

**Constitution and Bylaws**

of the

**Ottawa Bible Church, Inc.**

Ottawa, Franklin County, Kansas

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# Constitution and Bylaws of the Ottawa Bible Church

## PREAMBLE

Whereas, the Word of God demands that a Christian organization not only conforms to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105, Galatians 1:6-16, 2 Timothy 4:1-5), but also that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40),

*The object of this church is the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ into all the world, the edifying of Christians through the Word of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit, the promotion of godly worship, the defense of the faith once delivered unto the saints, and the encouraging of fellowship with all Christians of like precious faith, who operate or function in harmony with God's holy Word, till Jesus Christ comes again (2 Peter 3:9, 1 Timothy 2:3-4, Mark 16:15, Ephesians 4:12-16, Psalm 95:6, Jude 3:1, 1 John 1:3).*

Therefore, we the members of the Ottawa Bible Church of Ottawa, Kansas, set forth by this present document, the Constitution and the Bylaws in accordance with which our affairs, spiritual and material, shall be conducted.

## **ARTICLE I – Name**

The name of the congregation shall be the Ottawa Bible Church, Incorporated, of Ottawa, Franklin County, Kansas.

## **ARTICLE II – Doctrinal Statement**

The congregation acknowledges and accepts as its doctrinal standards the following:

### **OBC DOCTRINAL ESSENTIALS & DISTINCTIVES**

\*Doctrinal essentials involve closed-handed, theological matters which are considered under the spectrum of Christian orthodoxy. Doctrinal distinctives are open-handed, theological preferences which the leadership deems necessary to be taught at Ottawa Bible Church.

### **DOCTRINAL ESSENTIALS OF THE FAITH**

#### **1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURE**

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Matthew 5:18).

#### **2. THE GODHEAD**

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

#### **3. THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST**

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

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Romans 3:24-25, 1 Peter 2:24, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:3-5).

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We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9-10, Hebrews 7:25, 9:24; Romans 8:34, 1 John 2:1-2).

### 4. THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that God alone, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, determines which spiritual gift(s) each individual receives. We believe that each individual believer receives at least one spiritual gift, and possibly more, but that no individual possesses all of the gifts. There is no one gift that is superior to any other gift. Each gift is necessary for the functioning of the Body of Christ, and each individual believer has a responsibility to use their spiritual gift(s) to edify and build up the rest of the Body of Christ, in service to and for the glory of the Lord. (Romans 12:3-13; I Corinthians 12:4-31; Ephesians 4:11-16.)

### 5. 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 race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. We furthermore believe that man is totally depraved, and of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Genesis 1:26-27, Romans 3:22-23, 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12)

### 6. SALVATION

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 2:8-10, John 1:12, 1 Peter 1:18-19).

### 7. THE ETERNAL SECURITY AND ASSURANCE OF BELIEVERS

We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8, 1 Peter 1:5).

We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh (Romans 13:13-14, Galatians 5:13, Titus 2:11-15).

### 8. THE TWO "MEN" WITHIN THE BELIEVER

We believe that every saved person possesses both the "old man" and the "new man" with provision made for victory of the "new man" over the "old man" through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and that all claims to the "eradication" of the "old man" in

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this life are unscriptural (Romans 6:13, 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25, Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:10, 1 Peter 1:14-16, 1 John 5-9).

### 9. MISSIONS

We believe that it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by work to the truths of the Holy Scriptures and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind (Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

### 10. THE CHURCH

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

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; 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-11). We believe in the autonomy of the local church, free of any external authority or control (Acts 13:1-4, 15:19-31, 20:28; Romans 16:1, 4; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16, 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

Moreover, we do not believe that water baptism is necessary for one's salvific justification before God (salvation is by faith not works, Eph 2:8-9), but that it is to be encouraged as a means of sanctification among believers so that we might be publicly identified with our Lord in His death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:41-42, 8:37-38, 18:8, Romans 6:3-4, Colossians 2:12).

### 11. THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN

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

### 12. THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

We believe in the personal, imminent (pre-tribulational), and pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones (Zechariah 14:4-11, Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18, 5:1-9, Revelation 3:10, 19:11-19, 20:1-15).

### 13. THE ETERNAL STATE

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46, John 5:28-29, 11:25-27; Revelation 20:5-6, 12-13).

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We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43, Revelation 20:4-6, 2 Corinthians 5:8, Philemon 1:23, 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment (Luke 16:19-28, Mark 9:43-48, Revelation 20:11-15).

### 14. ORDINANCES

We recognize the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper as Scriptural means of testimony for the church in this age (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:41-42, 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

### 15. GENDER, MARRIAGE, & SEXUALITY

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25) to ultimately exemplify the relationship between Jesus and the Church (Eph 5:22-33).

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a biological man and a biological woman who are married to each other (1 Cor 6:18, 7:2-5; Heb 13:4), and that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of this biblical marriage context. God's *design* for sex, therefore, is to take two complementary genders, "suitable" (facing) and "joined" (clinging) (Gen 2:18, 24) to one another, to accentuate the image of God within this consummate action, for His glory.

God's *purposes* for marital intimacy are threefold: procreation (Gen 1:28; Ps 127:4-5), protection (Prov 5:3-9; 1 Cor 7:1-6), and pleasure (Prov 5:19; Song 1:2, 5:10-13). God has ordained the act of sexual intimacy in marriage to multiply image bearers for His glory, to protect from personal defilement, and to satisfy the place of deep longing at the holistic level.

Finally, the characteristics of passionate celebration, covenant fidelity, and personal sacrifice (Eph 5:22-33) are clearly seen in God's design for marriage and sexual intimacy.

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We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pedophilia and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Lev 18:22; Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity as a local Body of Christ, and to provide an example to the community, it is imperative that all believers abide by these Biblical principles (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22) to be pleasing to the Lord.

It is also important to note that we believe God offers immediate redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

Last, we believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mk 12:28-31; Lk 6:31) due to their inherent worth (Gen 1:26-27). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward an individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture (Matt 22:39; Mk 12:31), as it is the "kindness of God" which leads to a heart and lifestyle change of people created in His image (Rom 2:4).

### 16. THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect and value all human life (Psalm 139:1-24).

## DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES OF OTTAWA BIBLE CHURCH

### 17. CREATION

We believe and teach a literal six-day creation week from the account offered in Genesis 1:1-2:3, meaning the six days in Genesis refer to actual days where God created the world from nothing (*ex nihilo*), rather than ages or periods of time. Moreover, God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, not from exhaustion but for admiration of His work. As a result, we believe and teach that the earth is thousands of years old, rather than billions. Even more, we are not convinced of any evidence for species-to-species evolution. We also teach a literal interpretation (historical-grammatical) of Genesis chapters 1-11 (not poetic or allegorical), resulting in the special creation of a literal Adam and Eve, a historical Noah (Gen 6:5-10), and a literal worldwide flood (Gen 6:11-8:22).

### 18. THE SPIRITUAL EQUALITY AND DISTINCTIVENESS OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY

We believe and teach that God, in His very good and original creation, created men and

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women in His own image (Gen 1:26-27). Both genders are equal in value, dignity, respect, protection, and salvation (Gal 3:28). To complement their value and worth, there also exists a diversity of roles and functions specifically within the Church and the Christian home.

Within the Church, this means that the offices of elder-pastor (1 Tim 3:1-7) and deacon (1 Tim 3:8-13) belongs alone to biblically qualified, godly men, along with the endeavor of formal preaching and teaching to a mixed audience of both men and women (1 Tim 2:11-14). Women are exhorted by God's Word to lead and serve within the church as it pertains to the teaching and discipleship of other women (Tit 2:3-5), to the teaching and discipleship of children, and to great acts of service and outreach (Acts 9:36-42).

Within the Christian home, husbands are given the responsibility of leading their wives and their children with a spirit of humility and self-sacrifice, as Christ Himself loved and sacrificed Himself for the Church (Eph 5:22-33; 1 Cor 11:3; Col 3:21). Wives, as such, are called to willing and sensible submission to their husband's leadership as unto Christ, but never to the extent of sin or abuse (Col 3:18-21; 1 Peter 3:1-7). Likewise, mothers are encouraged toward sanctification by loving their children (1 Tim 2:15, Tit 2:4).

As a result, these roles reflect God's very good and creative purpose (Gen 2:18-24), and are designed by Him to foster relational peace, joy and blessings within the Church and the family unit. Finally, we believe that the diversity of function and role (not of personal value and worth) is something that God Himself exhibits within the Trinity (Jn 5:19-24; 14:25-26; 15:26-27), and is the sole basis, along with His Word, for our trust in these matters.

### 19. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

We believe and teach that the New Testament Church is distinct from the nation of Israel. As such, we do not believe that the Church has replaced Israel, for God is faithful to Israel as a nation (Rom 11:25-36) and will one day save a remnant of the nation for His salvific and eschatological purposes (Rev 7:4-8).

Moreover, we believe that all who are in relationship with the risen and ascended Son of God are considered members of the Church (Eph 1:22-23), the body of Christ (Rom 12:5), which began at Pentecost (Acts 2:42-47), and of which the gates of hell will never prevail against (Matt 16:16-18).

We also understand every individual indwelt by the Holy Spirit, whether it be Jew or Gentile, to be considered a part of this body, baptized into His Spirit by spiritual immersion, and given a spiritual gift (1 Cor 12:1-27), regardless of formal or nonformal membership to any particular localized church. As a result of these truths, every Christian holds the responsibility of proactively seeking to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, setting aside all sectarian differences, and loving one another from a pure heart (Eph 4:3-10; Col 3:14-15).

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## 20. THE NATURE OF LAST THINGS

We believe and teach a Pretribulational and Premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed saints (1 Thess 1:10, 4:13-18, 5:1-9; Rev 3:10, 19:11-19, 20:1-15). We also believe that the rapture of the Church will be followed by the fulfillment of Israel's seventieth week (7 literal years), also known as the time of Jacob's trouble (Dan 9:24-27; Jer 30:7), or according to Jesus, the great tribulation where the antichrist deceives the nations (Matt 24:15-21; Rev 6:1-19:21).

We believe that during this time, the Church, the body of Christ, will be in heaven. This period of Israel's seventieth week will be a time of judgment upon the entire earth, at the end of which the time of the Gentiles will be brought to a close (Ezek 30; Lk 21:24; Rom 11:25; Rev 11:2).

Today, we believe that the world is ripening for judgment, and that the end of the age will conclude with a great apostasy (Matt 24:10-12; 2 Thess 2:3). Universal righteousness will not find complete fulfillment until the second coming of Christ, where He will establish the Millennial Kingdom (Isa 32:17-18, 40:1-2, 61:7, 10; Rev 20:1-6), bring about final judgment for unbelievers (Rev 20:11-15), and bring about the new heaven and earth (Rom 8:20-25; Rev 21:1-22:9).

### **ARTICLE III – Membership**

Members of this congregation shall be those who subscribe to the doctrinal statement set forth in Article II hereof; who lead a Christian life and have an earnest desire to separate themselves from the [sins] of the world; who attend services faithfully and partake of the Lord's Supper frequently; and who submit, for the sake of love and peace, to the regulations already made or still to be made by this body, provided they do not conflict with the Word of God.

The Board of Elders shall interview and pass on all applicants for membership, and they shall ascertain that any such applicant subscribe to the doctrinal statements set forth in Article II hereof, is a person of good moral character and reputation, and otherwise agrees with and conforms to the intents of the Article III, before admitting such applicant to the membership.

Should any member be overtaken in a trespass that affects the church family, the attitude shall be towards restoration rather than dismissal (Galatians 6:1-4). The steps of Matthew 18:15-18 are guidelines: 1.) The offended tries to make it right, 2.) The offended with an elder or elders meet with offender, 3.) The offended before the church family, 4.) Those who persist in their sin after all this are then dis-fellowshipped. Repentance and cessation of the offense restores to the fellowship of the church (2 Corinthians 2:5-11)

We believe God's standard of moral conduct is recorded in His Word, the Bible. Persons who choose to openly live, and/or promote, moral behavior contrary to His Word are disqualified from church membership, ministry, and positions of leadership in Ottawa Bible Church. The Elders of the church will not perform weddings for same sex couples, nor can same sex weddings or activities be held on the church property (Revelation 21:8, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:9-11; Romans 1:23-32, Leviticus 18:6-29).

It shall be the duty of every member of this congregation to contribute according as God has prospered him toward the maintenance of the church and its missionary program and, in general, to assist in bearing the expenses and sharing the duties and services of this congregation.

#### **ARTICLE IV – Congregational Meeting**

An annual congregational meeting shall be held during the month of January for the purpose of reporting on all activities of the preceding year of the church.

At this meeting a financial report shall be read by the Treasurer and/or the Deacon Finance Committee. All departments shall be required to give a report, and the state and well-being of the church shall be reported on by the chairman of the Board of Elders or one designated by the Elders.

The chairman of the Board of Elders shall be in charge of this meeting (or any other Elder may be appointed by the Elders to take charge of this meeting in case of emergency).

A congregational meeting may be called at any time by the Elders for the purpose of reporting the state and well-being of the church by announcing said meeting at any regular meeting of the church. All matters shall be disposed of by the majority vote of Elders after prayerful consideration. This paragraph shall in no way ever be altered or changed.

## **ARTICLE V – Elders and Deacons**

The Elders have the general oversight of everything concerning the church. The primary concern of the Elders is the oversight of the ministries of the church and the spiritual life of the whole church family. The Deacons have the oversight of the property, finance, and compassion care of the church. The Elders and Deacons will meet quarterly and separately on other months.

Elders and Deacons shall be chosen from among those whose lives conform to the Word of God. Any candidate for the position of Pastor, Elder, or Deacon shall be considered in light of 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-19, 2:1-10. Any such person shall be chosen by the majority vote of the Elders. He shall be chosen only after he has proven himself to have a desire to serve the Lord in this way. Elders or Deacons shall serve after their appointment until their resignation or removal from office for cause. Removal of an Elder or Deacon from office shall be only by a majority vote of Elders then in office.

The Elders will select a Chairman for both the Elder and Deacon boards. Each board will select their own Secretary from among its own members annually. The Elders annually appoint a Treasurer who is in basic harmony with the above Scriptural passages. Directors of other church ministries are also by Elder appointment, and each carries on under Elder supervision.

Elders are to be present at all board meetings unless the chairman is notified.

The Pastors of this assembly shall be considered an Elder.

Deacons are to be present at all their board meetings unless the Chairman of the Board of Deacons is notified. Deacons will also function in a sub-committee format that consists of property, finance, and compassion care. Deacons will select among its own members a representative for each sub-committee. The sub-committees will meet at least once a month.

Any Elder or Deacon may resign his office at any time. Such resignation is to be made in writing and is to take effect at the time of its acceptance by the board.

At all board meetings, whether Elder's meeting or Deacon's meeting, a majority vote is necessary for the deciding of any matter. Three fourths (3/4) of the members of the boards constitutes a quorum.

All matters decided upon by the Deacons are subject to the approval of the Board of Elders.

## **ARTICLE VI – Officers**

The Elders are the ruling body of this non-profit corporation and shall be expected to see that all resolutions are carried out to their completeness. They shall sign all bonds, mortgages, contracts, or other instruments of writing required to be executed by this corporation.

The Elder appointed as Secretary shall keep minutes of all the congregational meetings, Elder's meetings, and joint Elder's and Deacon's meetings. He may appoint another Elder to take his place in case of emergency. He shall have custody of the minute books at the corporation and all other records and proceedings. He shall perform such duties as may be required or prescribed by the Board of Elders. He shall affix his signature to all instruments of writing required that the signature of a secretary be so affixed.

The Treasurer shall keep an accurate account of receipts and disbursements, providing monthly reports for the Deacons and a report for the church at the annual meeting. He shall be duly bonded. The Elders will select a qualified person to audit the accounts annually; Deacons should rotate in their counting of the offerings and the depositing of monies in the bank.

Any officer may be removed at any time by a majority vote of the Board of Elders. Upon the removal of any officer, the Board of Elders may appoint another to fill the vacancy so created.

### **ARTICLE VII – Pastors, Teachers, and Missionaries**

Only such pastors, teachers, and missionaries shall be called by this congregation as are in accord with the doctrinal standards set forth in Article II hereof and who have Scriptural qualifications for this service. The right of calling or dismissing pastors shall be vested in the Board of Elders of which a majority vote shall be required. The right of calling teachers or missionaries, or of dismissing them, shall be vested in the Board of Elders, also by majority vote.

### **ARTICLE VIII – Alteration of Constitution**

Two consecutive meetings of the Board of Elders shall be required to alter or repeal any part of this Constitution. A majority vote of the Board then in office shall be required to effect such alterations or repeal.

### **ARTICLE IX – Finances**

This church shall never resort to shows, bazaars, socials, or other schemes to raise money to carry on our work for the Lord. The finances shall be provided by the Lord's people who desire to share with us according to the way the Lord has prospered them.

### **ARTICLE X – Ordination**

When, in the judgment of the Board of Elders, a man in this membership or otherwise, is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the Board of Elders of this church to call and conduct a council for ordination. The Pastor is to have charge of the service or any other minister he may invite for this ordination, providing he is approved by the Elders then in office. The Elders of this church, or others who are invited to take part in the ordination, may thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, Scriptural qualifications, Christian experience, and so forth. The Elders of this church shall have the power to deny any applicants' ordinations who do not qualify.

**ARTICLE XI – Dissolution Clause**

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purpose set forth in this Constitution.

Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Elders shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the corporation in such manner or to such organization or organizations organized and operated within the strictures of Article II herein as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Board of Elders shall determine.

Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of Franklin County, Kansas, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.