

Constitution of Beijing International Christian Fellowship ("BICF")

Updated as of 7th June, 2015

PREAMBLE

This Constitution is a 'living document' and may be amended, as needed, to better serve the needs of the BICF. Rules for amending this document are defined in ARTICLE 12 below.

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Beijing International Christian Fellowship. The BICF is a non-affiliated, inter-denominational, Bible-based Christian fellowship.

ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSE

The mission of the BICF is to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and to teach people to obey all the commandments given to humankind by Jesus Christ.

The vision of the BICF is to build a vibrant, reproducing community unified in Christ that embraces and transforms people of all nations to impact their cities, their nations and the world for Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE 3 - DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

God: We believe there is one God, existing eternally in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and possessing the same attributes and perfections (Genesis 1:1, Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30, 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Jesus Christ: We believe that Jesus Christ is God (John 10:33). We believe in: His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:17, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:34-35); His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15, 7:26); His miracles (John 2:11); His vicarious and atoning death (1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9); His resurrection (John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:4); His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19); His personal return to earth in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11-16).

The Holy Spirit: We believe that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, dwells in every true believer (1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 6:16-17). We believe that the Holy Spirit seals and dwells in every believer, spiritually uniting them with one another (Ephesians 1:13, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Romans 8:9, Galatians 3:26-28). We believe the Holy Spirit enables the trusting, obedient believer to live a godly life (Romans 8:13-14, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20, Ephesians 4:30, 5:18) and continues to endow believers with gifts for the purpose of building up the body, for the common good, just as He wills (1

Corinthians 12:4-11).

The Scriptures: We believe the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, without error and infallible in the original manuscripts. We believe the Bible is the final authority in faith and life (2 Timothy 3:15-17, 2 Peter 1:20, Psalm 19:7-9).

The Condition of Man: We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, in innocence, and without sin. In Adam's sin humanity fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became spiritually dead and alienated from God. We believe that, within himself, man is incapable of redeeming himself from his lost and depraved condition (Genesis 1:26, 3:1-24, Romans 3:10-18, 5:12, Ephesians 2:1-3).

The Work of Christ: We believe that God's eternal Son, Jesus Christ, became man, without ceasing to be God, in order to reveal God and redeem sinful man. We believe Christ voluntarily offered Himself as our sacrificial substitute on the cross, satisfying God's righteous judgment against sin. We believe God's only provision for our sin is Christ's death on our behalf, through which God reconciles us to Himself (John 14:6, Acts 4:12, 2 Corinthians 5:21). We believe Jesus is the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Jesus (John 14:6).

Salvation: We believe that salvation from the penalty of sin is a gift of God's grace, cannot be gained by any work, and is provided on the single ground of trust in Christ's work on the cross. All who trust Christ in this way are forgiven of their sins and born into God's family by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:16-19, Romans 3:23, 5:1-9, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5).

The Church: We believe that the church, called in Scripture the Body of Christ, is a spiritual organism and that every true believer is a member of His Body. We also believe that Scripture affirms the establishment and continuation of local churches, groups of Christian believers called together for worship, instruction, fellowship and service (Ephesians 1:22-23, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Acts 2:42, 13:1).

Eternal State: We believe that at the moment of death, the souls of all who trust in Christ for salvation immediately enter Christ's presence, awaiting the resurrection of life. We believe that at death the souls of all who do not trust Christ for salvation immediately enter into conscious separation from God, awaiting the resurrection of condemnation, the eternal consequence of unbelief (Luke 16:19-26, 2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, Revelation 20:11-15).

ARTICLE 4 - CORE BIBLICAL VALUES

The BICF prayerfully seeks to cultivate within its fellowship the following Biblical values, evident in healthy, maturing churches worldwide.

1. **God-centered, Passionate Spirituality.** The BICF believes the deepest need in every believer's heart is to 'behold the beauty of the Lord,' and experience His

life-giving presence. Only God can satisfy. The BICF therefore seeks to be God-centered, not man-centered, consistently seeking through all its programs to gain a deeper understanding of God, love for God and experience of God. We believe God is most glorified in us when we are most deeply satisfied in Him (Mark 12:29-31).

2. **Relationship Oriented.** The BICF seeks to cultivate a culture of genuine Christian love among its members, through providing instruction in methods of demonstrating love, and facilitating ministries that achieve this.
3. **Unified in Christ.** The BICF seeks to be a visible expression of the multicultural diversity in God's Kingdom. We therefore seek unity in our multicultural diversity, appointing spiritually mature, gifted individuals from many cultures to visible positions of service and ministry leadership.
4. **Mission Focused.** The BICF believes it is the responsibility of every individual follower of Jesus Christ and of the body of Christ that makes up a local church to share the truth and love of Jesus Christ with those in our families, neighborhoods, cities, countries and to those in every nation in the world. The BICF therefore seeks to embrace, instruct and transform individuals from all nations who are in its fellowship to be equipped to teach, train and make disciples in their own nations. The BICF also seeks to teach, train, send out and support those who are called to make disciples in nations other than their own (Acts 1:8).
5. **Reproducing.** The BICF believes every follower of Jesus Christ has a unique, God-given calling and gifting and that each person is responsible to discern their calling and use their gifts in obedience in the building up of the body of Christ for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. The BICF further believes that all followers of Jesus Christ are called to make disciples and bear fruit. The BICF therefore seeks to provide an environment and a culture whereby believers are given opportunities to use the resources of the BICF to fulfill their calling, express their gifts and exercise their passions for ministry and to build up and train others who will do the same (Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:2).
6. **Catalytic.** The BICF is uniquely situated due to its Beijing location and external restrictions to cope with its composition of believers from dozens of cultures, countries and denominational backgrounds. The BICF therefore seeks to create and/or provide opportunities for ministry for individuals and/or organizations that could not normally occur outside the networking of the BICF (Matthew 5:14).

ARTICLE 5 - MEMBERSHIP

The BICF offers Membership into a specific BICF Church to those who are 18 years of age or older, who have been baptized, who faithfully agree to uphold the Constitution, agree with the Doctrinal Statement, commit to the Covenant of Fellowship, the Core Biblical Values and who desire to affiliate with the specific BICF church. This Membership does not require the Member to terminate

membership at the home church. Application for Membership, after being approved by the receiving BICF Church Board or their designee, shall be added to the Church Membership Roll.

Membership expires after a period of time set by each BICF Church Board. Each Member is required to renew Membership before Membership period expires or the Member will be considered to have withdrawn from Membership.

1. Covenant of Fellowship

Members affirm commitment to the following, to be expressed through affiliation with the BICF:

- To Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
- To seeking Him through a life of faith, and to obedience to the teaching of Scripture;
- To the Doctrinal Statement of the BICF;
- To attending congregational meetings as diligently as possible;
- To seeking a knowledge of their spiritual gift(s) and expressing them through one of the ministries of the BICF;
- To participation in a small group, as family and other priorities permit;
- To relating graciously and lovingly to other members, preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and
- To supporting the BICF in prayer, and through systematic, proportionate giving as God supplies and directs.

2. Members Meetings

Each BICF Church is responsible for its own Members Meeting. The Members Meeting shall be held at least twice during the Church Year. During this meeting the BICF Church Elders and BICF Church Deacons will provide Members with an update on ministry progress in the BICF, direction for the coming six months, the finances of the BICF Church, and any other necessary information. The Chairman of the Church Board shall lead the meeting.

3. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated only as follows:

- Death;
- Change of view regarding the BICF Constitution, Doctrinal Statement, the Core Biblical Values or failure to fulfill the obligations of the Covenant of Fellowship.
- Withdrawal from Membership;
- Termination of Membership by The Church Elder Council; or
- Failure to renew Membership as required.

- Members in good standing who leave Beijing shall be given, upon request, a letter of recommendation affirming their faithfulness in serving the Lord through the BICF.

4. Discipline

Discipline is handled by the BICF church(s) of the members involved.

To maintain the peace and purity of the church, the Scripture permits the removal of any person from the membership for disciplinary reasons (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Timothy 2:16-21). When an Member engages in conduct that in the opinion of the Church Elders is detrimental to the unity, peace, purity or ministry of the BICF, the Church Elders will appoint appropriate individuals to counsel, and if necessary rebuke the individual (Matthew 18:15-16; Galatians 6:1).

If reasonable attempts toward restoration are unsuccessful, charges shall be submitted to the Church Elder Council in writing. The accused person shall be notified of the charges and, if he desires to respond, he shall be given opportunity to respond to the Church Elder Council. He shall be notified of the meeting at least one week in advance of the meeting date.

Termination or any other form of discipline shall require a three-fourths majority vote of the Church Elder Council after careful and prayerful consideration. The Church Elder Council will then declare to the Church Board the kind of disciplinary action taken. Person whose membership has been terminated but who demonstrates a genuine attitude of repentance may be restored to membership consistent with the regulations governing the reception of new members.

ARTICLE 6 – GOVERNMENT – COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES

The government of the BICF Community, under the leadership of Jesus Christ, is vested in the Community Elders and Community Deacons as defined below.

1. Community Elders and Community Elder Council

(1) Qualifications

The qualifications for a Community Elder are those described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. In addition to meeting these qualifications, each nominee shall have served as a Community Deacon, Congregational Leader, Church Leader, Church Elder or as Church Deacon for at least six months, shall be a male Member, must be able to affirm without reservation to the BICF Constitution, Doctrinal Statement, Core Biblical Values, and Covenant of Fellowship. Community Elders who have served on the Community Elder Council within the previous twenty-four months are not required to have served as a Community Deacon or any other aforementioned position at least six months prior to nomination.

(2) Nomination

The Community Elder Council should normally consist of not less than three individuals and may be increased depending on the needs of the Community and the leading of the Holy Spirit, as determined by the prevailing Community Elder Council. When the Community Elder Council by a majority vote believes it necessary to increase the number of Community Elders, or to replace a departing Community Elder, they will inform the Community Board of this decision. Any member of the Community Board may then privately nominate to the Community Elder Council a candidate who meets the aforementioned qualifications. By a minimum three-fourths vote, the Community Elder Council will then either approve or disapprove the nomination. If the Community Elder Council approves the nomination and the candidate agrees to serve, the Community Board, at least one week before the Community Board Meeting, will then be informed of the nomination and the candidate's willingness to serve as Community Elder.

(3) Election

The Community Board will then approve the nomination through a three-fourths vote of the Community Board. The election shall be through secret ballot.

(4) Term of Office, Meetings and Quorum

The Community Elders shall be elected by the Community Board to serve a two-year term. A Community Elder may serve for three consecutive terms. After three consecutive terms, a Community Elder shall step down from the Community Elder Council for at least one year, after which he may again be nominated and serve. Terms shall begin from either April 1 or September 1.

Community Elders serving in the role of Senior Minister, Senior Administrator, or Church Leader may serve additional terms beyond the three consecutive term limit provided that the Community Board approves each new two-year term by a three-quarters majority vote. This vote shall be through secret ballot.

At the first meeting of the Community Elder Council at the beginning of the Community Church Year, the Community Elder Council shall elect from its own a Community Senior Elder. The regular meetings of the Community Elder Council shall be held at such time and place as the Community Elder Council may determine. Special meetings may be called at the request of the Community Senior Elder or a majority of the Community Elders. Notice of a regular or special meeting of the Community Elder Council shall be given at least one day prior to the meeting. A majority of all the Community Elders shall constitute a quorum for the Council, and the acts of the majority of those members present shall be the acts of the Community Elder Council unless otherwise specifically required by this Constitution.

(5) Duties

The Community Elders bear responsibility for (but are not limited to) the following duties:

- Shepherd and nurture the BICF spiritually, guard the purity of its teaching and practice, and discipline the BICF consistent with the teaching of Scripture.
- Establish and oversee the main areas of ministry.
-
- To start churches as the Elder Council deems necessary, appropriate, or convenient to purpose, and such action has to be approved by the Community Board.

Although the Community Elders lead and are officially responsible for the spiritual oversight of the whole BICF, they are not the total ministry of the BICF. Ministry is the work of the whole BICF. The Community Elders of the BICF shall be dependent upon the gifts and skills of others for the overall care of the BICF as the Community Elders lead an active, vibrant, every-member-ministering congregation.

(6) Limitations

The Community Elder Council may not assume any of the following prerogatives without approval by the Community Board:

- Amend the BICF Constitution;
- Adopt an annual budget.;
- Purchase, lease, sell or mortgage real estate property;
- Hire pastoral or non-pastoral staff apart from a three-fourths majority vote of the Community Board;
- Purchase non-budgeted supplies, materials, or equipment totaling more than RMB30,000 per purchase;
- Incur expenses for the BICF exceeding the annual budgeted revenue of the BICF;
- Adopt any home or foreign missionary for regular monthly support or alter the amount of support given or
- Infringe upon any other right reserved to the Community Board in this Constitution.

(7) Termination

A Community Elder may be terminated from service as a Community Elder only as follows:

- Death;
- Departure from Beijing for a period of more than six continuous months;
- Resignation;
- Refusal to fulfill the responsibilities designated in this Constitution, and so declared by a majority present at a duly called meeting of the Community Elder Council;
- Repeated absence: Absent from the BICF Sunday services for a period of four consecutive Sundays without prior notice or acceptable reasons given to the

- Community Elder Council; or
- Removal by a three-fourths vote of the Community Elder Council, if showing himself in attitude or behavior to be disturbing the purity, peace or unity of the BICF, has admitted changing his views regarding the Doctrinal Statement, or fails to live in harmony with the standards expressed in the Covenant of Fellowship or Constitution. Any Community Elder who cannot attend a meeting in which such termination is discussed shall submit his vote in writing. However, such absent voting shall not be counted as determining a quorum.

Any Community Elder to be removed from the Community Elder Council shall have the right, exercisable by giving written notice to appeal that decision to the Community Board. If the said Community Elder does not give notice of an appeal within fifteen days after the Community Elder Council's removal action, then the Community Elder Council's removal action shall become final and cannot be appealed. If the said Community Elder gives notice of appeal, then a special meeting of the Community Board shall be called by the Community Elder Council for this purpose on a date that is not more than thirty days after the Community Elder Council's removal action. At the special meeting, the Community Elder shall have the right to address the members concerning the Council's removal action. The Community Elder Council's removal action shall be reviewed, and the said Community Elder shall continue in his office for the remainder of his term, by a majority vote of the Community Board represented at the meeting. Otherwise, the Community Elder Council's removal shall become final.

2. The Community Deacons

(1) Qualifications

The qualifications for a Community Deacon are those described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. In addition each Community Deacon nominee must be an Member, able to affirm without reservation to the Community Constitution, Doctrinal Statement, Core Biblical Values, and Covenant of Fellowship and have demonstrated faithfulness to the Covenant of Fellowship through involvement in a ministry of the BICF for a period of not less than six months as of the date of nomination.

(2) Nomination

The number of Community Deacons necessary for service in the BICF shall be determined at least twice a year by a majority vote of the Community Board. Nominations for Community Deacon may then be submitted to the Community Elders by an Member, Community Elder or Community Deacon. All persons nominated shall be subject to approval by the Community Elder Council as meeting requirements of the office.

The Community Deacons should be representative of the congregation as much as possible. There shall therefore be an effort to have the Community Deacons give voice to the cultural, denominational and ethnic diversity of the BICF.

(3) Election

After the Community Elder Council approves a nominee for Community Deacon as suitable for the office, the Community Elders will contact the individual concerning this willingness to serve. If the candidate is available for service, there will then be discussion at the next Community Board concerning the candidate. After discussion, the Community Board will then either approve the candidate by a three-fourths majority vote. The vote shall be by secret ballot.

(4) Term of Office

Community Deacons shall serve for a two-year term, and may serve for three consecutive terms. After three consecutive terms, a Community Deacon shall step down from the Community Board for a period of at least one year, after which the person may again be eligible for nomination as a Community Deacon. Terms shall begin from either April 1 or September 1.

(5) Duties

The Community Deacons shall be responsible for the practical care and mercy needs of the BICF and the general oversight of finances, administration, facilities, legal and operational policies of the BICF. They shall:

- Hold themselves in readiness to assist in guiding the spiritual life of the congregation and in performing other necessary duties;
- Jointly with the Community Elder Council review and approve the all portions of the BICF budget as defined in the Constitution that are not the responsibility of a specific BICF church.
- Jointly with the Community Elder Council review and approve all rental, lease and other legally binding agreements to which any BICF entity is a party;
- Jointly with the Community Elder Council review and approve all non-budgeted capital or operational expense items in excess of RMB30,000 that are not funded from a specific BICF Church budget.;
- Provide regular feedback to the Community Elders regarding overall spiritual health and direction of the BICF community, churches and congregations.;
- Represent the BICF Churches in the nomination and election of Community Elders, as defined in the Constitution.

(6) Termination

A Community Deacon may be terminated from service as a Community Deacon only as follows:

- Death;
- Departure from Beijing for a period of more than 6 continuous months;

- Resignation;
- Refusal to fulfill the responsibilities designated in this Constitution, and so declared by a majority present and voting at a duly called meeting of the Community Elder Council;
- Repeated absence: Absent from the BICF Sunday services for a period of four consecutive Sundays without prior notice or acceptable reasons given to the Community Board; or
- Removal by a three-fourths vote of the Community Elder Council, if showing an attitude or behavior to be disturbing the purity, peace or unity of the BICF, has admitted changing his views regarding the Doctrinal Statement or fails to live in harmony with the standards expressed in the Covenant of Fellowship or the Constitution. Any Community Elder who cannot attend a meeting in which such termination is discussed shall submit his vote in writing. However, such absent voting shall not be counted in determining a quorum.
- Termination shall occur at the passing of the Community Elder Council's removal voting.

3. The BICF Community Treasurer

A BICF treasurer shall be a member of the Community Board and shall be elected to serve a two-year term, by a three-fourths majority vote of this Board at its first regular meeting of the Church Year. Terms shall begin in April. The Treasurer shall be responsible for preparing any BICF budget that is not otherwise prepared by a BICF Church, managing and safeguarding the BICF cash not managed by a BICF church, and providing community level periodic financial updates to the Community Board and any other reports as requested by the Board Chairman or Community Elders. The position of Treasurer shall be a non-paid staff of BICF.

4. The Community Board

Given the brief period that many Members live in Beijing, the government of the BICF is vested in the Community Elders and Community Deacons as defined in this Constitution. The Community Board collectively seeks guidance and wisdom from the Scripture in fulfilling the ministries of the BICF. The Community Board shall be organized as defined below.

(1) Organization

- A. Leadership:** At the beginning of each BICF Church Year, the Community Elder Council shall appoint a Chairman for the Community Board meetings. In the Chairman's absence, he shall appoint a substitute from the Community Elder Council to lead.
- B. Meetings:** The time and location of the Community Board meeting shall be announced during the congregational meetings and in the BICF Bulletin at least one week prior to the meeting. The Community Board shall meet as necessary to elect all officers as required by the Constitution, and otherwise at a frequency deemed

necessary by the Community Elder Council.

- C. Quorum:** A majority of all the Community Board members shall constitute a quorum for the Board. The acts of the majority of those present shall be the acts of the Community Board unless otherwise specifically required by law or by this Constitution.

If a member of the Community Board is absent, he could, when so desired, give his proxy in writing to any other Community Board member who is present at the said meeting. However, such proxy shall not be counted in determining a quorum.

- D. Order:** The newly revised Robert's Rules of Order shall be used in the transaction of business in all Community Board meetings except where otherwise stated in this Constitution.

- E. Agenda:** At the primary regular meeting of Community Elders and Community Deacons, the meeting shall seek to unite the hearts and minds of each member by beginning with an initial focus on Scripture, and in prayer. When necessary, the meeting will attend to the business of nominating, recognizing and electing the officers of the BICF. The meeting will seek collective wisdom on spiritual or organizational questions that affect the entire congregation, will provide brief reports from the various ministries, and will include prayer for those ministries.

- F. Minutes:** Minutes of all Joint Community Elder/Community Deacon meetings shall be taken by an appointed secretary and kept in a well-organized file. A copy of which shall be given to each member of the Community Board at least 3 days prior to the date of the following meeting. The minutes of a previous meeting shall be approved during the following meeting.

- G. Committees, Task Forces and Ad hoc Groups:** The Board may create and dissolve one or more committees, task forces or other ad hoc groups and assign such powers and responsibilities as the Community Board deems necessary, appropriate, or convenient to purpose.

5. The Churches, Church Leader, Church Elder Board, and Church Deacon

The governance authority of each BICF Church flows from the Community Elders and Community Deacons (the Community Board) to each BICF Church. The ministry of each church, under the leadership of Jesus Christ, is vested in the Church Elders and Church Deacons of the respective Church as defined below.

(1) Church Elders

The Community Elder Council is responsible to oversee the appointment of the respective Church Leader, in collaboration with the respective Church Elder Council, if it exists.

Each Church Elders Council shall be led by the Church Leader.

Nominations for a Church Elder shall be made by the respective Church Leader and his team of leaders or co-workers.

All nominations for a Church Elder for the respective church shall first be approved by the Church Elders Council, and approved nomination will then be ratified at the Church Board meeting.

The qualifications, terms, duties, terminations, etc. of the Church Leader and Church Elders shall be the same as those of the Community Elder except that each Church Leader or Church Elder may not have to serve as a Community Deacon for at least six months.

In addition to the duties of a Community Elder, Church Elders shall be responsible to:

- Establish and oversee the main areas of ministry in Inspiration, Education, Relationship and Impact consistent with their individual gifts and experience.
- Administer the Lord's Supper and Baptism and act for the BICF in the reception and dismissal of Members.
- Assist in praying for all people in the BICF; counseling the needy; comforting the suffering and bereaved; visiting the sick; teaching as needed; visiting new members; providing counsel for those couples who are engaged, married or divorcing; and any other care or mercy need required by the people in the community.

The meetings and quorum and the limitations of the Church Elder Council shall be the same as those of the Community Elder Council.

(2) Church Deacons

Nomination for Church Deacons shall be made by the Members of the respective churches.

All nominations for Church Deacons shall be approved by the respective Church Elder Council.

The Church Deacons shall be responsible for the practical care and mercy needs of the respective church. They shall:

- Hold themselves in readiness to assist in guiding the spiritual life of the respective church and perform other necessary duties;
- Jointly with the Church Elder Council review and approve the respective Church budget as defined in the Constitution;

- Jointly with the Church Elder Council review and approve all non-budgeted capital or operational expense items in excess of RMB30,000 that are to be funded from the respective church funds;
- Provide regular feedback to the Church Elder Council regarding and overall spiritual health, and direction of the respective congregation;
- The Church Deacons are strongly encouraged to assist with the collection of offerings and the administration of the Lord's Supper.

The qualifications, terms, termination of the Church Deacons shall be the same as those of the Community Deacon.

(3) BICF Church Treasurer

Each BICF Church shall have its own Treasurer.

The BICF Church treasurer shall be a member of the Church Board and shall be elected to serve a two-year term, by a three-fourths majority vote of this Board at its first regular meeting of the Church Year. Terms shall begin in April. The Treasurer shall be responsible for preparing the BICF Church budget, managing and safeguarding the church's cash, and providing regular financial updates to the Church Board, churchelders and semi-annual reports to the Members as requested by the Church Board Chair or Church elders.

The position of Treasurer shall be a non-paid staff of BICF.

(4) BICF Church Board

Each BICF Church shall have its own Church Board

Given the brief period that many Members live in Beijing, the government of each BICF Church flows from the Community board and is vested in the Church Elders and Church Deacons as defined in this Constitution. Each Church Board is comprised of its respective church Elders and Church Deacons. Collectively they seek guidance and wisdom from the Scripture in fulfilling the ministries of the BICF church. Each Church Board shall be organized in the same manner as defined for the Community Board except that all references to "Community" should be changed to "Church."

ARTICLE 7 - THE BICF YEAR

The BICF Church Year shall begin on the first day of September and shall end the last day of August of the following year.

The BICF Fiscal Year shall begin on the first day of January and shall end on the last day of December the same year.

ARTICLE 8 – ORDINANCES

Baptism is one of the two ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ. Members are required to be baptized as an outward testimony of an inward spiritual transformation. It shall be administered only to those who give evidence of having been born again by faith in Jesus Christ. The mode of baptism shall be immersion unless otherwise requested by the individual.

The Lord's Supper shall be administered as a commemoration of His death, the elements used as symbols of His body and blood. It shall be open to all self-examined believers regardless of church affiliation, and shall be administered as frequently as the Community Elder Council shall determine.

ARTICLE 9 – ORDINATION

The BICF shall have the authority to ordain qualified men and women to ministry service. Such individuals shall be ordained and given a commission to teach and administer the ordinances by an Ordination Council composed of the Community Elders and selected Community Deacons. The selected Community Deacons will be determined by the Community Elder Council. The Ordination Council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination concerning their call to Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, and demonstrated fruitfulness in Christian service.

ARTICLE 10 - DEDICATION OF CHILDREN

When requested by parents, it shall be the policy of the BICF to dedicate children to the Lord in a ceremony where the parents are commissioned to rear the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

ARTICLE 11 - FINANCIAL POLICY

The BICF shall seek to maintain a balanced budget, spending only within the means God has provided. The annual budget shall seek to balance expenditures between overhead and giving. The BICF shall not purchase long-term assets, including real estate, unless approved by a three-fourths majority by the Community Board voting through secret ballot.

This policy applies to Community and Church finances.

ARTICLE 12 – AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended through a proposed amendment being submitted to the Community Board. After one month of prayerful reflection, the proposed amendment may be approved through an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members of the Community Board voting at such a meeting called for this purpose. And the approved amendment shall be affective after approval unless otherwise specified in the

amendment itself. If any member of the Community Board is absent, he shall submit his vote in writing. However, such absent voting shall not be counted in determining a quorum.