

# **West Orlando Baptist Church, Inc.**

1006 East Crown Point Road

Ocoee, Florida 34761

## **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

(Approved on February 10, 2008)

### **PREAMBLE**

Be it known the following is the consensus of the members of West Orlando Baptist Church as to what constitutes a New Testament Church, and the law by which she is governed. It is herein conceded that this Constitution and Bylaws are only offered as man's ability may describe while the final and sole rule of faith and practice is the Holy Bible as ascribed in Article III, Section 1.

### **ARTICLE I. NAME AND PURPOSE**

#### **Section 1. Name**

This congregation of believers, comprised of persons who have made a public profession of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, been baptized by immersion in believer's baptism as commanded by our Lord, declared our purpose to endeavor to walk according to the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, and have been elected to church membership, shall be known as the West Orlando Baptist Church, Inc.; 1006 East Crown Point Road; Orange County; Ocoee, Florida, 34761.

#### **Section 2. Purpose**

- a) This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501C(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue law, including but not limited to, such purposes as establishing and maintaining religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, websites, daycare centers, camps, nursing homes, cemeteries, and other ministries that the church may be led of God to establish.
- b) The Church shall also ordain and license men to the Gospel ministry; evangelize the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Holy Bible, in all activities of Christian education; maintain missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country;

and engage in any other ministry that the church may decide from time to time to pursue in obedience to the will of God.

## **ARTICLE II. COVENANT**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church, in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expense of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotion; to religiously educate our children in the things of Christ; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagement and exemplary in our actions; to avoid all tattling; backbiting or malicious use of the tongue; improper anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to keep our testimony above reproach; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation; and mindful of the rule of our Savior, to secure it without delay.

We moreover, engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other Church, where we can carry out the spirit of this Covenant and principles of God's Word.

## **ARTICLE III. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### **Section 1. Beliefs**

#### a) The Holy Bible:

1. We believe the Holy Bible of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible, God-breathed, and therefore, the final authority for faith in life. The 66 books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical, historical meaning. (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21)

2. We believe that God preserved His Word in the English language in the King James Version. Only the King James Version shall be used for teaching and preaching from the pulpit, in all Sunday school classes, Bible studies, and all ministries coming under the authority of West Orlando Baptist Church.
3. Anywhere the terms “Bible,” “Holy Bible,” “Scriptures,” or “Holy Scriptures” are used herein, they shall refer to the Holy Bible as previously defined in paragraph 2 above.
4. This Church receives the Holy Bible as its sole authority in matters of faith and practice.

b) The God-Head:

We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, co-creators of the heavens and the earth, and of man, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 14:10, 26; II Corinthians 13:14)

c) God the Father:

1. We believe that God the Father is the co-creator and nurturer of the heavens and the earth, and of all creation. The first person of the Holy Trinity, the head of the triune God-head and the Father of Christ Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary. He created man in His own image to have a personal relationship with man.
2. God is holy and righteous, the law-giver, and provider for His children/people. God will one day judge all people who have ever lived. He is the origin of everything, and everything is subject to Him, the supreme and powerful authority, the fountain and wellspring of all things. He is the only true God.
3. We believe that God exists realistically, objectively, and independently of human thought; that God created and sustains everything; that God is omnipotent and eternal, and is personal, interested and answers prayer. It is His intent that man, through a personal relationship with God Himself, would glorify God. In this regard, He works in the affairs of men to bring about His will which is that none will perish and that all would come to repentance. God the Father so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (Jesus Christ) to pay the sin debt for the world.
4. God the Father reigns supreme and sovereign over all and is glorified through His Son. His desire is that all men would honor, glorify and exalt His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. God is both transcendent and imminent; thus, God is simultaneously infinite while at the same time present in the affairs of the world. He is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. God is the essence and giver of love and life. (Genesis 1, 2; 2 Peter 3:9; Matthew 18:11; Luke 19:10; John 3:16)

d) God the Son (The Lord Jesus Christ)

1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal only begotten Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary that He might reveal God and redeem sinful mankind. (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; II Corinthians 5:19-21; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-8)
2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through his death on the cross as a representative of vicarious substitutionary sacrifice and that our justification is made sure by His literal and physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Romans 3:24-25; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:3-5; 2: 24)
3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where as the High Priest He fulfills a ministry of representative, intercessor, and advocate.(Acts 1:9-10; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; I John 2:1-2)
4. We believe that at the end of the tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His Saints to establish His earthly messianic kingdom, which was promised to the nation of Israel. (The Second Advent of Christ). (Daniel 2:44-45; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

e) God the Holy Spirit:

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the God-Head, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:13-14)
2. We believe that He is the divine teacher who assists believers to understand the Holy Bible appropriately and that it is inherent that all the Saved are filled with the Spirit and it is our duty to give over control to the Holy Spirit daily. (Ephesians 1:17-18; 5:18; I John 2:20, 27)
3. We believe that He is the bestower of spiritual gifts to every believer. He uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly that they can do the work of the ministry. (Romans 12:3, 8; I Corinthians 12:4-11, 28; Ephesians 4:7-12)

4. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing were temporary. We believe that speaking in tongues was never a common and necessary sign of the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit, or the ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death as a way to the consummation of our salvation and the resurrection through God. Though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (I Corinthians 13:8; 14:21-22; II Corinthians 1:22)

f) The Total Depravity of Man:

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved, and of himself is utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Ephesians 2: 1-3; 4:17-19)

g) Salvation:

We believe that salvation is the free gift of God offered to man by grace, which cannot be earned, and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19)

h) Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers:

1. We believe that all the Redeemed (once saved) are kept by God's power and are thus secured in Christ forever, thus we cannot lose our salvation. (John 6: 37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1; 8:19-38; I Corinthians 1:4-8; I Peter 1:4-5)
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. This privilege clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as a license to sin. (Romans 13: 13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

i) The Church:

1. We believe that the local church, which is the body and the espoused Bride of Christ, is totally made of born-again persons. (I Corinthians 12:12-14; II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27)
2. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28, 32; Titus 1:5-11)

3. We believe in the autonomy of the local church, free of any external authority or control other than God's. (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; Romans 16:1, 4; I Corinthians 3: 9-16; 5:4-7, 13; Ephesians 2:19-22; I Peter 5:1-4)
4. After salvation, we recognize water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; I Corinthians 11:23-26)
5. We believe in the blessed hope and personal imminent return of Christ who will rapture His church. (I Corinthians 15: 51-52; I Thessalonians 4:15-18)

j) Separation:

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. Our separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations are commanded of God. (Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 6:14; II Timothy 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; II John 9, 11)

k) The Eternal State:

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men. The saved person to eternal life with God in heaven, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-6, 12, 13)
2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are absent from the body and present with the Lord at death. They then await the first resurrection when spirit, soul, and body are united to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6)
3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection when soul and body reunite. Then they shall appear at the Great White Throne of Judgment and shall be cast in the lake of fire not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment in torment. (Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6,7; Revelation 20:11-15)

l) Satan:

We believe that Satan is a created being, the author of sin, the deceiver, and facilitator of the fall of man. That he is the open and declared enemy of God and man, and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire. (Genesis 3:1-6; Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10)

m) Creation:

We believe that God created the universe in six literal twenty-four hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day Age Theory, and theistic evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Genesis 1, 2; Exodus 20:11)

n) Civil Government:

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consistent with three basic institutions: (1) The Home; (2) The Church; (3) and the State. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all, including the authorities themselves are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balances these with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon others. The Home, the Church, and the State are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 2:13-14)

o) Human Sexuality:

We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bi-sexuality, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 3:4)

p) Abortion:

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortion of pregnancy due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the well being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Psalm 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:41-44)

q) Missions:

We believe that God has given the Church the Great Commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations, so there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must go and not wait for them to come to us. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:20)

r) Giving:

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to them, is obligated to support their local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe (10% of all income) as a basis of giving to the local church, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, for those in need, and the spreading of the Gospel, including local and foreign missions. We believe that a giver relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe or offering once the gift has been made, unless specifically designated by the giver. (Genesis 14:20; Proverbs 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:6-7; Ephesians 4:28; I John 3:17)

s) Church Ordinance:

The two ordinances of this Church shall be Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. These ordinances were given to believers to participate in following salvation, in obedience to, and in remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The Lord's Supper: The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was given to the local New Testament Church by our Lord Jesus Christ to be taken by believers in remembrance of Him, and shall be commemorated by the Church as often as the pastor may be led by the Holy Spirit. The pastor will oversee the observance of the Lord's Supper. The Chairman of the Deacons shall have charge of the arrangements for the observance and the deacons, or other designated members, shall assist the pastor in distributing the elements to the congregation and in observing the ordinances. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations. The elements of the Lord's Supper shall include unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice. (I Corinthians 11:23-24)
2. Baptism: This Church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at a worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord in his daily walk. (Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:35-38; Romans 6:4)
  - a. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
  - b. The pastor, or other person authorized by the pastor and/or Church, shall administer baptism.

t) Belief and Denial of Who GOD is:

1. WE BELIEVE that there is one, and only one, living and true God. An infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and

worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection; and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. (John 4:24; Psa. 147:5, 83:18; Heb. 3:4; Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:1; Exod. 15:11; Isa. 6:3; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:6-8; Mark 12:30; Rev. 4:11; Matt. 10:37; Jer. 2:12-13)

2. We DENY that all world religions follow the True God, as most were formed and are taught as a rejection of Him. We also deny that all monotheistic religions worship the same God, as many reject His Triune nature, Omnibenevolence, and/or salvation by Grace through the Cross. Because of these denials, we denounce any teaching of a supreme being that is in contradiction to the Truths above and stated within the West Orlando Baptist Church Constitution. We believe these Truths to be clearly evident in the Bible, God's Holy Word. (Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 1 John 5:7; John 10:30, 5:17, 14:23, 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Phil. 2:5-6; Eph. 2:18; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5) This section added by unanimous vote on Wednesday, April 24, 2013.

## **Section 2. Authority of Statement of Faith**

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Holy Bible itself is the sole and final source of what we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Holy Bible and therefore is binding upon all members.

## **ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1. Obtaining Membership**

- a) Regular Member:

Membership in this church shall be any person:

1. Recently Saved and Baptized:

That has attended at least one regularly scheduled service as shown by the completion of a Church attendance record. After this initial visit, the person(s) requesting membership must have a visit with the pastor, or his designee, to display all of the following:

- a. Person has given evidence of repentance from sin.
- b. Having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. Desiring a Christ-like walk.

- d. Submitting to the ordinance of baptism by immersion under the authority of the local church.

After the visit with the pastor, or his designee, the person(s) requesting membership are to then come forward during a regularly scheduled service for a vote by the membership.

2. By Transfer of letter:

Whom the ordinance of baptism by immersion has been properly administered by biblical church authority, that is, after their profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and upon receipt of a letter of recommendation from their former church of like faith, may be received by agreement vote of West Orlando Baptist membership. Any dissent by the pastor, his designee, and/or membership shall be referred to the deacons. Membership is then granted or denied by the majority vote of the deacons.

3. By Statement of like faith:

Whom the ordinance of baptism has been properly administered by a biblical church authority, that is, after their profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, however due to extenuation circumstances, if a letter of recommendation is not attainable they may be received as a member upon their statement of like faith (as previously described herein) and an agreement of the membership present. Any dissent by the pastor, his designee, and/or membership shall be referred to the deacons. Membership is then granted or denied by the majority vote of the deacons.

4. By Restoration:

If having been removed from membership, upon majority vote of the membership after confession is made publicly before the church membership of the sin or sins involved and is satisfactorily evidencing repentance to the pastor (or the deacons if the office of pastor is vacant). Any dissent by the pastor, his designee, and/or membership shall be referred to the deacons. Membership is then granted or denied by the majority vote of the deacons.

- b) Associate Member:

An associate member is one who regularly attends our church while holding an active membership in another out-of-state church of like faith. All of the above criteria would be applicable to associate members.

## **Section 2. Duties of a Member**

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to the Covenant, each one further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the pastor; to pray for him; to recognize his authority in the spiritual affairs of the local church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church in prayer, scriptural attendance (Hebrews 10:25), tithes, offering, and with other financial support as the Lord enables and in accordance with biblical commands to support through a lifestyle walk affirming the beliefs and practices of the church. Following these duties would deem a member to be in good standing with the church.

## **Section 3. Privileges of Membership**

The congregation functions, not as a pure democracy but, as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the under-shepherd with the counsel of the deacons. Membership in this church does not afford those individuals with any property, contract, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. The determination of the internal affairs of this church is ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the Church's own rules and procedures. The membership of the Church has certain limited areas of exercising a vote. Minimum age required at time of vote is 14. Members may not vote to initiate any Church action but rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the Church as determined by the pastor.

## **Section 4. Termination of Membership**

Termination of membership of this Church shall be after written notification to the member of the concerns regarding;

- a) The refusal of a member to be in faithful attendance and/or failure to contribute to the support of the Church for a period of not less than six months. After no favorable result from encouragement and prayer of the Church, the secretary, by instruction of the pastor, will remove such names from the roll based upon the recorded information in the Church records.
- b) Any member refusing the discipline of the Church, not repenting or making corrections over any action clearly in violation of biblical, Christ-like conduct.

The action taken by the Church shall be consistent with scriptural instruction that is given in Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 5:3-5; and Galatians 6:1.

Any and all action shall be taken under the leadership of the pastor. Church discipline is not designed by God to hurt, maim, judge, or punish, but is designed to restore fellowship with the membership.

Following the exhausted means of proper biblical actions, the pastor with the deacons will give recommendation to the Church for dismissal by the usual agreement vote of the membership then present.

Note: Any person whose membership in this Church has been terminated for any reason can be reinstated upon correction of the situation or circumstances and upon proper evidence of repentance and intent of accepting this Church order, in Christ, upon an agreement vote of the membership.

## **ARTICLE V. CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

### **Section 1. Pastor**

The visible leadership of a scriptural Church resides in the God-appointed office of pastor. (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-12; I Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17)

- a) Qualifications: I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; The pastor must be:
1. An ordained Baptist minister.
  2. Blameless and the husband of one wife.
  3. Watching out for others, sober-minded and of good behavior.
  4. Given to hospitality and able to teach.
  5. An advocate of total abstinence of any alcohol, tobacco products, illegal drugs and/or any other harmful substances.
  6. Not quarrelsome but a peacemaker.
  7. Not eager of dishonest gain.
  8. Patient, not a novice, and have a good report.
  9. One who rules his home well with children (living at home) under subjection.
  10. Just, holy and able to use self-control.
  11. Faithful in all duties of a member.
- b) Responsibilities:
1. The pastor shall have charge of the welfare and oversight of the Church; administer the ordinances of the Church; act as Church moderator, when present, in all meetings for the transaction of business; perform the various other recognized duties incumbent of his office; and shall be set-up and considered an ex-officio member of all Church boards, committees and all subsidiary organizations or groups.

2. The pastor shall set the number of deacons needed which may change as the size, ministries, and needs of the members change. The preferred minimum number of deacons will be set at seven, but not less than three.
  3. The pastor, along with the Finance Committee, shall prepare a budget for the coming year which shall be presented to the membership for approval at the yearly business meeting in January of each year.
  4. The pastor shall be responsible for all purchases and have authority to purchase the supplies necessary for his work. A limit amount will be set by the Finance Committee for his authority to purchase without further consent.
  5. The pastor shall, in his absence, appoint a moderator. If he fails to do so, the head of deacons will become moderator.
- c) Call of the Pastor:
1. A pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church as soon as possible whenever a vacancy occurs.
  2. A Pulpit Committee shall be made up of the following men: one deacon elected by the deacons, two trustees elected by the trustees, the moderator and three men elected by the Church at a special business meeting called for this purpose. At this meeting, the Church body will nominate four or more spiritual men in good standing and then vote to elect three of these men to serve with the other four members. The committee shall elect a chairman who will not be the moderator or Chairman of Deacons. It shall be their responsibility to seek out suitable candidates for the vacant office of pastor. Upon the majority approval by the Church members of the candidate pastor, the Pulpit Committee shall automatically dissolve.
  3. Only one candidate shall be considered at a time.
  4. The candidate must fully agree in writing with this Constitution and Bylaws herein without reservation.
  5. The candidate shall visit, preach and be questioned by the Church members present, following an announcement from the pulpit the week previous. The Church members present will be given two weeks to pray about the call of this candidate. During this time a minimum of three announcements shall be given from the pulpit at three separate and regularly scheduled services announcing the business meeting to vote on this candidate. At this meeting, the Church members present (14 and older) shall vote by secret ballot for or against the candidate. (a seventy-five percent majority is required for a call to be extended). If a Church member is providentially hindered from attending this meeting, but was present when the candidate preached and was questioned, they may request an absentee

ballot in advance of the meeting. All ballots shall be counted by the deacons in full view of the church members present. A recount may be requested by a Church member in good standing at this time and accomplished. Where no recount is requested the count shall stand.

d) Remuneration:

The salary and compensation for the pastor shall be set by the deacons in council with the Finance Committee and must be within the guidelines set forth in the budget. The pastor's salary and benefits package shall be evaluated annually. (I Timothy 5:18)

e) Duration of the Pastor:

The relationship between the pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved by either party. The severance of the relationship may be considered at any quarterly business meeting provided announcement to that effect has been given from the pulpit two Sundays prior to the business meeting. This announcement may not be made unless the majority of the presently serving deacons agree on this issue.

## **Section 2. Deacons**

Deacons (servants), as the scripture teaches, are men selected to serve the Lord Jesus Christ as they serve the people under the leadership of the pastor.

a) Qualifications: (Acts 6:3; I Timothy 3:8-13; James 1:19)

1. Honest, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom of God.
2. Serious and not double tongued.
3. An Advocate of total abstinence of any alcohol, tobacco products, illegal drugs, and/or any other harmful substances.
4. Not eager for dishonest gain.
5. Of a pure conscience and serving without blame.
6. Husband of one wife.
7. Having proper rule in his home.
8. A member in good standing for no less than one year.
9. Men of prayer and compassion.
10. Faithful in tithes and offerings.

11. Swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath.

12. Each deacon must fully agree in writing with this Constitution and Bylaws herein without reservation.

b) Responsibilities:

1. With the pastor, they are to consider, formulate plans, be involved in the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the development of mature Christians, and the extension of God's Kingdom. They shall seek to know the spiritual, moral, and physical needs of the members of the Church, and shall serve the whole church in relieving, encouraging, and developing all who are in such need.
2. The deacons shall elect a chairman at their first meeting after the elections.
3. The deacons shall serve in any capacity to aid the pastor.
4. The deacons shall give counsel to the pastor as needed.

c) Election: See Article VII Elections.

d) Number of deacons:

The pastor shall set the number of deacons needed which may change as size, ministries and needs of the membership changes. The preferred minimum number of deacons will be set at seven but not less than three.

### **Section 3. Licensing and Ordination of Ministers**

a) Licensing:

Any male member in good standing, giving evidence that he is called to the work of the ministry and showing proper zeal, character and the ability to preach may, with the approval and recommendation of the pastor, in counsel with the deacons, be brought before the church for approval of the membership. A seventy-five percent (75%) majority of voting members present is necessary for approval.

b) Ordination:

Any member in good standing, giving evidence of a full time call of God to the ministry, may be request ordination to the Gospel ministry. Upon approval and recommendation of the pastor, in counsel with the deacons, an ordination council will be convened for this purpose. The pastor will assemble the council at his discretion using his pastoral staff, deacons, and/or ordained ministers outside this Church. After careful examination and approval of the council, the candidate will be presented to

the Church for approval. A seventy-five (75%) majority of the voting members present is necessary for approval. The pastor, or his designee, shall plan and coordinate the ordination service.

#### **Section 4. Other Elected Officers**

Each of the following elected officers must fully agree in writing with this Constitution and Bylaws herein without reservation.

a) Officers and Duties:

1. Trustees: The trustees shall be a minimum of five (5) men, members of the Church, in good standing (but shall always be an odd number, as the pastor determines the need), whose terms of office shall expire at the end of each church year. Trustees may be eligible for nomination for re-election as determined by the pastor. Replacements shall be elected by the Church annually by at least seventy-five percent (75%) vote of those members present and voting at a Business Meeting called for this purpose. The trustees shall have the duty and power to purchase, hold, maintain, convey, mortgage or otherwise encumber the property of the Church (Corporation), and to make and execute all contracts, deeds, bonds, notes, transfers, leases, mortgages and other legal instruments as may be necessary for the performance of these duties. These actions shall always be subject to the approval by at least seventy-five percent (75%) vote by those members present and voting, by secret written ballot, at a meeting called for this purpose provided herein. The signature of any two trustees shall be required to make any transaction, including but not limited to the signing of checks. The trustees shall be under the advisement of the pastor and deacons.

The trustees ensure that all Church property and equipment is properly maintained. The trustees, in cooperation with the Church bookkeeper, shall annually submit to the Finance Committee an updated long-range capital reserve budget and a repair and maintenance operation budget for the Church's assets.

The trustees shall verify that the Church maintains adequate insurance to protect the Church's interests against loss.

The trustees shall be ex-officio (non-voting) members of each committee that deal with or otherwise address the Church buildings, grounds, or finances.

2. Church Clerk(s): This person or persons shall be present at all church services to record perspective memberships during the invitation. One of the church clerks, appointed by the pastor or moderator in the absence of the pastor, shall have responsibility to take minutes of all business meetings and include them in a complete file on record in the Church office. The church secretary may also be the

acting clerk. The pastor shall set the number of clerks needed. The church clerk shall also prepare and provide the minutes of the previous meetings for approval by his Church membership.

3. Treasurer: The treasurer, with his assistant(s) shall be responsible to count all offerings, fill out deposit slips, and the timely deposit of all monies. Their duties will also include recording all monies carefully so that designated offerings can be recorded. They will give these records along with the bank deposit slips to the bookkeeper. The treasurer shall choose assistant(s) with the approval of the pastor. The treasurer may choose someone to assume his duties in his absence with approval of the pastor. No monies will be counted without at least two of the above mentioned men present. A printed form for this purpose shall be signed by at least two of the men present.
  4. If other elected positions are needed, the pastor will bring those forth to the congregation with a proposed list of duties.
- b) Election of officers: See section VII on Elections.

## **Section 5. Employee Positions**

a) Employees and duties:

1. Pastoral Staff, except the Senior Pastor: Their duties will be assigned by the pastor.
2. Church Secretary: His or her duties will be assigned by the pastor.
3. Daycare/School Director: His or her duties will be assigned by the pastor and will work under his authority with the advice and guidance of the school committee.
4. Bookkeeper: His or her duties will be assigned by the pastor, and will also include the following:
  - a. Set up books to record all monies received and dispensed.
  - b. Receive the reports from each offering, signed by two or more treasurer(s) or trustees.
  - c. Verify bank deposit slips and reconcile all bank statements.
  - d. Keep all records up-to-date and available when asked to be seen.
  - e. Make sure all checks are printed, signed and sent out in a timely manner.
  - f. Produce monthly and quarterly reports as needed.
  - g. Fulfill any additional duties as assigned by the pastor.
5. Groundskeeper: His or her duties will be assigned by the pastor.

6. Other positions may be created as necessary and within the approved budget.
7. All employees must fully agree, in writing, with the constitution and bylaws herein, without reservation.

b) Filling employee positions:

1. The filling of all employee positions shall be the responsibility of the pastor.
2. The pastor has the authority to hire and terminate as needed.
3. The pastor may seek council from deacons, trustees, and/or others as he feels necessary.
4. Salaries shall be set by the pastor in council with the finance committee and within the confines of the approved budget.

### **Section 6. Appointed Positions**

- a) Positions such as head usher, Sunday school superintendent, choir director, teachers, parking attendants, etc. will be appointed by the pastor and will serve under his authority for the term designated by the pastor. New positions will be created as needed.

b) Moderator:

In the absence, incapacity or vacancy of the pastorate, the moderator shall oversee the day to day operation of the Church, work closely with the employees, deacons, trustees, and heads of all ministries, worship services, business meetings, etc. and to insure all are handled in a Christ-like manner. He may appoint deacons, trustees, and others to certain tasks to accomplish this goal.

1. The pastor shall appoint a moderator in his absence, unless the office of pastor is vacant.
2. If the pastor shall not be able to perform his duties due to illness, accident or disease, and has not appointed a moderator, then the head of the deacons shall become the moderator.
3. If the office of pastor is vacant, the head of deacons shall become the moderator.

### **Section 7. Committees**

Unless otherwise noted, membership in all standing committees shall be recommended by the pastor and deacons to the Church for approval by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a business meeting. A majority vote shall be considered seventy-five percent (75%) of those members present and voting. Church members may make

recommendations to the pastor and/or deacons to consider for nomination. All members of standing committees will serve for a term of one year. At the expiration of their term, any member of a standing committee can be nominated for re-election as determined by the pastor. Each committee shall select its chairman annually.

Additional committees, including temporary or permanent committees, may be organized at the request of the pastor, as needed, and will serve consistent with the terms of the Bylaws herein. In the case of a temporary committee, the committee will automatically dissolve upon the completion of their designated purpose.

All committees shall elect a chairman at its first meeting to serve for one year, or until a successor is selected. The chairman shall obtain the written approval of the pastor prior to presenting an item to be voted on by the committee. Any open floor topic or new business must be approved in writing by the pastor before bringing it before the committee to vote.

All officers and teachers of the Church, or members of committees, shall be members of this Church in good standing; they shall believe in and support the work of this Church; and be governed by the Church Bylaws and the Church Covenant, the Covenant being the essential teaching of the New Testament. Failure to measure up to those standards shall be sufficient grounds for the removal from office.

#### 1. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of seven (7) members in good standing, one of whom shall be the Church treasurer, one shall be a trustee (selected by the pastor and the trustees) and one shall be a deacon (selected by the pastor and the deacons). The remaining committee members shall be nominated by the pastor and/or deacons, and shall be voted on at a regular business meeting. Church members may make recommendations to the pastor and/or deacons to consider for nomination. This committee shall take office the first of the month following the Business Meeting in which the vote occurred.

It shall be the duty of this committee to coordinate with the pastor and Church treasurer in the preparation of the Church operating budget and compile the operating and capital budgets for the Church and school/day care to present to the Church for its annual approval. The budgets for the Church and school/day care shall be presented to the Church by account. Copies of the Church budgets shall be presented to the Church at a worship service at least one (1) week prior to the Business Meeting in which approval will be sought. Discussion and amendments may be offered and a final vote taken. Approval by at least seventy-five percent (75%) of those members present and voting at a meeting called for this purpose shall be required to adopt the budgets.

This committee, in cooperation with the pastor and Church bookkeeper, may submit revised budgets for the Church and school/day care at any time during the year for approval by the Church. Any proposed budget revision shall be presented to the Church at a worship service at least one (1) week prior to a call for vote. Approval by at least seventy-five percent (75%) by those members present and voting at a Business Meeting called for this purpose shall be required to adopt the revised budgets.

It shall also be the duty of this committee to evaluate, supervise, and administer the adopted budgets for the Church and school/day care in cooperation with the Church bookkeeper, acting as a comptrolling committee. This committee may recommend to the Church any expenditure that will be in excess of any departmental operating budget or an amount in excess of any capital item in the capital budget (extra budgetary item). The pastor or the moderator (in the absence of the pastor) may recommend any extra non-budgetary item for approval of the finance committee. Approval by at least seventy-five percent (75%) by those members present and voting at a Business Meeting called for this purpose shall be required to adopt any non-budgetary expenditure.

## 2. School/Daycare Committee

This committee shall consist of a minimum of five (5) members of the Church, in good standing, (but shall always be an odd number, as the pastor determines the need), who's terms of office shall expire at the end of each Church year. Of the committee members, one shall be a deacon (selected by the pastor and the deacons), and one shall be a trustee (selected by the pastor and the trustees). At the expiration of their term, any committee member may be eligible for nomination for re-election as determined by the pastor. Staff members, teachers, and their immediate family members shall be excluded from serving on this committee, except in an advisory capacity.

The pastor, or his designee(s), shall be ex-officio (non-voting) members of the committee. The committee shall elect a chairman at its first meeting to serve for one year, or until the successor is selected.

The pastor, in conference with this committee, shall recommend an administrator to the Church for approval.

This committee, upon the recommendation of the school administrator, with the approval of the pastor, may adopt such rules and regulations as it deems necessary or reasonably desirable, and shall provide counsel and advice regarding the employment of teachers and other school personnel, salary recommendations, and adoption of school policy for the general operation of the school.

The school administrator, in conjunction with the Church bookkeeper, (or daycare/school bookkeeper if the position is created) shall prepare the school/daycare operating budget, submit it for the advice and consent of the school committee, and submit the proposed budget to the Finance Committee for approval and presentation to the Church membership.

3. Missions Committee

The number of committee members and their duties shall be assigned by the pastor.

## **Article VI. Meetings**

### **Section 1. Worship/Ministries**

There shall be regularly scheduled services for the Church body to assemble for Bible study, worship, etc., set aside in each week. As the spiritual leader, the pastor shall preside over all services or appoint others at his discretion.

### **Section 2. Business Meetings**

Business meetings shall be conducted quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the pastor at any regular Church service which has been previously announced at the two preceding regularly scheduled Church services. All Meetings are within the framework of the Constitution and Bylaws herein, therefore, all secret meetings are invalid. The annual Business Meeting will convene no later than the last day of each January which is usually after a Sunday night service.

All administrative meetings shall be conducted within the guidelines of Christian character and operated as consistently, where practical, with the Robert's Rules of Order (Henry Robert, Copyright 2000; Perseus Publishing). Any persons conducting themselves in a contrary behavior to these principles will be asked to change such behavior or leave the meeting.

The pastor shall be the moderator of all Meetings:

- a) The pastor will appoint a moderator when his absence is necessary; at such time there shall be no administering discussed or actions taken other than routine scheduled services or called meeting as directed.
- b) Whenever the Church is without a pastor, the regular weekly functions and service must continue unabated. However, no administrative actions other than that pertaining to the call of the pastor and day to day business may be conducted under the leadership of the moderator together with the deacons, unless otherwise scheduled and voted on by the Church membership, and in keeping with these Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VII. ELECTIONS**

### **Section 1. Filling Vacancies**

Elections will be set forth in the annual business meeting in January of each year to elect all elected ministry positions. If a position becomes vacant during the year the pastor, or moderator in his absence, may call a special business meeting to elect a replacement to that ministry. This may also be done at the three (3) quarterly Business Meetings.

### **Section 2. Duration**

All elected ministry positions shall be for the duration of one year and all presently serving may be eligible for re-nomination as determined by the pastor.

### **Section 3. Election Process**

There will be a special Business Meeting called at least thirty (30) days before a scheduled meeting for the election of officers. At this meeting the following will take place:

- a) The pastor, or moderator in his absence, shall make known the number of person(s) needed for each position; read the qualifications and responsibilities of the position and take nominations from the floor. An attempt should be made to nominate more than required.
- b) The pastor, with the help of the deacons or his designee(s), shall visit by phone or personally, all person(s) nominated to qualify them according to the By-Laws and make sure the individual is able and willing to serve in this capacity.
- c) A list of nominees shall then be presented to the Church two weeks before the annual or special called Business Meeting. The Church should use these two weeks to be in prayer of all decisions.
- d) Elections shall be by secret ballot and counted by the deacons or designees of the pastor. The individuals with the highest votes shall take office immediately.

## **ARTICLE VIII. FINANCES**

### **Section 1. The Administrator**

The administrator shall be the pastor or his designee.

- a) The administrator along with the Finance Committee shall prepare all budgets which will be presented and approved at the Church's annual Business Meeting.

- b) The administrator shall consistently seek the advice of the officers of the Church, individuals, collective men of the Church or business people when and where such advice is necessary beyond his capacity.
- c) The administrator shall have a “limit amount” set by the Finance Committee to dispense without the consent or advice of any. In keeping with the economics, this amount may change but will always be accountable.
- d) The administrator shall make available, an open and full accounting of all monies and expenses provided to the membership before the quarterly business meeting. The books are kept in the Church office for the security and integrity of all involved.
- e) The administrator shall always be abreast with the state of the finances.

## **Section 2. The Bookkeeper**

The bookkeeper shall: See section 5: Employee positions (a) 3.

## **Section 3. The Treasurer**

The treasurer is to be elected by the Church as authorized by Article VII entitled Elections. They may or may not hold other positions in the Church. The treasurer shall:

- a) Serve on the Finance Committee.
- b) Select and schedule assistants (as approved by the pastor) to count all offerings received.
- c) The treasurer or his designee (as approved by the pastor) must make a written report of cash, coins, checks, etc., and sign it along with the assistant that counted with him.
- d) Deliver written report of all receipts and deposit slips to the Church bookkeeper.
- e) Work in accord with the Church bookkeeper for clarity for any Church financial inspection.

## **ARTICLE IX MISSIONS**

In following the Scriptures and keeping with the Constitution, West Orlando Baptist Church, Inc., will be consistently involved in missions at home and abroad. This outreach is considered an integral part of this ministry.

## **Section 1. Teaching**

All curriculum themes will have the evangelistic thrust of reaching lost souls for Christ in every part of the world.

- a) There will be a consistent effort to show the need to extend Church ministry into these areas and that God calls men to accomplish this work.
- b) Selected missionaries shall be sent forth with authority to baptize converts and establish New Testament churches.
- c) Missionaries shall be on a continual prayer list and their report letters brought to the attention of the congregation.

**Section 2. Finances**

- a) When inviting a missionary to be in the services of the Church regardless of the purpose, the Church shall care for the housing while they are there and give a love offering, especially for the missionary.
- b) If this Church decides to support a missionary financially the Church shall inform the missionary as to the amount and when the support shall start and how long it will endure. God has always blessed churches being faithful to such commitments especially when sacrificing.
- c) A Missions Committee may be set in place to oversee all missions' projects and responsibilities.

**Section 3. Missionary's Responsibilities**

- a) Do the work which the Constitution and Bylaws prescribe.
- b) Give an accounting of the work on a regular basis.
- c) Report to the Church upon returning from the field.
- d) Other responsibilities as determined by the pastor.

**ARTICLE X. AFFILIATION**

- A. West Orlando Baptist Church, Inc. was organized and shall forever remain as an Independent, Fundamental Baptist Church.
- B. There is no church institution, organization or person which may supersede the scripture in causing this Church to relinquish its autonomous classification.
- C. This article cannot be amended or cancelled. (Refer to Article XII)

**ARTICLE XI. DISCIPLINE**

- A. This Church shall always employ the scriptural methods.(Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1)

- B. All members are subject to be taught Biblical doctrine.
- C. All members are subject to reproof when their works or actions are not those which benefit or uplift the Church. These actions may include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - 1. When a member refuses to walk in daily living according to the Word of God; or
  - 2. When a member sows discord among the Church members or in the community; or
  - 3. When a member is no longer in fellowship with our purpose, the pastor or his designee will make effort to contact this person for the changes which need to be made. In the event an offense is brought to one or more members this one or more may put forth the effort. When failure results the pastor and deacons will make the effort. When this all fails this person may be brought before the Church for resolution. If success to bring this person to repentance is not reached and the fellowship is broken, and thereby the articles of this Constitution and Bylaws, then the person is to be dismissed. For restoration see Article IV entitled Membership.
- D. All members are subject to correction. Not being perfect, a member may say or act contrary to the Biblical faith or practice. The correction is largely found by hearing the Bible taught while being faithful in the services. On occasion the pastor and deacons may find it necessary to confront individuals.
- E. All persons, when expressing a desire to become a member, also express a desire to know God the Father and His Word better. Therefore, all are subject to be instructed in principle and in precepts of daily living, and in service for our Lord Jesus Christ as led by God's Spirit. It is noted the righteousness of God through Christ brings salvation to the sinner's soul.
- F. All members are subject to the same love and equality because we are a family. When one is ill, we should have a desire to help.

## **ARTICLE XII AMENDMENTS**

- A. The Statement of Faith (Article III) and Affiliation (Article X) of this Constitution and Bylaws cannot be amended due to the scriptural foundation and/or the deterioration of these documents.
- B. Amendments may be suggested regarding the methods of operations, so long as the recommendation is not contrary to Scripture or against the stated purpose of these documents.
- C. Any amendments must be:
  - 1. Published for thirty days before the meeting in which it is to be amended and ratified;
  - 2. Accompanied by the majority recommendation of the pastor and deacons;
  - 3. Ratified by seventy-five percent (75%) of a secret ballot vote of the members present;

4. Careful to provide a requested absentee ballot to any member providentially hindered, provided they have read and considered the amendment, and are voting members in good standing;
5. The ballots will be collected and counted by the deacons, and/or pastor appointed designees, double-checked and verified together in full view of the voting congregation; and
6. Then recorded as ratified unless there is good reason for a recount.

### **ARTICLE XIII. TAX EXEMPT PROVISIONS**

#### **Section 1. Private Inurement**

No part of the net earning of the Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers or other private persons, except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered, and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in previous Articles.

#### **Section 2. Political Involvement**

No substantial part of the activities of the Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The Church shall not participate in or intervene in the publishing or distribution of statements of any political campaigns on behalf of any candidates for public office.

#### **Section 3. Dissolution**

In the event of the dissolution of the Church, the trustees shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all the liabilities of the Church, dispose of all the assets of the Church to an organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for like religious beliefs and purposes, which at the same time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501C (3) of the Internal Revenue Code 1986 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the trustees shall determine.

#### **Section 4. Racial Non-Discrimination**

The Church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students or others on the basis of race, color, national and/or ethnic origin.