church.

2. Qualifications

- a) Being a Deacon, the Treasurer shall meet the qualifications of a Deacon (see ARTICLE IX. Section 2.B.2).
- b) The Treasurer shall be able to handle monetary transactions.
- c) The Treasurer shall be able to maintain the records of monetary transactions.

3. Election

The Treasurer is elected to office by the church membership at the Annual Business Meeting for a term of one year and may succeed himself.

4. Duties

The Treasurer serves as a member of the Board of Deacons, and he is the Legal Treasurer of the Corporation. It shall be his duty to:

- a) Receive all monies contributed or paid to the church and to cause such monies to be deposited in a bank designated by the Board of Deacons.
- b) Make budgeted disbursements and those approved by the Board of Deacons. In the case of a Benevolent Fund disbursement or an emergency disbursement from the Missions Fund the approval of the Board of Elders is required.
- c) Keep a detailed record of all transactions.
- d) Make a monthly report of all transactions to the Board of Deacons.
- e) Call to the attention of the Board of Deacons special monetary needs that arise, so that upon approval by the Board, the need may be presented to the church orally or in a written statement.
- f) Provide Financial Statements to the Board of Elders as requested.

F. Elected Office Vacancies

1. Reason for Vacancy

A vacancy may occur by resignation, death, or when declared vacant due to incapacity. The Board of Elders may make a declaration of incapacity after an investigation.

2. Filling a Vacancy

When an elective office becomes vacant, the Board of Elders shall consult with the affected Board, if any, and appoint a replacement, if needed, to serve until the next Annual Business Meeting when it will be filled by election.

3. Requirements for Replacement Church Officers

Replacement officers of the church shall

- a) Be members of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE VI. Section 1).
- b) Affirm the Distinctive Beliefs of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE V. Section 2).

Section 3. Appointed Offices of the Church

A. Establishment and Dissolution of Appointed Offices

The Board of Elders may establish, fill, and dissolve appointed offices in support of the services and spiritual life of the church as the need arises.

B. Requirements for Appointed Officers of the Church

Appointed officers of the church shall

1. Be members of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE VI. Section 1).
2. Affirm the Distinctive Beliefs of Village Bible Church (see ARTICLE V. Section 2).

ARTICLE X. Our Joint Board Meetings

The Joint Board is composed of the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons to consider matters on which either Board desires to help. The Joint Board is an advisory board; it has no legal function. The final decision for a matter under consideration rests with the Board under whose jurisdiction it would have fallen or upon the members of the church at a Business Meeting.

Section 1. Calling a Meeting

The Chairman of the Board of Elders or the Chairman of the Board of Deacons may call a meeting of the Joint Board.

Section 2. Order of the Meeting

The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall serve as Moderator of the Joint Board.

ARTICLE XI. Our Committees and Auxiliary Organizations

Section 1. Nominating Committee

The Elders shall establish a nominating committee ninety days prior to the Annual Business Meeting.

A. Members

The committee shall consist of not less than five members from the following groups:

1. One member from the Board of Elders
2. One member from the Board of Deacons
3. One member from the Board of Deaconesses
4. Two members of the church

B. Committee Chairman

An Elder shall be the chairman of the Nominating Committee.

C. Duties

1. Selecting Nominations

After praying, reviewing the qualifications for each position, and discussing potential nominations, the nominating committee shall draft a list of nominations for each office.

2. Approval of Nominations

The committee shall submit a list of potential nominations to the Board of Elders for approval.

3. Contacting Nominees

Once approved by the Elders, the nominees will be contacted by the committee to obtain their consent to the nomination, which shall include:

- a) Their agreement to hold office
- b) Their concurrence with the Distinctive Beliefs of the church (see ARTICLE V. Section 2)
- c) Their commitment to live a lifestyle consistent with being a Christian leader

4. Posting of Nominations

The list of nominees who have consented to their nomination shall be posted at least fourteen days prior to the day of the Annual Business Meeting.

5. Accepting Nominations from Village Bible Church Members

Members in good standing may nominate church members for elected offices in addition to the posted nominations.

- a) Additional nominations shall be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee within seven days after the posting of the list of nominations.
- b) Additional nominations shall be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee.
- c) Each additional nomination shall have the signatures of at least two church members who certify that they have recently read the qualifications for the office.
- d) Additional nominees shall certify in writing:
 - i) Their agreement to hold office
 - ii) Their concurrence with the Distinctive Beliefs of the church (see ARTICLE V. Section 2)
 - iii) Their commitment to live a lifestyle consistent with being a Christian leader

Section 2. Auditing Committee

The Elders shall establish an auditing committee at the close of the fiscal year.

A. Members

The Elders shall appoint three church members (see ARTICLE VI. Section 1.C.1) to the auditing committee.

B. Committee Chairman

An Elder shall be the chairman of the Auditing Committee.

C. Duties

- 1. Audit the Treasurer's accounts for the fiscal year.
- 2. Report the audit results to the church membership.
- 3. Include the audit report in the minutes of an Elder Board meeting.

Section 3. Other Committees and Auxiliary Organizations

The Board of Elders may establish and dissolve Committees and Auxiliary Organizations in support of the services and spiritual life of the church as the need arises.

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Appendix A: Expanded Explanations of Our Beliefs

Appendix A more completely expresses some of the doctrines presented in ARTICLE V – Our Beliefs.

A. The Bible

We believe God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired the Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. The Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.

1. We believe the Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: It is to be believed as God's instruction in all that it affirms; obeyed as God's command in all that it requires; embraced as God's pledge in all that it promises (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
2. We believe the Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
3. We believe Scripture, being wholly and verbally God-given, is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives (2 Pet. 1:20-21).
4. We believe the authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own, and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.
5. We believe that Scripture should always be interpreted on the basis that it is infallible and inerrant. In inspiration, God utilized the culture and conventions of His penman's environment, an environment that God controls in His sovereign providence; it is misinterpretation to imagine otherwise. So history must be treated as history, poetry as poetry, hyperbole and metaphor as hyperbole and metaphor.

B. The Nature of God

We believe that there is one 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).

1. God the Father
 - a) As the Creator, God is Father over all creation (Mal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 12:9).
 - b) God's relationship with Israel is likened to a relationship between a father and a son (Ex. 4:22-23).
 - c) The title "the God and Father of the Lord Jesus" (2 Cor. 11:31) is the full title of the first Person of the Trinity.

- d) God is Father of those who believe and have received eternal life by being born again. This is an everlasting relationship beginning at new birth, which is true for each Christian.

2. Jesus Christ

- a) We believe Jesus Christ, the Son, is associated with the Father in an eternal and unchangeable filial [of, relating to, or befitting a son] relationship (John 1:1; 17:5, 24). He did not become a Son of the Father by His incarnation, or by His resurrection, nor is He a Son by mere title, nor is He temporarily assuming such a relationship that He may execute His part in the Covenant of Redemption.
- b) We believe in the deity of our 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 men (John 1:1-2, 14; Luke 1:35).
- c) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5).
- d) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9-10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2).

3. The Holy Spirit

- a) We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them until the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13-14).
- b) We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled¹¹ with the Spirit (John 16:13; 1 John 2:20, 27; Eph. 5:18).

¹¹ The Holy Spirit dwells in all believers from the time of salvation. Being filled with the Spirit is the believer allowing the Holy Spirit to work in him.

C. Man

1. Creation of Man

We believe that God created both the material (body) and immaterial (spirit) constitution of man (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7, 21-23; 5:1-2; 6:6-7). The immaterial nature of man was made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28; John 4:24).

2. The fall of Man

We believe that the fall man was an actual event that occurred in the Garden of Eden. The fall occurred when Adam and Eve chose to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). Adam and Eve willfully disobeyed the revealed will of God. They acted independently of God and sought to determine their own course of life. They refused to submit to God's sovereign right to totally direct man's life (Jer. 10:23; Psa. 37:23).

3. Condition of Man

We believe that Adam's original sin affected him and all of his descendants because of the solidarity of the human race and resulted in:

- a) Man's spiritual death and broken fellowship with God (Gen. 2:17; 3:8; Eph. 2:1)
- b) Man's total depravity through the corrupting effects of the sin nature (Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:18)
- c) Man's physical death and liability to the second death (Gen. 2:17; 3:19; Rom. 5:12; 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:22; Heb. 9:27)
- d) Man's loss of original righteousness (Ecc. 7:20; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:10)
- e) Man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24)
- f) Imputation (laying the responsibility or blame for) of sin to Adam and all his descendants (Rom. 5:12-21)
- g) Revealed and impending wrath of God (John 3:36; Rom. 1:18)

D. Salvation

1. Method of Salvation

We believe 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 Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (Eph. 2:8-10; John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

2. Fruits of Salvation

a) Christian Living

We believe that all believers should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord and that separation from all religious apostasy (renunciation of a religious faith) and all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded by God (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1).

b) Proclaiming the Gospel

We believe it is our obligation to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:19-20).

E. The Church

1. Definition of the Church

a) Universal Church

We believe that the universal church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2).

b) Local Church

We believe that the local church is an assembly of professed believers in one locality (Matt. 18:17; Acts 8:1, 3; 11:22, 26; 12:1, 5; 14:23, 27).

2. Mission of the Church

a) Glorification of God (Rev. 4:11)

b) Evangelization of the World (Acts 1:8)

c) Restraint of sin (Matt. 5:13-16; 2 Thes. 2:6-7)

d) Edification (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Thes. 5:11; Jude 20)

3. Serving the Church Body

We believe that all Christians are given at least one spiritual gift for the building up of the Body of Christ, the Church (1 Cor. 12:4-31).

F. Angels

1. Origin of Angels

We believe that angels were created by a direct act of God's will (Psa. 148: 2, 5). Angels were created in righteousness (Ezek. 28:14-15; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26), but some fell from righteousness.

2. Nature of Angels

We believe that angels are finite spirits (Heb. 1:7, 14 cf. Psa. 104:4). God is an infinite Spirit (John 4:24; 1 Kings 8:27). Angels have eternal existence, but were created. They have great abilities, but are not omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all-powerful), nor omnipresent (present in all places at all times).

3. Good Angels

We believe that the good angels are confirmed in their goodness because of their choice to obey God rather than to follow Lucifer (Satan) in his rebellion against God (1 Tim. 5:21). Good angels serve God in perfect obedience, worshipping, praising, and serving Him.

G. Satan and the Demons (Evil Angels)

We believe that Satan and those angels that chose to follow him are confirmed in evil (Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:28, 31; Heb. 2:16 cf. Matt. 25:41).

1. Satan

We believe that Satan is a fallen angel, the author of sin and the cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

2. Demons (Evil Angels)

We believe that demons are evil angels. They attempt to hinder the work of God's angels (Dan. 10:13), oppose the people of God (Eph 6:12), and support the evil of Satan (Rev. 12:7 cf. verses 4, 9). Like Satan, the demons will be eternally punished.

H. The Return of Christ

We believe in the literal fulfillment of the Old and New Testament prophecies.

1. The Church and Israel are Different

The belief in the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies leads to the conclusion that there is a clear distinction between Israel and the Church. The Old Testament prophecies tell of a restored kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of the Messiah that covers the whole Earth. The New Testament confirms this universal kingdom where

Israel has a distinct role (Matt. 19:28; cf Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Cor. 15:24-58; Rev. 20:1-6).

2. The Millennial Kingdom

The Kingdom of the Messiah is established when Christ returns to Earth and ushers in His 1000 year reign on Earth (the Millennium). All the powers of government will be held by Christ (Psa. 2:8-12; 45:6-7; 72:2-14; Isa. 11:4; 65:19-23). There will be material prosperity (Psa. 72:16; Amos 9:13-14), and a redeemed nature (Isa. 11:5-8; 41:18-19; 55:12).

3. The Rapture and Tribulation

Before the Millennium, those who believe in Christ will be gathered (raptured) from the Earth (1 Thes. 4:13-18). A time of great unbelief, lawlessness, and destruction (the tribulation) occurs after the rapture. (2 Thes. 2:1-4; Matt. 24:15-21; Dan. 7:24-25; 1 Thes. 1:10; 5:9; Rev 3:10). The purpose of the tribulation is to purify Israel and to test the world.

I. Dispensationalism

1. Definition

A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose. The word *economy* is the core of the definition. Economy is derived from the Greek word *oikonomos/oikonomia* and is used in Scripture to mean steward, stewardship, or dispensation (Luke 12:24; 16:1-4, 8; Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 4:1; 9:17; Gal. 4:2; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10).

The word *oikonomos* means "an administration," whether of a house or property, of a state or a nation, or in the current sense, the administration of the human race or any part of it, at any given time. Just as parents govern their household in different ways, depending on the maturity of their children, so God has at different times dealt with men in different ways, according to the necessity of the circumstances, but He does this to achieve a great end: the glorification of Himself. Dispensationalism views the world as a household run by God.

The word *distinguishable* in the definition points out the fact that there are some features that are distinctive to each dispensation which mark them off from each other as different dispensations. The phrase *the outworking of God's purpose* in the definition reminds us that the viewpoint in distinguishing the dispensations is God's, not man's. The distinguishing features are introduced by God; the similar features are retained by God; and the overall combined purpose of the whole program is the glory of God.

2. The Primary Characteristics for Distinguishing the Dispensations

- a) The different governing relationship into which God enters with the world in each economy

- b) The resulting responsibility of mankind in each of these different relationships
 - c) The corresponding revelation necessary to effect the change (new revelation is a stage in the progress of revelation through the Bible)
- 3. The Essence of Dispensationalism
 - a) The recognition of a distinction between Israel and the Church
 - b) A consistently literal principle of interpretation of the Bible
 - c) The basic and working conception of the purpose of God as His own glory rather than as the single purpose of salvation