

**Constitution of the
Hannover International Bible Church
Hannover, Germany
(Approved 15 March 2015)**

ARTICLE 1: Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches and other organizations. We confess that the Word of God always supercedes this document.

ARTICLE 2: Name

This body shall be known as Hannover International Bible Church.

ARTICLE 3: Objectives

3.1. To be a dynamic body of believers led and empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with our community and the world. (1 Cor 12; Romans 12:4-5; Gal 5:16, 25; Eph 5:18)

3.2. To be a worshiping fellowship, experiencing an awe of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His Lordship. (Luke 6:46; John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 1 John 5:3; Matthew 7:21-23; 12:50)

3.3. To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers. (1 John 1:6-7; Amos 3:3)

3.4. To be a church which ministers to all persons in Jesus' name. (Matthew 20:27-28; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:10-11; John 13:34; 2 Corinthians 12:15)

3.5. To be a church whose purpose is to become ever more Christlike in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality and possessions to the Lordship of Christ. (Luke 9:23; 14:25-33; Romans 8:29; 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:24; 1 John 2:6; 3:3)

3.6. To support missionary work of the church at home and abroad. (Matthew 28:18-20; 3 John 5-8; John 20:21)

3.7. To cooperate with and support other domestic and international charitable organizations, including indigenous and foreign missionaries. (3 John 5-8)

3.8. Supporting Christian communities at home and abroad in matters of building, reconstructing and purchasing venues for corporate worship and community service, as well as social welfare work. (3 John 5-8; 1 John 3:16-18)

3.9. Conducting social welfare work and supporting the social welfare work of other charitable organizations at home and abroad. (1 John 3:16-18)

3.10. Exercise Christian charity wherever help is needed. (1 Corinthians 13:1-8; 1 John 3:16-18)

ARTICLE 4: Purpose

4.1 The purpose of this congregation is to give visible form to that faith and fellowship to which God has called His people through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. We acknowledge ourselves to be a local manifestation of the universal church in and through which Jesus Christ continues to minister to the world by His Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 1:23; 2:16; 4:4, 12, 16; Colossians 1:18)

4.2 We shall seek to fulfill this calling through corporate worship, prayer, and study; through a program of Christian nurture by which our members may be built up in their faith and love; through proclamation of the Gospel by word and deed, local and world-wide; and through ministering to human need in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:42)

ARTICLE 5: Doctrine

The church accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and as the authoritative basis for its doctrine and all that it does. The church's statement of faith is a brief summary of what we believe. The Word of God always supercedes the statement of faith and any document produced by the church. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 17:17)

ARTICLE 6: Polity and Government

6.1 Recognizing that Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church, this congregation shall seek to learn and obey the will of our Lord in all matters of faith and practice. Decisions for governing the affairs of this church are the responsibility of the active membership of the congregation operating under the Lordship of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; 2:19-20; 4:15; 5:23)

6.2 The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership in accordance with Article VII of this constitution.

6.3 All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

6.4 **This church is autonomous.** The Church answers to no higher organization. She answers to God and God alone. (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Acts 5:29, 32)

6.5 The church can vote to become a member of other organizations for the purposes of cooperation, fellowship, and training. The church cannot vote to place itself under any other authority other than Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE 7: Membership

7.1 Admission to Membership: Any person professing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, trusting solely in His merits for salvation, having been baptized by immersion after profession of faith, giving evidence of salvation, is invited to become a member of this church.

7.1.1 Prior to receiving membership, each person will read, understand and agree with the Church's statement of faith, doctrinal positions, the Covenant of Membership and this constitution. (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Romans 15:5-6)

7.1.2 Testing: Each prospective member will give testimony before the Church and allow the members to test them of at least a period of two months before being accepted as a member. (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1)

7.2 Rights: Members receive the many blessings of the firm commitment of each member to all the other members, as outlined in the Covenant of Membership. All members sixteen are entitled to vote in elections and questions presented at church business meetings. Members are eligible for consideration as candidates for elected church offices. (see Section on elected officers for qualifications).

7.3 Duties: All church members are expected to understand the Covenant of Membership and abide by it, and to understand and be in agreement with the Statement of Faith and doctrinal positions. Each member is responsible for regular participation in the life of the church and its ongoing support, including financial contributions. Each member is obligated to test all new members. (1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:5-6)

7.4 Annual Renewal: Membership is renewed annually. By renewing one's membership one reaffirms their commitment to the Lord and His Church. Membership is renewed every January. Those who do not renew their membership will be dropped from the roles. (Hebrews 3:6, 14; 6:11-12; Colossians 1:22-23)

7.5 Covenant of Membership

7.5.1 Having been led, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, on the profession of our faith in His merits alone for our salvation, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and the assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. (Romans 10:9-10; 12:4-5)

7.5.2 We endeavor, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love in truth; to strive for the advancement of this church, to pursue personal and corporate holiness; in knowledge and in righteousness; to promote its spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as able, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spreading of the gospel throughout all nations. (Jude 3; Galatians 5:16, 25; Ephesians 4:11-16; 5:18; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Timothy 4:7-8; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 18-14; 3 John 5-8; Acts 2:42; Romans 12:12; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, Galatians 6:1-10, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24 and 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15)

7.5.3 We also endeavor to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our relatives and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct, abstaining from practices that violate clear biblical principles; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior. (Romans 8:29; 12:1-2; 13:14; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10-12; 1 John 2:6, 15-17; 3:3, 9-10)

7.5.4 We endeavor, to practice complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in heterosexual marriage by abstaining from practices such as cohabitation, pornography, and fornication. (1 Corinthians 7; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 18:9; Romans 1:32)

7.5.5 We further endeavor to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; transparent slow to take offense, but always ready quickly forgive and be reconciled and mindful of the rules of our Lord and Savior to secure it without delay. (John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16-18; Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 18; Luke 18:1; Ephesians 4:20-32; Matthew 6:12, 14-15)

7.5.6 We moreover intend, as soon as possible, when we remove from this place, to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. (1 Corinthians 12:14-21)

7.6 Termination of Membership

7.6.1 By personal request: Upon written request, a member may be dropped from membership rolls. When requested, a letter of reference shall be granted to another church, providing that the member is in good standing.

7.6.2 By exclusion: See 7.7 Discipline

7.6.3 By non-participation: If, after six months of non-participation for no reasonable reason members will be dropped from the rolls of the church. The membership will attempt to make contact, but if unsuccessful the non-participant will be dropped. (John 15:1-8; Matthew 3:8; 7:21-27; 21:28-30; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 1:11; Romans 2:4-7; 2 Peter 1:4-8)

7.6.4 By death: The names of deceased members shall be removed from the membership rolls.

7.6.5 Failure to renew: See 7.4.

7.7: Discipline

7.7.1 Church members are encouraged to practice church discipline as outlined by our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 18:5-18. The goal of church discipline is holiness within the Body. (Hebrews 12:5-14; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 1 Timothy 4:7-8; Titus 2:11-14)

7.7.2 When church discipline gets to the level of the church being involved, the church will notify the member in writing. The church will gather together in fasting and prayer before

any final decision is made. The church will make its final decision in writing. Dismissal is effective upon 2/3 majority vote of the members present at a business meeting.

7.7.3 The church shall refer to Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, Galatians 6:1-10, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24 and 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15 as God's commandments regarding church discipline.

7.7.4 The church will receive back into fellowship those disciplined members who repent and seek reconciliation publicly before the members. After careful consideration the members shall vote for reinstatement. The reinstatement of an ex-member will follow the same procedures as for a new member.

ARTICLE 8: Meetings

8.1 Family business meetings will be conducted as required but at least quarterly.

8.2 All official meetings will be announced at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.

8.3 Items for discussion will be provided to the congregation prior to any official meeting for the purpose of prayer and study.

8.4 Proxy votes are acceptable only on production of a letter signed by the person voting in absentia.

8.5 The pastor will moderate meetings unless the Church decides to elect a different moderator.

ARTICLE 9: Church Officers and Other Appointments

9.1 - Church Leaders: The officers of this church shall be the pastor, elders, deacons, clerk, treasurer, organizational officers and ministry team leaders. These positions will be voted on and filled as and when deemed by the members to be necessary.

9.1.1 All elected leaders will be in full agreement with the church's statement of faith, constitution, doctrinal positions and covenant of membership and will teach the Bible in light of the church's doctrinal stand.

9.1.2 All Bible studies and small groups that are affiliated with the Church must disciple and teach in light of the church's doctrinal stand.

9.1.3 God's qualification for elders and deacons will be applied to appointed elders and deacons. (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 6:1-7)

9.1.4 Church leaders are to relinquish leadership if at any time they do not meet biblical qualifications.

9.2 – Appointments to the Board of Celle/Hannover International Bible Church e. V..

9.2.1 The following officers will be elected automatically to serve on the board of the International Bible Church Celle/Hannover e.V.: Pastor, elders, deacons, treasurer.

9.2.2 Other appointees: Other members can be appointed to the board of Hannover/Celle International Bible Church e.V. by the vote of the church membership. Appointees must be members in good standing, fully committed to the Church, be in full agreement with the Church's statement of faith and doctrinal positions and have been a member for at least one year.

9.3 – Appointments to Official Representatives of the Church

9.3.1 The pastor and his wife automatically are official representatives to any organizational meetings. (This paragraph assumes that the pastor's wife is a member of HIBC and is in good standing.)

9.3.2 Elders are automatically authorized to represent the Church at organizational meetings.

9.3.2 The Church can vote to appoint other representatives. No member, with the above exceptions, can officially represent the Church without the church's vote.

ARTICLE 10: Ordinances

10.1 **Baptism:** The church shall receive for baptism any person requesting it who has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by personal faith. Candidate for baptism will attend baptism classes conducted by an elder before he/she is baptized.

10.1.1 Baptism shall be by immersion in water.

10.1.2 Those persons being baptized by the Church also must agree to become members of the Church. The Church will not baptize anyone who does not intend to be a member of HIBC.

10.1.2.1 Those being baptized will be in agreement the Church's statement of faith and doctrinal positions are will submit themselves to the testing the members. See Article 7 - Membership.

10.1.3 Those wishing to be baptized by the Church will attend baptism classes administered by an elder.

10.1.4 The pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism.

10.2 **Lord's Supper:** The church will observe the Lord's Supper on a regular basis.

10.2.1 The pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall officiate the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE 11: Other Religious Ceremonies

11.1 **Weddings.** The Church will conduct marriage ceremonies for church members only. At least one person of the couple must be a member of HIBC. If one of the couple is not a member they will provide a letter of reference from the church where they are active members.

11.1.2 HIBC will only marry those couples who are both Christians. HIBC will not perform marriage ceremonies unless both persons in the engaged couple are practicing Christians.

11.1.3 Couples wishing to be married at HIBC must attend marriage counseling before the ceremony. The marriage counseling sessions are to be conducted by one of the elders of the Church.

11.1.4 Exceptions to the above requirements can only be by vote of the membership of HIBC. The requirement that both are practicing Christians is non-negotiable.

11.1.5 The Church will not remarry divorced people.

11.1.6 The Church cannot force or demand that the elders perform a marriage ceremony of which the elder objects.

11.2 Baby Dedications. Parents are encouraged to dedicate their children to the Lord. The dedication is between the parents and the Lord. The Church acts as witnesses to the parents' commitments to raise their children in the way of the Lord and makes a commitment to assist the parents in their commitment to the Lord.

11.2.1 The Church does not baptize babies since the practice unscriptural. The Church baptizes only believers.

Article 12: Finances

All tithes and offering made to Hannover International Bible Church will be forwarded to Celle/Hannover International Bible Church e.V. with specific instructions on how those funds are to be disbursed.

ARTICLE 13: Disbandment

In the event of the church disbanding, those voting to disband will also determine, by vote, how the church's property and funds will be disposed.

ARTICLE 14: Adoption and Amendments

14.1 The constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when a majority of members vote in favor.

14.2 Any of the stipulations in this constitution may be amended, altered or repealed by a three-fourths majority of the member present.

14.3 A copy of the amended constitution must be made available to all members at least one month prior to the business meeting in which the vote is to be taken.

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