
Dale Bible Church Membership Handbook



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Welcome

As the Elders of Dale Bible Church, we want to welcome you on this journey to church membership. We hope that through this process you will become better acquainted with our convictions and vision as a local church body. We encourage you to read and pray through the handbook, asking God to help you discern if Dale Bible Church is the body of believers He would have you to live out your faith among. This handbook was created to help you understand both the benefits, responsibilities, and expectations of church membership. May God richly bless you as you prayerfully read through this handbook and seek to discern whether God is leading you to be a part of Dale Bible Church.

History

Dale Bible Church began on September 16, 1987 with a small Bible study that met at a nursing home in Dale. Led by Pastor Jim Thompson and with sponsorship from Townsend Bible Church in Newburgh, this Bible study grew until the church was able to move into various other facilities and increase the number of ministries it provided. The Lord continued to bless as the church was able to buy its own property and build our current facility which was completed in July of 1994. God has continued to bless Dale Bible Church, allowing us to continue to grow and to buy some additional land with the hope of expanding our facilities further in the future by God's grace.

Our Mission

As a body of believers, our mission is to be faithful in **Loving the Lord, Living the Word**, and **Reaching the People**.

Our Vision

To see the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ go forth changing hearts and lives for the glory of God, and to see individuals come to a new or right relationship with our Lord and Savior through salvation in Him.

What We Do

Strive to be the very best witness we can be for Him and His glory; to live our lives as a testament of His constant goodness and faithfulness to us each and every day.

Our Community

The community of our church consists of down to earth, like-minded believers from all walks of life. Though we may differ from one to another, we are still all united in that common bond of Jesus Christ.

The Church

One of the greatest misunderstandings in our culture is that the church is a place or a building. The Bible teaches that the church is not a place or building but is a people. The Apostle Paul expresses this in 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

The people who make up the church are called out of darkness. They are those who are saved through repentance and faith, and are saved into a body of believers. Biblically there seem to be three separate churches that all believers are a part of. The universal church is the entirety of all believers, over all the earth, over all time. The visible church is the entirety of all believers, over all the earth, who are currently living. The local church is a local body of believers, like Dale Bible Church, seeking to live out their faith in community with one another. Acts 2:42 demonstrates the local church in action as, "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

The local church is God's people set apart and called out by God to display His character and grace through the unity and fellowship of believers around the gospel of Jesus Christ with the mission of making disciples of all people.

(For further information see Doctrinal Statement #12)

Membership

In the New Testament, it is clear that those who profess faith in Christ were part of a gathered and defined community of believers. As a community, the early believers corrected unrepentant sin and sought reconciliation by excluding some from the fellowship (Matthew 18, 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2). The community also maintained and cared for a list of widows (1 Timothy 5:9). Also the church met together as a regular practice of the Christian community for fellowship, encouragement, teaching, and celebration of ordinances (Acts 2:42-47).

Typically when we think of the term "membership" we think of being a member of a club or organization in which we pay dues and receive benefits. While there are many personal benefits to being a church member, we must also realize that a biblical church member is not as much concerned with what they can get out of church membership, but by what they can give as a functioning church member. God has gifted every believer with spiritual gifts that are meant to be used in serving and edifying the church body (Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31)

Dale Bible Church welcomes into church membership those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, give evidences of a continuing and growing faith in Jesus, and agree with our Doctrinal Statement. The first step of faith for all believers seeking membership is baptism (Matthew 28:18-20, John 4:1-2).

(For further information see Doctrinal Statement #11,12 and By-Laws I and IV. Other helpful resources on church membership: "Church Membership" by Jonathan Leeman; "I am a Church Member" by Thom Rainer)

Leadership

The leadership at Dale Bible Church consists of Elders (paid and lay pastors) as well as Deacons. These Elders and Deacons make up the Church Board which meets monthly and is granted complete authority as the governing body of the church. The Board is responsible for the spiritual upholding of the church and community through the ministry of the Elders. The Elders specifically are responsible for the care of the congregation, evangelization of the community, and extending of the Gospel to the ends of the earth among other responsibilities. The congregation, made up of voting members, has the opportunity to vote on the selection of pastors, approval of church officers, changes in the Constitution and By-Laws, as well as all matters not under the jurisdiction of the Elder and the Church Board.

(For further information see Doctrinal Statement #11 and By-Laws II, III, and V. Other helpful resources: “Church Elders” by Jeramie Rinne)

Loving the Lord

Relationship

Before we can truly love the Lord, we must know Him and have a relationship with Him. The Bible teaches that God is one God existing in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the creator and sustainer of the Universe, and as such created mankind in His image. However the first man, Adam, sinned against God and because of his disobedience, mankind now inherits a sinful nature which alienates us from God. Our sin nature and our personal sin, separates us from having a relationship with God who created us. Because we are separated from God because of our sin we deserve the just punishment for our sin. Romans 6:23 tells us that, “the wages of sin is death”. This is not only referring to physical death but spiritual death which is eternal separation from God in a literal place called Hell. Because we are bent toward sinning and spiritually dead, there is nothing we can do of ourselves to make ourselves right before a Holy God. However, the good news of Romans 6:23 tells us that while, “the wages of sin is death”, “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, became a man who fully obeyed God without sin yet took the sin of the world upon Himself, bore God’s wrath toward our sin on the cross, laid down His life sacrificially, and then rose from the dead demonstrating His defeat of sin and death once and for all. Because of Jesus’ sacrifice for us, we now have access to a restored relationship with God by faith in the finished work of Christ on our behalf. If we will turn from our sin and disobedience toward God and trust in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection to reconcile us to God, then we will be adopted as a child of God and live forever in relationship with Him. We refer to this truth as the gospel because it is the “good news” of what God has done to restore our relationship with Him.

(For further information see Doctrinal Statement #2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 16. Other helpful resources: “The Gospel” by Ray Ortlund, “Conversion” by Michael Lawrence)

Fellowship

Once we have truly turned from our sin and trusted Jesus as our Savior, our relationship with God will never be severed. However, as believers we can still struggle with the presence of sin and break our fellowship with God. God desires that we continue in fellowship with Him, and as His children we should also desire to confess our sins to God and experience a restoration in fellowship with Him. We can walk in continual fellowship with God by studying and submitting to His Word and by obeying it through the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within those who have trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. Prayer is also a powerful part of our fellowship with God as we adore Him, confess sin, thank Him, and pray for specific spiritual and physical needs that we and others may have.

(For further information see Doctrinal Statement #7 & 8. Other helpful resources: “Discipling” by Mark Dever, “Prayer” by John Onwuchekwa)

Worship

God desires those who will worship Him and give Him the glory due His name. Worship is not simply an act of singing praises to God, although music can be a great expression of worship. Worship is also not just something that takes place at a church building on a Sunday. The idea of worship is the idea of attributing worth or value to something. Worship is what you glory in, it’s what you give weight to, it’s what you sacrifice to, it’s what you give preeminence to in your life. We may often place other things in this place of preeminence in our lives such as money, family, or any number of selfish desires. Because God is our Holy Creator and Redeemer, He alone is worthy of this type of worship in our lives. God desires for us to worship Him each and every day of our lives in every place we are, by making Him the rightful King of our lives. This means that everything we do is for His honor and glory.

(Other helpful resources on worship: “Real Worship” by Warren Wiersbe)

Living the Word

Trusting the Word

The reason our church is named Dale Bible Church is because of our emphasis on God's Word. We recognize that God's primary means of revealing Himself to us is through His Word, the Bible. The Bible is made up of 66 books, written by 40 different authors, over a period of 1500 years, and yet it is consistent throughout and has one primary theme: Jesus. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** tells us that, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." God has breathed and inspired the Bible to reveal Himself to us so that we can have a relationship with Him. knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. **2 Peter 1:20-21** says, "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." While the Bible was written by 40 different human authors, there is one true author, God. We can trust that the Bible is God's Word because of its consistency and singular theme. We can trust that because the Bible isn't just the words of man, but is inspired by God, it is without error. We can also trust it because, despite man's best efforts to destroy it, God has preserved His Word through the ages. We therefore believe the Bible to be the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God.

Knowing the Word

Because God's Word is His primary means of revealing Himself to us and how we can experience a relationship with Him, our desire is to learn more about God's Word in order to learn more about God and our relationship with Him. **2 Timothy 2:15** tells us to, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." As a church body, our desire should be to study God's Word individually on our own, together with our families, in smaller group settings, and corporately in our worship services. As Elders and teachers of God's Word,

our desire in teaching corporately is what the Apostle Paul wrote in **Acts 20:27** to declare, “the whole counsel of God.” Because this is our desire, the primary means by which we proclaim God’s Word is through expository preaching. What this means is that, instead of focusing on a particular theme or verse of scripture out of context, we seek to study a passage of scripture so as to understand the full context of what God is trying to communicate to us. As we do this we seek to practice exegesis, which means pulling the meaning out of the text, rather than eisegesis, which is putting meaning into the text based on our own presuppositions, biases, or agendas. Our goal is to submit to God’s Word as the final authority when it comes to truth, faith, and life.

(Other helpful resources: “Expositional Preaching” by David Helm, “Sound Doctrine” by Bobby Jamieson)

Practicing the Word

We cannot allow knowledge of God’s Word to become the primary goal. Our desire as believers should not be simply to know God’s Word, but to put it into practice through the power of the Holy Spirit. As Pastor Warren Wiersbe once said, “the mark of a true Bible student is a burning heart, not a big head.” God desires us to study His Word but also to obey what His Word says. As James writes, “be doers of the word, and not hearers only” we should seek to apply what we learn to our lives. As a church body we ultimately seek to live out the Word in order to grow in our walk with Christ, serve one another and point others to Him. Part of practicing the Word means serving the rest of the church body in the way in which God has gifted us. **Romans 12:4-8** tells us that God has given every believer a specific gift or gifts in order to serve the body. Believers may be gifted in different ways, but no gift is more important than any other, and all are to be put into practice by using them to serve one another.

(For further information see Doctrinal Statement #1. Other helpful resources on the Bible: “Why Trust the Bible?” by Greg Gilbert)

Reaching the People

Giving

One way in which we desire to reach people with the Gospel is through the giving of our tithes and offerings. These tithes and offerings are used by Dale Bible Church to exercise the ministries within the church, reach those outside of the church, and to provide for the pastors and staff employed by the church. The church board will annually evaluate the ministries of the church and present a budget to the church body. Giving is also an act of worship as we give back a portion of what God has blessed us with. The attitude from which we should give is laid out in **2 Corinthians 9:6-7** - "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." It is therefore expected that members of Dale Bible Church will give cheerfully, faithfully, generously, and sacrificially to the gospel ministry of the church in order to reach people with the gospel.

Personal Evangelism

All Christians are called to share their faith regardless of personality, giftedness, or vocation. The work of faithfully proclaiming the gospel is not solely the work of the pastors or the church as a body, but is a command given to every Christian by Jesus Christ. This command is found in **Matthew 29:19-20**, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." We encourage members to invite friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family who are non-Christians to one of our worship gatherings or other church events as these are opportunities for non-Christians to see and experience life and relationships with Christians; but, an invitation to a meeting or event should not replace an invitation to know Christ. We seek to equip one another through the teaching of God's Word to become more effective witnesses to the

lost, but no matter how much we know or don't know, we are still called to share the good news of the gospel, and what God has done to change our lives. As Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" so we too should not be ashamed to share the gospel to those who have yet to believe. It is therefore expected that members of Dale Bible Church seek out opportunities to share their faith through personal evangelism.

Global Missions

In **Acts 1:8** Jesus tells His disciples just before ascending into heaven, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." It is from this command that we as a church body seek to be witnesses of the gospel locally, nationally, and globally. We seek to support missionaries who have this heart for sharing the gospel across the world. In order to financially support this call to make disciples of all the nations, we determine annually to allocate a minimum 10% of our budget to supporting global missions. In fulfilling this call, we also desire as individuals to be willing to serve as missionaries should the Lord lead us to do so.

(For further information see Doctrinal Statement #10, and By-Laws II, i. Other helpful resources on Evangelism and Global Missions: "Evangelism" by Mack Stiles, "Missions" by Andy Johnson, "Discipling" by Mark Dever)

The Membership Process

If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, demonstrate a growing faith in Jesus, have read and agree with our Doctrinal Statement, have no membership or affiliation with any secret organization, and are at least 18 years of age; we invite you to pursue church membership at Dale Bible Church.

The process to pursuing membership is as follows:

Step 1: Attendance

Before pursuing the next steps of becoming a member of Dale Bible Church you must be a regular attender to our worship services for a period of 6 months.

Step 2: Baptism

Before being received into membership, any person not previously baptized shall be willing to receive a Christian baptism, by immersion, unless physically impossible. Baptism is an outward witness of the believer's identification with Christ. We encourage all saved people to give a public testimony in this way.

Step 3: Membership Class

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a member, or are ready to pursue membership, we offer a membership class in which we explain our Church Mission, church structure, and doctrinal statement. This will also give you an opportunity to ask any further questions that you may have.

Step 4: Membership Application

Once you have attended a membership class, we invite you to fill out a membership application. This allows us to get to know you better and affirm your desire to become a member of Dale Bible Church.

Step 5: Elder Interview

Once we have received your membership application and reviewed it, we will set up an interview with our Elders. This may sound like an intimidating step but our intention is not to intimidate, rather to further get to know you better, ask any questions we may have in regards to your application, answer any questions you may have for us, and further affirm your desire to pursue membership. Following the interview the Elders will either approve or deny membership and new members will then be presented to the congregation.

Church Discipline

In our desire to be faithful in obeying what God's Word teaches us about dealing with unrepentant sin among any member, we humbly practice church discipline. Should a member be guilty of disorderly conduct or false doctrine so opposed to the church's life and faith as to destroy the possibility of fellowship with Christ, the process of church discipline will be as follows:

1. The member under consideration will first be visited by the Elders as directed in Matthew 18:15-18, Galatians 6:1, and I Timothy 5:19.
2. If the member under consideration gives satisfactory evidence of repentance and fellowship with Christ, he/she is to be restored to the fellowship. (II Corinthians 2:6-8)
3. If the member under consideration refuses to repent, further steps of discipline, in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18, will be taken which may result in termination of membership. (I Corinthians 5:12-13, Matthew 18:17)

The practice of church discipline is a courageous and compassionate act of love, done in humility, with the goal of restoration and reconciliation to the person under discipline to the honor and glory of God.

How to Leave Dale Bible Church Well

We recognize that a time may come when it is necessary for you to leave Dale Bible Church and join another church. It is our desire that should this time ever come that you follow the steps below in leaving in a way that honors the Lord.

1. Have a good reason for leaving.

Before you go, evaluate whether your reasons are good, legitimate, and honoring to God. The reasons that people leave churches are many. Some are good, some are bad, and many are hard to discern. Check your pride in the decision. Ask yourself whether you are running from conflict or reacting to unrealistic expectations. If your reasons are good, go. If not, stay. If you are unsure, it would be wise to seek good counsel from godly friends, other church members, or one of our Elders. Before leaving, make sure you have evaluated your reasons and sought godly counsel within the church.

2. Communicate your decision to leave with the appropriate leaders.

Your Pastors and Elders need to know you are leaving. If you are serving in an area of ministry, communicate it to the ministry leader in that area. We encourage personal communication face to face rather than written communication in an email or text.

3. Tell these leaders the truth about why your leaving.

If you have legitimate reasons to leave, then you have nothing to hide or worry about. If you are concerned that your reasons for leaving will cause hard feelings, deliver it in the spirit of **Proverbs 27:6**, “Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.” Scripture commands us in **Ephesians 4:15** to “speak the truth in love”, which means you shouldn’t camouflage the real reasons. God may use your reasons for leaving to help Dale Bible Church and the Elders to better shepherd and grow as a church. Take the initiative to seek out an Elder to explain your reasons for leaving. These men and the church desire to shepherd you humbly.

4. **Appropriately transition or conclude your ministry commitments.**

If you've been an active part of ministry, someone else will need to serve in your role and assume your responsibilities for ministry. Give our ministry leaders an appropriate time to find others to serve in your capacity. Offer to help train and equip another member to serve in your area of ministry.

5. **Leave graciously.**

The Bible warns against causing division in the church in **Romans 16:17** and **Titus 3:9-11**. Ray Pritchard writes, "Leaving graciously means you refuse to speak evil of those who remain in the church. Look forward, not backward. Focus on your new church, not your old one. Think carefully before you speak about your former congregation. Don't say anything that could be remotely constructed as criticism. Even casual comments could stir up needless controversy. Let the Golden Rule guide all your comments public and private."

Conclusion: Jesus loves the church.

If you've read this material and realize that you didn't leave a church well in the past, it might be wise to circle back to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. If you have gossiped or stirred up division, you should make it right, apologizing not only to the Pastors and leaders of the church but also to the people to whom you gossiped. In the end, remember that Jesus loves the church you're leaving and the one your going to; His blood was shed for both. Both churches are part of His bride. Do His bride the honor of leaving well.

Doctrinal Statement

(1) The Holy Scriptures - We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments 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; John 16:12-13).

(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

a. 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 men (John 1:1-2,14; Luke 1:35).

b. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for all mankind as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that the sufficiency of this atoning sacrifice to accomplish the redemption and justification of all who trust in him is assured by his literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Romans 3:24-25; Romans 4:25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 Peter 2:24 and 2 Peter 2:1).

c. 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 9:24; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2).

(4) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

a. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that he is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14).

b. We believe that he is the divine teacher who guides believers into all truth; and, that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (John 16:13; 1 John 2:20, 27; Ephesians 5:18).

(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; and, that man is totally depraved, and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23; Romans 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 our sins (Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

(7) The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

a. 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; John 10:27-30; Romans 8:1,38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 1:5).

b. 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 Natures of the Believer - We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and, that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural (Romans 6:13; Romans 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

(9) Separation

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

b. We believe that sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between one man and one woman (as genetically defined), within the love and bonds of marriage (Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5; Hebrews 13:4). Therefore, we believe that any other form of sexual intimacy is both immoral and a perversion of God's gift (Leviticus 18:1-30; Proverbs 6:32; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

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

(11) The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts

- a. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and, that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and, that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12).
- b. We believe that the biblical offices of pastor and elder in the church, or their equivalents, are restricted to biblically qualified men (1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
- c. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15).

(12) The Church

- a. We believe that the Church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age (Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2).
- b. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; Acts 20:17, 28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11).
- c. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control (Acts 13:1-4; Acts 15:19-31; Acts 20:28; Romans 16:1,4; 1 Corinthians 3:9,16; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7,13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
- d. We believe in the ordinances of believer's water baptism and the Lord's supper as scriptural means of testimony for the church age (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

(13) Dispensationalism - We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to his purpose. Three of these - the age of law, the age of the Church, and the age of the millennial kingdom - are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture (John 1:17; 1 Corinthians 9:17; 2 Corinthians 3:9-18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10; Ephesians 3:2-10; Colossians 1:24-25; Hebrews 7:19; Revelation 20:2-6).

(14) 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; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

(15) The Second Advent of Christ - We believe in that "Blessed Hope," the personal, imminent, pre-tribulation and pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for his redeemed ones; and in his subsequent return to earth, with his saints, to establish his millennial kingdom (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11-16; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10).

(16) The Eternal State

a. 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; John 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-6,12-13).

b. 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; Philippians 1:23; Philippians 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

c. 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 16:19-26; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 1:6-7; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 20:11-15).

Movements Contrary to Faith

(1) Ecumenism - Ecumenism is that movement which seeks the organizational unity of all Christianity and ultimately of all religions. Its principal advocates are the World Council of Churches and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

(2) Ecumenical Evangelism - Ecumenical Evangelism is that effort to promote the gospel by bringing fundamentalists into an unequal yoke with theological liberals and/or Roman Catholics and other divergent groups.

(3) Neo-Orthodoxy - Neo-Orthodoxy is that theological movement which affirms: the transcendence of God, the finiteness and sinfulness of man, and the necessity of supernatural divine revelation of truth; but, while using evangelical terminology, seriously departs from orthodoxy: in accepting the views of destructive higher criticism, in denying the inerrancy of the Bible as historic revelation, in accepting religious experience as the criterion of truth, and in abandoning important fundamentals of the Christian faith.

(4) New Evangelicalism (Neo-Evangelicalism, New Conservatism) - These terms refer to that movement within evangelicalism characterized by a toleration of and a dialogue with theological liberalism. Its essence is seen in an emphasis upon the social application of the gospel and weak or unclear doctrines of: the inspiration of Scripture, biblical creationism, eschatology, dispensationalism, and separation. It is further characterized by an attempt to accommodate biblical Christianity and make it acceptable to the modern mind. We believe that these movements are out of harmony with the Word of God and the official doctrine and position of IFCA International and are inimical to the work of God.

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

According to the Christian Scriptures, marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standard, and the means for procreation of the human race. We believe that sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between one man and one woman (as genetically defined), within the love and bonds of marriage. (Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:4-5; Ephesians 5:21-33; I Corinthians 7:3-5; Hebrews 13:4)

We believe that any form of sexual intimacy outside of marriage is both immoral and a perversion of God's gift (Leviticus 18:1-30; Proverbs 6:32; I Corinthians 6:18; Romans 1:26-27; I Thessalonians 4:3-8). Furthermore, we believe that any form of sexual immorality such as

adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, pornography, cohabitation (regardless of the age of the individuals involved), any attempt to change one's gender in disagreement with one's genetically defined gender, is sinful and offensive to God. (Leviticus 18-20; Romans 1)

Therefore, in light of our biblical commitments, the pastors of the church will perform no weddings or ceremonies contrary to the above understandings, at the church or at any other location. Furthermore, no member or non-member parties will be allowed to use any facilities of the church for weddings, receptions, or other functions who are openly involved in any of the above.

We believe that in order to preserve the function, unity, and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly whether at church, home, or in the community.

We do believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Romans 8). We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior, attitudes, or speech directed towards any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Dale Bible Church. (I Peter 2:13-25; I Thessalonians 4:11-12)

Covenant of Faith

In subscribing to these articles of faith, we by no means set aside, or undervalue, any of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; but we deem the knowledge, belief and acceptance of the truth as set forth in our doctrinal statement, to be essential to sound faith and fruitful practice, and therefore requisite for Christian fellowship in IFCA International.

Constitution

The purpose of this church is the glory of God through Jesus Christ in the salvation of lost souls; the edification and separation of believers through the teaching of God's Holy Word; the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel as expressed in the shed blood and finished work of the Lord Jesus on Calvary's Cross; the promotion of Godly Worship; the defense of the "faith once delivered" and the study of the scriptures until He comes again. Believing it necessary to govern ourselves in an orderly and efficient manner, we do hereby adopt the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and the following Constitution and By-Laws:

ARTICLE 1- TITLE AND ADDRESS

1. The name of this congregation shall be "Dale Bible Church".
2. The mailing address of this congregation is P.O. Box 236, Dale, IN 47523 in Spencer County.
3. The physical address of this congregation is 300 E. Vine st. Dale, IN 47523 in Spencer County

ARTICLE 2- DOCTRINAL BELIEFS

Please refer to the Dale Bible Church's Doctrinal Statement.

ARTICLE 3- AFFILIATION

This church shall remain affiliated with IFCA International as long as our Doctrinal Statements are in complete agreement.

By-Laws

I. MEMEBERSHIP

A. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. Such persons as confess by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. Such persons must be in complete agreement with the Dale Bible Church Doctrinal Statement.

B. ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

1. Before being received into membership, any person not previously baptized shall be willing to receive a Christian baptism, by immersion, unless physically impossible. Baptism is an outward witness of the believer's identification with Christ. We encourage all saved people to give a public testimony in this way.
2. Before being received into membership, all candidates are to fill out a membership application in its entirety.
3. Before being received into membership, a candidate must have no membership or affiliation with any secret organization.
4. Before being received into membership, all candidates are to be examined by the Pastor and the Board of Elders.
5. Before being received into membership, all candidates are to participate in a membership class.

C. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

In all cases of disorderly conduct or false doctrine so opposed to the church's life and faith as to destroy the possibility of fellowship with Christ, procedure will be in the following manner:

1. The member under consideration will first be visited by the Elders as directed in Matthew 18:15-18, Galatians 6:1, and I Timothy 5:19.
2. If the member under consideration gives satisfactory evidence of repentance and fellowship with Christ, he/she is to be restored to the fellowship. (II Corinthians 2:6-8)
3. If the member under consideration refuses to repent, further steps of discipline, in accordance with Matthew 18:15-18, will be taken which may result in termination of membership. (I Corinthians 5:12-13, Matthew 18:17)
4. If a member is habitually absent without due cause from worship and fellowship, and/or fails to communicate with the church for a period of 6 months and/or fails to reply to communication, he/she shall be placed on the inactive list and/or removed. Said person will not be eligible to vote at a church business meeting. He/She can be reinstated to full membership only after appearing before the Board of Elders.

D. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

1. A member must be at least eighteen (18) years of age in order to vote in a congregational business meeting of the church, of any and all phases of major church expansion, improvements and additions of \$1500.00 or more as recommended by the board, and the engaging of a Pastor as recommended by the

board, after approval by two-thirds (2/3) vote of all members present at the meeting called for this purpose. This vote shall be final.

2. Membership gives the privilege of serving in the capacity as an officer, teacher, and/or leader of a ministry.

II. GOVERNMENT

A. CHURCH BOARD

1. The church board shall consist of the Pastor, and/or Assistant Pastor, Elders, and deacons.
2. The number in each office shall be determined upon the needs of the church and availability of qualified men who are members above reproach.
3. The church board shall be granted complete authority as the governing body of the church, with duties as follows:
 - a) The church board shall determine a yearly budget and oversee the collection and expenditure of the budget through the treasury in the interest of the church property. Any expenditure over \$1500.00 must be brought before the congregation by the board for a majority vote.
 - b) The board shall determine the amount and authorize the payment of the Pastor's salary.
 - c) Meetings of the church board shall be held at least once a month, at a time to be determined by the board itself.
 - d) The church board shall be responsible for the spiritual upbuilding of the church and community through the ministry of the Elders.
 - e) All activities of any church ministry must meet with the approval of and be subordinate to the Elder Board.
 - f) The Elder Board shall have the authority to call into a board meeting any member of parties concerned, if they are willing, in case of a conflict that tends to damage the fellowship of the church. Please refer to item #4 under Discipline of Members.
4. No person shall hold an office in the Church who is not a member of the Church in good standing and eighteen years of age or older.
5. The Church Board shall elect a member of its own body to serve as chairman at all meetings. The Pastor shall serve as an advisor to all committees and officers of all organizations of the Church and shall be an ex-officio member thereof.
6. For the term lengths of the board members, refer to sections under the Elders and Deacons term limits.

B. THE PASTOR

1. The Pastor shall be an ordained minister of the Gospel, preferably.
2. The Pastor shall continue to serve until he resigns or until his ministry is terminated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members, that are in good standing, attending a meeting called for that purpose. The said meeting shall be called upon the recommendation of the Elders after receiving valid Scriptural accusation from two or three voting members that are in good standing. (I Timothy 5:19-20, I Timothy 3:1-7)

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3. In case that the relation of the Pastor and the Church is terminated, one month's notice is to be given by either, unless other arrangements have been made.
 4. The Pastor is permitted to be away from the church five weeks each year for vacation and/or special speaking engagements, not including personal days as determined by the elder board. The Pastor is to devote his time to the work of the Lord in this church and is not to serve as pastor in another church during his pastorate.

C. THE ASSISTANT PASTOR

1. The Assistant Pastor, if needed, shall be chosen by the church board in the same way as the Pastor, without the freezing of board member terms.
2. His duties shall be similar to those of the Pastor and as determined by the Pastor and Elders, depending upon the present needs of the church.

D. THE ELDERS

1. The number of Elders will be determined by the Elder Board based on the needs of the Church. They shall serve a 3 year term with the exception of when there is only one serving Elder. Said term shall then extend until a replacement Elder is elected. They shall be men in full communion as determined by the Church Board after a time of examination. Scriptural qualifications for Elders as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 are to be followed. The Elders shall be responsible, along with the Pastor, for the spiritual welfare of the church.
2. The collective body of Elders shall care for the congregation, evangelize the community, and extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The Elders shall serve the Church in giving direction to the various ministries of the Church which includes: education, evangelism, missions, and stewardship, etc.
3. They shall assist the Pastor in administering the Lord's Supper and Baptism if necessary.
4. They shall be expected, under the Pastor's direction, to visit the sick and sorrowing of the membership, investigate delinquents, and endeavor to remedy any Spiritual weaknesses in the lives of the members.
5. They shall, with the Pastor, be entrusted with the matters of discipline. The procedure, as found in Matthew 18:15-17, shall be followed.
6. All serious grievances between the congregation and the Pastor and/or the Elders, shall be handled through the Elder Board under the direction of the Holy Spirit.
7. They shall, along with the Pastor, serve as a membership committee to examine all those who desire to join the membership of the Church.
8. They, along with the Board of Deacons, shall serve as the pulpit committee to seek and examine any candidate for the office of Pastor.
9. They shall carry out the duties of Sunday School Superintendent which includes supervising the work of the Sunday School and presiding at all meetings of the Sunday School Teachers and their assistants.

E. THE DEACONS

1. The number of Deacons, also known as Trustees, shall be determined by the Elder Board based on the needs of the Church. They shall serve on the Church Board. Their term of office shall be three (3) years in length unless determined otherwise by the Elder Board. Their term shall be arranged so that one-third (1/3) of the Deacons' terms expire each year. They shall be men in full communion as determined by the Church Board after a time of examination. Scriptural qualifications for Deacons are found in I Timothy 3:8-13.
2. The Deacons shall have charge of the real and personal property of the church. They shall see to its proper care, use, and maintenance, including the insurance upon all property.
3. They shall hold themselves in readiness to assist the Pastor and/or the Elders in whatever capacity deemed necessary. This includes the ministering of the Lord's Supper and Baptism.
4. They, along with the Board of Elders, shall serve as a pulpit committee to seek and examine any candidate for the office of the Pastor and/or the Assistant Pastor.
5. They shall appoint among themselves a Head Deacon whose duties shall include being in charge of the buildings and grounds; in which he shall coordinate the other areas of service with the deacons within the ministry.
6. They shall carry out the duties of treasurer which includes the responsibilities of all Church funds and shall make a monthly report to the Church board and a yearly report to the annual church meeting.
7. They shall carry out the duties of secretary which includes keeping an accurate record of all business conducted at the Church Board meeting, keeping minutes of all annual and called Church business meetings, and keeping a record of Church membership.
8. They shall appoint among themselves a Head Usher who will be responsible in cooperation with the Pastor for the coordination of the ministry of Head Usher. He, in turn, shall appoint ushers who shall see to the greeting and welcoming of people at any of the stated services of the Church, the personal comfort of the congregation during the services, the receiving of offerings at any of the services, and any other duties deemed necessary by the Church Board.

F. DEACONESS

"Deaconess" is a Scriptural term meaning "servant." The Deaconess shall serve the Church under the parameters of I Timothy 2:12-13.

1. The number of Deaconesses shall be determined by the Elder Board based on the needs of the Church. Deaconesses shall be members above reproach, in keeping with the standard of God's Word. (I Timothy 2:9-15; Titus 2:3-5) They shall supervise all social activities of the Church and Ladies' functions in cooperation with the Pastor and the Elders. The Head Deaconess shall be appointed by the Elder Board.
2. They shall be responsible for the preparing and the caring of the communion elements and assisting in the baptism of female candidates.
3. The Deaconess' term shall be two years, effective January 1st of each year.

G. COMMITTEES

Various committees may be appointed and must be approved by the Elder Board.

H. VACANCIES

Vacancies may be filled by the Board of Elders when an office becomes vacant.

I. MISSIONS

The ministry of missions shall consist of members in a good standing with Dale Bible Church. It shall be under the direction of the Elder/ Church Board. The board's responsibility will consist of the following:

1. To develop a concern for missionary work, to seek out, develop and promote a continuing year-round missionary program, and to diligently seek out missionary projects worthy of support of the Church.
2. To work with the Pastor in planning missionary conferences and/or individual missionary speakers.

III. ANNUAL MEETINGS

- A. There shall be an annual church meeting, to be held in the Fall, for the purpose of the approval of the church officers (Elders and Deacons) and for the further purpose of receiving and approving reports of any standing committees, and for the business that may be brought before it. The annual church budget will also be presented. Special meetings may be called when necessary by the Chairman of the Church Board or the Pastor. No meeting shall be called without notice given a minimum of two (2) Sundays prior to the meeting date.
- B. The Chairman of the Church Board shall act as Chairman of the business meetings of the Church. In the absence of the Chairman of the Church Board, a member of the Board of Elders, duly appointed by the Chairman, shall act as Chairman.
- C. All matters, not under the jurisdiction of the Elder and the Church Board, shall be brought before a simple majority vote of those present, except changes in the Constitution and By-Laws, and the selection of a Pastor, which require a two-thirds (2/3) approval.
- D. All candidates for Elders and Deacons must be approved by the Church Board prior to their notification of being nominated.
- E. The terms of all accepted candidates shall become effective January 1st of the next year.

IV. ORDINANCES

A. BAPTISM

Baptism is only to be administered upon an individual's profession of faith in Jesus Christ. We believe that the mode of water baptism is to be by immersion. We may baptize any believer who desires it. The baptized individual is not required to join our local church.

B. LORD'S SUPPER

The frequency of the Lord's Supper is to be observed at the discretion of the Elder Board. Additional communion services may be held at the discretion of the Elder Board.

V. ORDINATION OF MINISTERS

The Dale Bible Church, being independent in itself and having a congregational form of government, shall have the power to authorize the Church Board to call a council for the purpose of examination and ordination into the Christian ministry. The Board of Elders, in cooperation with the Pastor and the Candidate for ordination, shall call an ordination council and set a date for the ordination service.

VI. AMENDMENTS

After submission to the Church Board, the Board may recommend amendments to the By-Laws which may be presented in writing at any annual or called meeting of the Church. The announcement of and the presentation of the proposed amendment to the By-Laws shall be made thirty (30) days in advance of said regular or called meeting. The proposed amendment change(s) shall be made available to the Church membership. If said amendment receives a two-thirds (2/3) vote by ballot of members present, it shall become part of the By-Laws. A quorum is necessary for this vote to be authorized.

VII. QUORUM

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the total voting membership shall constitute a quorum at the annual meeting or any called meeting of the Church.