



**INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST  
CHURCH BREMEN  
CHURCH CONSTITUTION  
AND BY-LAWS**

Revised Version

October 2016

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# CONSTITUTION

## INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH BREMEN

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We further declare that the governing of this body shall be carried out in an orderly manner according to the Biblical principles set forth in this document. This document shall preserve the liberties of each individual member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches and organisations.

### ARTICLE I – NAME

This church shall be known as **International Baptist Church Bremen** (Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts), Hohenlohestr. 60, 28209 Bremen, Germany.

### ARTICLE II - CHURCH COVENANT AND OBJECTIVES

#### Church Covenant

Since we have committed ourselves to Jesus Christ and have experienced the acceptance, forgiveness, and redemption of God our Father, we covenant together as members of this church that with God's help, through the guiding presence of His Spirit:

- We will walk together in brotherly love.
- We will show loving care to one another and encourage, counsel, and admonish one another.
- We will assemble faithfully for worship and fellowship, and will pray earnestly for others as well as ourselves.
- We will endeavour to bring up those under our care "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
- We will seek, by Christian example and personal effort, to win others to Christ and to encourage their growth toward Christian maturity.
- We will share one another's joys and endeavour to bear one another's burdens and sorrows.
- We will oppose all conduct which compromises our Christian faith and will uphold high standards of Christian morality.
- We will prove the reality of our conversion by living godly, fruitful lives.
- We will maintain a faithful ministry of worship, witness, education, fellowship, and service.
- We will be faithful stewards of our resources and abilities - through tithes, offerings and service - sharing the gospel with people of all nations.

As a result of this covenant relationship, we will seek earnestly to live to the glory of God, who brought us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

#### Objectives

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 the Holy Spirit.

Our main purpose is to make disciples of Jesus Christ from the nations in the English language.

We do this by:

1. Providing opportunities for the corporate worship of God;
2. Providing opportunities for Christian growth through the teaching of God's word, "that we may present everyone mature in Christ" Colossians 1:28;
3. Encouraging others to profess faith in Jesus Christ through the faithful proclamation of the Gospel;
4. Ministering to human need, both within the fellowship and to the outside world;
5. Reaching out to non-believers, especially those from the English-speaking international community;
6. Being a worshipping fellowship of international believers, experiencing an awareness of God, recognising His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership; and
7. Supporting worldwide missions.

## **ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF BELIEF**

We accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired word of God and as the authoritative basis for our doctrine and practice (2 Timothy 3:15-16; 2 Peter 1:19-21). The church subscribes to the articles of faith as expressed in the "IBC Statement of Basic Beliefs" as adopted by the International Baptist Convention in 2008. We accept as ordinances Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

## **ARTICLE IV - CHURCH GOVERNANCE**

The government of this church is vested solely in the body of believers who compose it. It shall not be subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical or governmental body. The church is a member of the Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden in Deutschland K.d.ö.R. According to Article 4 of the Bund's constitution, the church is a legally independent part of the Bund and shares in the legal rights of the Bund. It carries out its business independently and in accordance with the Bund's regulations.

International Baptist Church Bremen is also a member of the International Baptist Convention.

# **BY-LAWS**

## **I. MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section A - General Consideration**

As a sovereign, congregational body of believers in the freedom of Jesus Christ, this congregation retains the exclusive right of self-government in all areas of church life. The body reserves the right to determine who shall be members of this church and the

conditions of such membership. All members of this body shall be persons who give evidence of spiritual regeneration (Titus 3:5-6) and have been baptised scripturally as believers (Matthew 3:15-17, Acts 8:36-37). Members are expected to accept this document and conduct themselves accordingly.

## **Section B - Privileges and Responsibilities of Members**

1. The members of International Baptist Church Bremen come together to fulfil the New Testament privilege of worshipping Almighty God through Jesus Christ (John 4:23-24).
2. Prayer, fellowship, and spiritual growth are to be encouraged and offered to every member (Acts 2:42).
3. Every member may participate in the New Testament ordinances of our Lord Jesus as administered by this church.
4. Every member is expected to attend church conferences and vote at all elections and on all questions submitted in church conferences, unless otherwise stated in these By-Laws.
5. All members should be encouraged to find their God-given assignments within the ministry of the whole body of the church.
6. All members can be considered as a candidate for elective offices in the church, unless otherwise stated in these By-Laws.
7. Each member has the responsibility to exercise these privileges solely within the direction of God's Word (John 13:34-35, Romans 12:3-19).
8. All members are expected to keep the doctrines and objectives of the church.

## **Section C - Candidacy / Application Process**

Any person who expresses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and who has reached an age of his/her personal accountability may apply for church membership in this body.

Candidates for church membership shall give some evidence of a desire to support the church's ministry and become involved, sharing their spiritual and natural gifts to the glory of God. Any candidate may offer him/herself for membership through the Pastor, after consultation and counselling in a new members' seminar, and having given personal testimony to the church body. Finally, a new membership application form is to be submitted.

After consideration of the applicant's qualifications according to scripture, the Pastor or another Elder may make a recommendation to the church concerning the applicant's request at any regular or called meeting of the church body.

Individuals are received as a member in one of the following ways:

- a) By profession of faith in Jesus Christ followed by Believer's Baptism
- b) By transfer of membership from another Baptist church or church of like faith and order and affirming that one has been baptised as a believing Christian;
- c) By affirming that one has personally accepted Jesus Christ and has been baptised as a believing Christian.

## **Section D - Discipline**

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasise to its members reconciliation, that every reasonable measure will be taken to resolve any unhappy difference within the rules of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption and brotherhood (2 Thessalonians 3:11-15).

It is forbidden to present or encourage non-Biblical teaching within the fellowship (Colossians 2:8-10, 2 John 7-11).

Should a member's behaviour cause a serious situation or represent a serious danger to the welfare or witness of the church (Romans 16:17-20), the member concerned shall be counselled by the Pastor and the Elders.

## **Section E - Termination of Membership**

All actions concerning termination of membership shall be conducted in a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death: church membership ceases automatically upon death of a member.
2. By letter of transfer: a letter of transfer may be granted to any church of like faith and order for members in good standing. When letters of transfer are granted, membership in this church will be terminated with immediate effect.
3. In writing: church membership may be terminated in response to a written request received from the member.
4. Letter of release: the church may terminate the membership of a person who no longer fulfils the obligations specified in the Constitution and By-Laws. Where applicable, the action of exclusion may take place after pursuing reconciliation and rendering due written notice, allowing opportunity to make such action unnecessary. Recommended termination of membership in such circumstances is to be communicated to the church body during a Church Conference.

The membership role will be reviewed at least once a year after which the updated membership list will be published.

# **II. LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**

## **Introduction**

The Church will appoint a Pastor and Elders, and may call, in cooperation with the existing Eldership, Assistant Pastors, Deacons and Trustees, who will serve as those elected to lead the church (officers). While such appointments will be according to need and opportunity, they will be guided by the prayerful discernment of a candidate's character, spiritual gifting and maturity in alignment with biblical guidelines, (especially 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 3:8-13; Titus 1:6-9) and a sense of call from God to the task in question.

The Pastor and the Elders together shall comprise the Eldership.

## **A. Pastor**

The Pastor shall be an ordained Baptist Minister, qualified according to the Holy Scriptures and having experienced a particular sense of call from God to the international ministry and missions. The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church, preaching the Word of God faithfully from a Biblical basis and perspective, leading the church to perform its primary functions and fundamental duties, as outlined and implicated in the Holy Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Acts 20:17-35, 1 Corinthians 2:1-16, 2 Corinthians 6:1-10, 2 Timothy 2:1-20, Titus 1:6-9).

The Pastor and his wife shall automatically become members of International Baptist Church Bremen upon commencing service. A separate covenant agreement / work contract is to be drawn up between the Pastor and International Baptist Church Bremen.

The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all church committees and organisations, leading the church in its organisational structure and governance.

The Pastor shall normally preside over the Church Council and all church conferences or may appoint an Elder or Deacon in his place.

### Calling of the Pastor by the church

The procedure for calling a Pastor shall be in accordance with those set forth in the guidelines for the Pastor Search Committee (see Annex).

### Term of Office

Once elected by the church, a pastor shall serve according to the contract of employment.

### Election

1. The church's calling of the pastor shall be by nomination of the Pastor Search Committee.
2. Such a call to be appointed as pastor will be extended upon an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B, by secret ballot.

### Annual Review

A Pastor-Church Covenant, which describes the duties and responsibilities of the Pastor, shall be drawn up between the Elders and the Pastor. This Pastor-Church Covenant is part of the contract of employment and should be reviewed annually.

### Termination

Upon his decision to terminate his services, the Pastor shall first communicate his intentions to the Elders, before then presenting his resignation at a regular Sunday worship service in writing.

In the event that the church deems it necessary to terminate the services of the Pastor, the recommendation to do so must come through the Elders. It will be the responsibility of the Elders to gather all facts, testimonies, and information for documentation of offence. All efforts will be made to promote reconciliation and healing, allowing for the opportunity to make such action of termination unnecessary. In the event of conflict such that reconciliation cannot be achieved, or in the event of serious misconduct of the Pastor, the

Elders will recommend termination to the church. The church shall vote in accordance with Section VI. B, by secret ballot concerning such termination.

## **B. Elders**

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice in the New Testament, Elders are servant shepherds, called by God to work alongside the pastor in giving spiritual oversight to God's people. An Elder shall be a mature Christian man who is an active member of the church with a sincere desire and sense of call from God to serve as an Elder.

He should also express a clear understanding of the Scriptures that is in line with the church's statement of belief.

### Duties

As well as being devoted to prayer (Acts 6:4) an Elder's responsibilities include:

1. Proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
2. Ensuring pastoral care for the church's members and other persons in the community.
3. Feeding and equipping the flock through teaching and guidance "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" Ephesians 4:12.
4. Identifying, recruiting, nurturing and developing spiritual leaders for the church.
5. Modelling disciple-making, (Matthew 28:19) according to his gifts and specific callings from God.
6. Leading the church in discerning and accomplishing its values, mission and vision.

### Term of Office

Once elected by the church, an Elder shall serve a term of office of 3 years. A serving Elder may be re-elected for one additional term for a maximum of 6 consecutive years. After two such 3-year terms a lapse of at least 1 year is required before an Elder may be elected to serve again.

### Election

1. The pastor and existing Eldership will nominate potential Elders at the church conference.
2. Recommendations from church members of potential Elder candidates may be given in writing to the Eldership for their consideration.
3. Each nominee will be required to give a public testimony at a regular worship service.
4. Following any nomination, there will be a period of at least 2 weeks before the related election. This is to provide the opportunity for the church members to prayerfully consider the nomination and give sincere feedback about the nominee(s) to the existing Eldership. This process may include a questionnaire if deemed helpful on the occasion.
5. Provided there is no significant concern raised, the election shall proceed at the next church conference, which should be no sooner than 2 weeks following the nomination(s). A call by the church to be appointed as an Elder will be extended upon an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B, by secret ballot.

### Commissioning

Those nominees elected to serve as Elders will be commissioned to this role prior to serving in a worship service of the whole church. (Acts 14:23)

### Termination

An Elder may resign, upon giving at least two months' notice or at a mutually agreed time.

Elders are subject to the same scriptural principles of church conduct and discipline as apply to all other church members.

In the event that an individual no longer meets the requirements of an Elder, he should voluntarily resign or be subject to dismissal. Recommendation to dismiss an Elder shall be presented in a report from the Eldership. At a specially called Church Conference, the dismissal shall come into effect following an affirmative vote in accordance with Section VI. B, by secret ballot.

### Special Duties

- Should the occasion arise that the Pastor is to leave the church, the Eldership will oversee the Pastor Search Committee (see the guidelines in annex) and ensure that the church can continue to function in an orderly manner. In the event of serious illness or prolonged absence of the Pastor, when he is unable to carry out his duties, these same rules apply. If an Interim Pastor is called, he is accountable to the Eldership.

## **C. Deacons**

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice in the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the church whose roles exist to free the elders to focus on eldership tasks (Acts 6:1-4). They will be active church members with spiritual maturity, practical giftings and a sincere desire and sense of calling from God to serve as a Deacon. They will be appointed by the Eldership and the church.

### Duties

- Assist the Eldership in
  - fulfilling the goals and mission of the church in general
  - ensuring the implementation of the practical and administrative needs of the church (such practical tasks will include administration, finance, media, event coordination and any other relevant area that arises).
- Work in harmony with and under the direction of the Eldership.

### Term of Office

Once elected by the church, a Deacon shall serve a term of office of 3 years. A serving Deacon may be re-elected for one additional term for a maximum of 6 consecutive years. After two such 3-year terms a lapse of at least 1 year is required before a Deacon may be elected to serve again.

### Election

1. The pastor and Eldership will nominate potential Deacons at the church conference.
2. Recommendations from church members of potential Deacon candidates may be given in writing to the Eldership for their consideration.

3. Each nominee will be required to give a public testimony at a regular worship service.
4. Following any nomination, there will be a period of at least 2 weeks before the related election. This is to provide the opportunity for the church members to prayerfully consider the nomination and give sincere feedback about the nominee(s) to the Eldership. This process may include a questionnaire if deemed helpful on the occasion.
5. Provided there is no significant concern raised, the election shall proceed at the next church conference, which should be no sooner than 2 weeks following the nomination(s). A call by the church to be appointed as a Deacon will be extended upon an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B, by secret ballot.

#### Commissioning

Those nominees elected to serve as Deacons will be commissioned to this role prior to serving in a worship service of the whole church.

#### Termination

A Deacon may resign, upon giving at least two months' notice or at a mutually agreed time. Deacons are subject to the same scriptural principles of church conduct and discipline as apply to all other church members.

In the event that an individual no longer meets the requirements of a Deacon, he/she should voluntarily resign or be subject to dismissal. Recommendation to dismiss a Deacon shall be presented in a report from the Eldership. At a specially called Church Conference, the dismissal shall come into effect following an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B, by secret ballot.

### **D. Administrator**

The Administrator supports the organisation and administration of the church and works closely with the Pastor, Elders and Deacons.

#### Term of office

Once elected by the church, the Administrator will serve an initial term of office of 1 year. The Administrator may be re-elected for additional terms as the church sees fit.

#### Election

The Administrator is nominated by the Eldership and is elected by an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B.

#### Termination

The Administrator may resign, upon giving at least two months' notice or at a mutually agreed time. The Administrator is subject to the same principles of church conduct and discipline as apply to all other church members.

In the event that the Administrator fails to meet the requirements of the office he/she should voluntarily resign or be subject to dismissal. Recommendation to dismiss the Administrator shall be presented in a report from the Eldership. At a specially called

Church Conference, the dismissal shall come into effect following an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B.

### Duties

- The Administrator shall be responsible for keeping suitable records of all official actions of the church. All records shall be church property.
- The Administrator shall ensure that there is a copy of the annual financial report in the church records.
- The Administrator shall maintain a record of all members. All requests and granting of church letters shall be done in accordance with the decisions of the church.
- The Administrator shall keep written notes of all church conferences and also serve as secretary of the Church Council.
- The Administrator will work with the Pastor and other church leaders in preparing the annual reports to the International Baptist Convention and the Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden.
- The Administrator shall work together with the Elders and Deacons in fulfilling these tasks.

## **E. Treasurer and Financial Ministry Team**

### **Treasurer**

The Treasurer is the financial officer of the church. The Treasurer shall work together with the Elders and Deacons in attending to the church's financial matters.

### Term of office

Once elected by the church, a Treasurer will serve an initial term of office of 1 year. The Treasurer may be re-elected for additional terms as the church sees fit.

### Election

The Treasurer is nominated by the Eldership and is elected by an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B.

### Termination

A Treasurer may resign, upon giving at least two months' notice or at a mutually agreed time. Treasurers are subject to the same principles of church conduct and discipline as apply to all other church members.

In the event that a Treasurer fails to meet the requirements of the office he/she should voluntarily resign or be subject to dismissal. Recommendation to dismiss the Treasurer shall be presented in a report from the Eldership. At a specially called Church Conference, the dismissal shall come into effect following an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B, by secret ballot.

### **Financial Ministry Team**

The Treasurer shall serve as Chairman of the Financial Ministry Team. The team shall consist of the Treasurer and one or two other members. This team shall comprise mature members of the church and not include anyone related to the Treasurer by blood, marriage, or business.

### Term of office

Once elected by the church, a member of the Financial Ministry Team will serve a term of office of 1 year. He/she may be re-elected for additional terms as the church sees fit.

### Election

The Elders and/or Deacons shall nominate one or two members to serve on the Financial Ministry Team. A call to serve will be extended upon an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B.

### Termination

Members of the Financial Ministry Team may resign, upon giving at least two months' notice or at a mutually agreed time. They are subject to the same principles of church conduct and discipline as apply to all other church members.

In the event that a member of the Financial Ministry Team fails to meet the requirements of the office he/she should voluntarily resign or be subject to dismissal. Recommendation to dismiss a member of the finance team shall be presented in a report from the Eldership. At a specially called Church Conference, the dismissal shall come into effect following an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B, by secret ballot.

### Duties

The Financial Team:

- Shall prepare a budget for the coming financial year (January to December), ideally in November but latest in December, for subsequent approval by the Elders, Deacons and whole Church Body.
- Receive, preserve, and manage the church's financial records and resources.
- Shall reimburse, upon receipt, all expenses in accordance with the church's budget. Reimbursement will be by bank transfer where possible.
- Shall keep a current itemised account of all receipts and payments ensuring that the church will pursue its religious and charitable purposes in accordance with German tax law.
- May be authorised by the Eldership to pay out for special circumstances a non-budgeted item, not to exceed € 250.00. In the event of an emergency, the Elders are granted discretion to authorise a non-budgeted payment of up to € 1,000.00. Authorisation of this increased amount must be made through a unanimous vote of the Elders. Failure of this vote reverts authorisation back to € 250.00. A successful vote requires disclosure to the Church Body by the Elders at the next Sunday church service.

The Treasurer:

- Shall submit the financial records to the Church Administrator annually for preservation as part of the permanent records of the church. They shall be property of the church.
- All accounts of the church may be inspected by any member of the church except those of individual records of tithes and offerings. Due notice of inspection must be given.
- May share budget information with the International Baptist Convention upon request for periodical records and reports.

### **Auditors**

#### Election

The Church membership shall appoint two members per year outside the financial team itself to audit the financial records of the prior year. The auditors shall be mature members of the church and not include anyone related to the financial team by blood, marriage, or business.

#### Termination

Auditors are relieved of their duties after the successful audit of the financial records.

### **F. Trustees**

The church shall appoint three Trustees to hold in trust the congregation's legal affairs. The trustees shall be the Treasurer and two other members.

#### Term of Office

Once elected by the church, a Trustee will serve a term of office of 3 years and may be re-elected for additional terms as the church sees fit.

#### Election

A Trustee is nominated by the Eldership and is elected by an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B.

#### Termination

A Trustee may resign, upon giving at least two months' notice or at a mutually agreed time. Trustees are subject to the same principles of church conduct and discipline as apply to all other church members.

In the event that a Trustee fails to meet the requirements of the office he/she should voluntarily resign or be subject to dismissal. Recommendation to dismiss a Trustee shall be presented in a report from the Eldership. At a specially called Church Conference, the dismissal shall come into effect following an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B, by secret ballot.

#### Duties

- Serving as legal representatives of the church.
- Coordinating an annual audit of the financial records.
- Holding power of attorney for the Bund giving them authorisation to act on behalf of the Bund and International Baptist Church Bremen. The Bund provides this power of attorney. No decision can be made by these representatives without a vote of the church in a church conference.

## **III. CHURCH COUNCIL**

The church council shall serve the church by coordinating and evaluating recommended programs and ministries according to church priorities and calendar. The council shall work together in all activities to ensure that the church leadership and resources are best used in the fulfilment of the church covenant and objectives. The council will consist of a representative(s) of the Eldership and Diaconate, the ministry team leaders and the leaders of currently active committees.

All activities, recommendations and dates planned by the council must be made known to the church.

## **IV. MINISTRY TEAMS AND COMMITTEES**

### **A. Ministry teams**

This document does not include a list of all ministry teams, recognising the fact that different ministry teams will be active at different times, seeking to serve the church and meet various needs depending on church growth and changes in the coming years. Examples of ministry teams are Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry, Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Prayer Ministry, Greeter Ministry, Outreach Ministry, Worship Team Ministry, House Groups. (For guidelines of specific ministries see Annex.)

Unless otherwise stated in the relevant guidelines, the following requirements apply to the leaders of ministry teams and committees serving International Baptist Church Bremen:

Ministry team leaders

- Must be members of International Baptist Church Bremen.
- Shall be appointed by and receive regular feedback from the Eldership and Deacons.
- Will act in harmony with this Constitution and By-Laws in order to promote effective service and worship.
- Will recruit team members.

Unless otherwise stated in the respective guidelines in the Annex to these By-Laws, it is not necessary for every person serving in a ministry team to be a member of International Baptist Church Bremen.

### **B. Committees**

At different times, various committees will be required to support the church leadership.

The committees may be

- Ongoing Committees – i.e. groups who serve the church by carrying out primarily organisational duties on a regular basis

or

- Temporary Committees – i.e. groups who are called into service to meet a specific need for a certain, limited period (e.g. Pastor Search Committee)

Committee leaders

- Must be members of International Baptist Church Bremen.
- Shall be appointed by and receive regular feedback from the Eldership and Deacons.
- Will act in harmony with this Constitution and By-Laws in order to promote effective service and worship.
- Will recruit committee members

Unless otherwise stated in the respective guidelines in the Annex to these By-Laws (important exceptions e.g. Pastor Search Committee, Constitution & By-laws Committee),

it is not necessary for every person serving on a committee to be a member of International Baptist Church Bremen.

## V. CHURCH ORDINANCES

### A. Baptism

As a New Testament church we desire to encourage all believers to follow in obedience to Christ's example and commission to be baptised. (Matthew 3:15, Matthew 28:19). Believer's Baptism as we practice it is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, upon their public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour. It is an act of obedience symbolising the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.

### B. Lord's Supper

1. The Lord's Supper will be observed regularly and with special emphasis as agreed by the Pastor and Elders.
2. All professing believers may participate in the observance of the Lord's Supper.
3. A one-week prior notice will be given before each Lord's Supper for individual participants' spiritual preparation.

## VI. CHURCH MEETINGS

### A. Worship Services

The church will strive to conduct weekly worship services and times of Bible study and prayer. Other meetings of the church shall be set according to the needs and growth of the congregation.

### B. Church Conferences

#### When

**Regular Church Conferences** shall be held quarterly, the dates of which shall be announced in advance.

**A special Church Conference** may be called by the Pastor, Elders or Deacons, announcing its agenda with one week's prior notice.

The conference shall be presided over by the Pastor or designated Elder or Deacon.

#### Decision Making

Unless otherwise stated in this document, decisions or motions which require the approval of members shall observe the following procedure:

- The vote can only be held when a simple majority (50%) of the membership is present. This constitutes a quorum.
- Acceptance of the motion requires an affirmative vote of at least 75% of members present in that church conference.

## **VII. AMENDMENTS**

In the event that any church member wishes to suggest any changes to this Constitution and By-Laws, such changes shall be given in written form to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee. The committee shall consider each proposal and where changes are considered necessary shall submit these at church conference. Any proposed amendment or repeal shall be presented to the church in written form one week prior to the Church Conference. Changes to this document require an affirmative vote conducted in accordance with Section VI. B.

## **VIII. CLOSURE OF INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH BREMEN**

Should there be a movement in the church body to dissolve the constituted church, a vote shall be conducted in accordance with Section VI. B. In such a case, all assets and monies shall be transferred in trust to International Baptist Convention, Frankfurt, together with a letter declaring the invalidity of the church's By-laws and closure of the church.

## **IX. APPENDIX**

### **Prayer of Dedication**

We humbly pray, Heavenly Father, for Your guidance as we commit ourselves to You.  
May our conduct, unity, and growth reflect Your Lordship.  
Bind us together as Your church, with Your love.  
May we serve You with the boldness of the Holy Spirit.  
To Your honour and glory we dedicate this document and Your church.  
Your kingdom come, Thy will be done.  
Amen

### **Appreciation**

To those servants whose previous labours were a source of reference and model:  
Rev. Charles Warford, Rev. Earnest Walker, Rev. Stephen Sligh, Rev. Richard Clark, Rev. James Erwin  
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### **Acknowledgment of Consulted Printed Sources**

The Holy Bible  
The Church Constitution and By-laws Committee, SBC Sunday School Board, USA;

"Baptist Faith and Message," (1963 and 1998), SBC, USA;  
Church Administration Handbook, Bruce P. Powers, editor, Broadman Press;  
A Parliamentary Guide for Church Leaders, C. Barry McCarty, Broadman Press; and  
 "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised", 1990, Scott, Foresman and Company.

## Scripture References

Matthew 3:5-6	Matthew 3:15-17	Matthew 18	Matthew 28:19-20	John 4:23-24	John 13:34-35
Acts 2:42	Acts 6:1-4	Acts 8:36-37	Acts 20:17-35	Romans 12:3-19	Romans 16:17-20
1 Cor. 2:1-16	2 Cor. 6:1-10	Colossians 2:8-10	2 Thess. 3:11-15	1 Timothy 3:1-13	1 Timothy 4:12
1 Timothy 5	2 Timothy 2:1-20	2 Timothy 3:15-16	Titus 2	Titus 3:5-6	2 Peter 1:19-21
2 John 7-11					

## Historical Information

- International Baptist Church Bremen Constitution & By-Laws first adopted 17 May 1998.
- International Baptist Church Bremen received as full member of the European Baptist Convention Wednesday, 28 October 1998, with a Charter Membership Roll of twenty-seven (27) believers.
- With a membership of thirty (30) believers, International Baptist Church Bremen was received as an associate member of the Bund Evangelisch Freikirchlicher Gemeinden Deutschland Wednesday, 12 May 1999.
- Original Constitution & By-Laws Committee (Winter / Spring 1998)  
 Revisions adopted by International Baptist Church Bremen on 3 June 2001, 22 April 2007 and 2016.
- Committee Members: Rev. Richard Clark, Samson Tolessa, Stephan Wolff, James Hayford, Owen Griffiths, Uwe Münster, David Crandall, Heidi Jacques, Rev. James Erwin, Jeff Christopher.