



Constitution for Church Plant (By-Laws)

Harvest Bible Church Paris

Last Revised

9/13/24

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

Psalm 127:1



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PRELIMINARY NOTES REGARDING A CONSTITUTION FOR LAUNCHING A CHURCH

1. The church constitution is a crucial aspect of launching a church. It helps to set a collective understanding of how the church will function and interact. It will be the launchpad for the culture of the church.
2. The following principles need to be constantly communicated to the church community through various formats.
3. Every elder must read, understand, and become familiar with the church by-laws.

PREAMBLE

The following document contains common beliefs and practices of Harvest Bible Church Paris. It is our desire as a church family to grow in wisdom and maturity concerning matters of Christian doctrine and practice that reflect the glory of the one true God.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church is, and shall be, Harvest Bible Church Paris.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

Harvest Bible Church Paris exists to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). The fulfillment of this commission is accomplished through making disciples of Jesus Christ. As disciples are made, the church exhibits God's presence on earth and God is ultimately glorified (1 Corinthians 10:31).

ARTICLE III: PILLARS

Harvest Bible Church Paris is founded on four pillars of Christian doctrine:

1. Unapologetic preaching – preaching God's word with absolute authority and without apology according to 2 Timothy 4:2.

2 Ti 4:2^(ESV) ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

2. Unashamed adoration – lifting high the name of Jesus through worship according to John 4:24.

Jn 4:24^(ESV) ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."



3. Unceasing prayer – believing firmly in the power of prayer and expectation for God to work through his people according to Ephesians 6:18.

Eph 6:18^(ESV) ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

4. Unafraid witness – sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with boldness according to Ephesians 6:19-20.

Eph 6:19–20^(ESV) ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

ARTICLE IV: MARKS OF A MATURING DISCIPLE

Fulfilling the Great Commission means making disciples who make disciples. A maturing disciple will be marked by:

1. Worshipping Christ

Ro 12:1^(ESV) ¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2. Walking with Christ

3 Jn 4^(ESV) ⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

3. Working for Christ

Ga 6:9^(ESV) ⁹And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

ARTICLE V: DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The following doctrinal statement does not exhaustively present all that we believe. The Bible itself, as the Church's final and sufficient authority for all of life, is the sole and final source of all the Church believes. For all matters not expressly covered in this statement, the Bible will be interpreted and applied as the ultimate authority.

THE SCRIPTURES

We believe the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments to be the completed record of God's revelation of himself to humanity. Different human authors, while writing according to their own



styles, personalities, and circumstances, were supernaturally guided by the Holy Spirit to record the very words of God. These words are verbally inspired by God and inerrant in their original writing. These sixty-six books are clear and sufficient for application in every aspect of life and the well-being of all mankind (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21).

GOD

We believe in the one true God (John 17:3), eternally existing in perfect unity as three equally and fully divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). These three are one God, having distinct and complementary roles in redemptive history, yet also having the same nature, attributes, being, and equally worthy of the same glory, honor, and obedience (Mark 12:29, John 1:1-4). God is the Creator of all things (Revelation 4:11), and he is also the Sustainer of all things (Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3). He is a God of truth, love, and righteousness, and he will be the final judge of all the earth (Genesis 18:25, Psalm 9:8).

GOD THE FATHER

We believe God the Father created all things in six literal days for His glory according to His own will (Revelation 4:11), through His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:1). He is the Source of every perfect gift (James 1:17), and sent His Son, Jesus Christ to accomplish salvation for mankind (John 3:16).

GOD THE SON

We believe in the absolute and eternal deity of the Lord Jesus Christ as God the Son (John 1:1). He is the manifestation of God in human flesh (John 1:14, 18), becoming fully human by the will of the Father (1 John 4:14) and the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). He was conceived of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and accomplished our redemption through his sacrificial death on the cross. He was uniquely able to atone for our sins being fully God and fully man. Three days later, He rose physically from the dead, was witnessed by many in his resurrection and ascension into Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). He now sits at the Father's right hand as Head of His Body the Church and Mediator between God and man. He is coming to earth again in power and glory to consummate His rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the central ministry of the Holy Spirit in this age is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts people of sin (John 16:8), regenerates the sinner who believes on Christ (Titus 3:5), baptizing the new believer into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). For the believer, He indwells, guides, instructs, sanctifies, seals, fills, comforts, equips, empowers, and bestows individual spiritual gifts for ministry and the building up of God's Church (John 16:13, Romans 8:9-17, 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 12:4-5, Ephesians 4:11-12).

MANKIND

We believe God created mankind in his own image, male and female, in their innocence to glorify God and enjoy relationship with Him (Genesis 1:26-30). By voluntary transgression of God's



commandment man fell from his sinless state and brought sin, death, and condemnation to all mankind (Genesis 3:1-6, Romans 5:12). As a result, all human beings are totally depraved by nature and choice and are without excuse under the righteous wrath of God (Romans 1:18-25, 32). In this condition, all mankind is lost and in desperate need of the saving work of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:19-20).

SALVATION

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a substitutionary sacrifice in our place (1 Corinthians 15:3). Salvation from sins is found in no one other than Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross fully satisfied the righteous wrath of God; so all who repent and place their faith in the sacrifice of Christ alone are declared righteous before God (2 Corinthians 5:21). They are born again of the Holy Spirit and adopted as a child of God forever (Romans 8:14-16). True believing faith results in obedience to and love for Jesus Christ and a life eager to glorify God and persevere to the end (Romans 5:1-5).

RESURRECTION

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven, and His present role as High Priest and Advocate (Acts 1:3, 9, Hebrews 7:25-26).

THE CHURCH

We believe the Body of Christ is one universal Church composed of all those who have placed saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Jesus Christ is the supreme Head of His Church (Ephesians 5:23). The Scriptures command believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances (baptism and communion), fellowship, service to the local body through the development and use of talents and spiritual gifts, and outreach to the world in fulfillment of Christ's command to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:42-46, Romans 12:1). Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to His Word and under the watchful care of a plurality of elders, there is a local expression of the universal Church. In this local context, believers are to work together in love and unity with the ultimate motive of glorifying God (Ephesians 4:16, Romans 11:36).

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is a public declaration of the believer's salvation in Christ, identifying with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection symbolized by immersion in water (Romans 6:3-6). The Lord's Supper is the united commemoration by believers of Christ's death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). It should be preceded by careful self-examination before a believer participates (1 Corinthians 11:27-32).

MISSIONS

We believe the proper response of every believer to the Gospel is to become active participants in the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew



28:18-20, Romans 12:1). The priority of this call is centered on establishing Bible-centered churches that plant other churches for God's glory and Gospel testimony.

THINGS TO COME

We believe in the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to consummate His Kingdom on earth. This confident expectation of His return has great bearing on the quality of life, service, and mission-focus of the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We believe in the bodily resurrection of the saved and the lost. The lost will be raised to judgment and wrath. The saved will be raised to eternal joy in the new heavens and the new earth, to dwell in the presence of God forever (John 5:28-29).

ARTICLE VI: CHRISTIAN LIVING

CONCERNING CONDUCT

The Bible describes all believers in Jesus Christ as "saints", set apart to God and therefore responsible to live in a manner that does not bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord (Romans 2:1-2, 1 Peter 1:14-19, 2 Timothy 2:19, Titus 2) lest the Word of God be blasphemed (1 Timothy 6:1, Titus 2:5). As Christians, we are to obey the Word of God (1 John 2:3), seek the things which are above (Colossians 3:1), walk as He walked (Ephesians 4:1), and accept as our responsibility the duty and privilege of bringing the Gospel to a lost world (Matthew 28:19-20). A victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who have presented themselves wholly to Christ and walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, which all believers are called to do (Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:18, Romans 6-7).

CONCERNING SEPARATION

God is holy and expects holiness of his people (Leviticus 11:44, 1 Peter 1:15-16). The Bible commands personal and ecclesiastical separation from religious apostasy (2 John 7-11, Romans 16:17, Titus 3:10), from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations (1 John 2:15-17, James 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:1-5), and from professing believers living in willful disobedience to the Word of God (2 Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6, 14-15, 1 Corinthians 5). This does not include separation from unbelievers who need the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 5:9-10), nor does it include believers in Christ who are walking in doctrinal or behavioral error but not under church discipline.

CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

Scripture clearly teaches that God is the sole authority in matters of marriage and sexuality for all people. Marriage involves the sacred joining together of one man and one woman in faithful, life-long union (Gen. 2:18-24, Matthew 19:1-9, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, Hebrews 13:4). The Bible teaches that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) and intends the marriage union to last until one spouse dies (Genesis 2:24, 1 Corinthians 7:10-13). Sexual intimacy is a gift from God to be enjoyed solely within the God-ordained definition of marriage, and God has clearly commanded in



Scripture total abstinence from any form of sexual activity outside this context. Such sexually immoral activities would include (but are not limited to) lustful thoughts, adultery, fornication, pornography, homosexuality, bisexuality, bestiality, paedophilia and polygamy (Leviticus 18, Matthew 5:27-28, Romans 1:18-32, 13:13, 1 Corinthians 5, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, Galatians 5, Colossians 3:5, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, Hebrews 13:4, Jude 1:7).

Disobedience to these clear commands is sin, yet it is no more or less offensive to God and other forms of sin (Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-5, Colossians 3:5-19). God provides redemption, healing, freedom from the power of sin, and restoration to all who turn from sin and embrace Jesus Christ by faith (Acts 16:31, Romans 1:16, Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 3:3-7). As a church, we are called to love, disciple, exhort, and patiently assist those who repent of sin and support them as they fight against sexual temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 4:14-16). This conviction of Scriptural definitions for marriage and sexuality does not allow for any form of bigotry, harassment, hateful speech, or evil actions toward those caught in sexual sin. Such behavior is forbidden by God and ineffective at producing change that glorifies God (Leviticus 19:17-18, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, Galatians 3:1-3, Ephesians 4:31-32, Colossians 4:5-6, 2 Timothy 2:24-26, James 1:19-21, 26, 1 Peter 2:1).

CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP

The New Testament clearly describes followers of the Lord Jesus Christ identifying with and committing to a particular local body of believers. Accordingly, to implement the principles of accountability and commitment within the local church, Harvest Bible Church recognizes the need for formal membership. The term “membership” will be replaced with “ministry partnership” to emphasize the responsibility of every believer to obey the Lord Jesus Christ and join in serving through their talents and God-given abilities (Romans 12:3-8).

ARTICLE VII: MINISTRY PARTNERSHIP

QUALIFICATIONS

Any person shall qualify to be a Ministry Partner if he:

- Professes personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord
- Has been baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ
- Is not living in sin that would require church discipline
- Has completed the process for admission
- Is in full agreement with the Doctrinal Statement

ADMISSION

1. Prospective members must attend Harvest Essentials I and Harvest Essentials II classes. These classes give an introductory and thorough overview of who Jesus Christ is and what Harvest Bible Church believes and teaches.



2. Any person may initiate an application for Ministry Partnership by submitting a signed written covenant, which includes a declaration of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and a commitment to adhere to the authority of the Church as expressed in the Church Constitution.
3. The applicant must be interviewed by pastors/elders to verify the applicant fulfills all qualifications for Ministry Partnership and understands the Church policies and Ministry Partnership responsibilities and exhibits a lifestyle and attitude consistent with biblical doctrine.
4. Once the Elders Council is satisfied the applicant fulfills all qualifications for Ministry Partnership, they may use absolute discretion to install the applicant as a Ministry Partner. The applicant will then be added to the Ministry Partner record kept by the Church Clerk.

PRIVILEGES, RIGHTS, AND DUTIES

Ministry Partnership carries the following duties, privileges, and rights:

1. To minister to one another's spiritual needs as part of the Body of Christ and to participate in Church activities and ministries as the Lord directs and personal circumstances permit, in accordance with Church policies and philosophy of ministry.
2. To financially support the work of the Church as the Lord directs and personal circumstances permit.
3. To respect and submit to the spiritual authority of the Elders Council and procedures of the Church as expressed in the Constitution.
4. To attend all public meetings of the Church.
5. To participate in the ordinances administered by the Church.
6. To attend, speak, and participate at all Ministry Partnership meetings.
7. To maintain unity by not criticizing nor listening to criticism concerning another Ministry Partner(s) and will speak directly and lovingly to those involved when offended.

WITHDRAWAL AND REMOVAL

A Ministry Partner, who is not under discipline, may withdraw Ministry Partnership by notification to the Elders Council with an explanation of the reasons for the request for withdrawal.

Upon receipt for removal from Ministry Partnership, and confirmation from the Elders Council that the individual(s) is not under church discipline, the individual(s) shall be removed from Ministry Partnership and deemed to have resigned from any positions of ministry leadership.

If the individual is found to be under church discipline, the request for withdrawal will not be accepted until the discipline process is complete and the reason for discipline is resolved.

If a Ministry Partner is habitually absent from the Church for a period of six consecutive months without reasonable explanation, the Elders Council will have authority to remove the individual from Ministry Partnership.



RECORD

A record of Ministry Partners shall be kept by the Church Clerk.

RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

Personal disputes between Ministry Partners should be resolved in accordance with principles laid out in Matthew 18:15-20, Luke 17:3, Galatians 6:1, and 1 Corinthians 5:1-5.

If the dispute cannot be resolved between Ministry Partners involved, then the Ministry Partner who is alleged to have been wronged must refer the matter to a Pastor/Elder who will then approach the Ministry Partner alleged to have caused the wrong with the goal of resolving the dispute.

If this second attempt fails, then the matter must be referred to the Elders Council for following the disciplinary process set out in the next section.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRING DISCIPLINE

A Ministry Partner shall be deemed to be under the discipline of the Church if the Elders Council determines by resolution that any of the following circumstances have occurred:

1. There is evidence of unethical or immoral conduct or behavior that is unbecoming of a Christian, contrary to biblical principles and commands.
2. There is evidence of an unwillingness to either comply with, adhere to, or submit to the authority and procedures set out in the Constitution.
3. There is propagation of doctrines and practices contrary to those set forth in the Statement of Faith, or the general teachings of the Church.
4. There has been wrong committed against another individual causing discord or dissension in the Church, with or without malicious intent, that is not repented of, and has not been resolved through the mechanism for dispute resolution set out in the previous section.

RESTORATION THROUGH DISCIPLINE

The primary aim of discipline shall be the restoration of the offender to fellowship with God and with the Church. The Church is given the duty to practice such discipline in a Christian manner. In administering discipline, care must be taken that the Ministry Partners carry a worthy witness of their faith before the world, both for the sake of the spiritual formation of each Ministry Partner, and for the collective witness of the Church (2 Corinthians 2:1-11).

PROCEDURE FOR DISCIPLINE

An unresolved allegation giving reason for disciplinary action against a Ministry Partner must first be submitted to the Elders Council in a written or verbal statement detailing the nature of the allegation, an explanation of the basis upon which it is made, and a description of previous steps



taken to seek a resolution. This statement must be presented to two elders or ministry leaders authorized to engage in church discipline matters.

If the authorized persons determine, on a preliminary basis, that the allegation is invalid, then the allegation shall be dropped, and no further disciplinary action against the Ministry Partner shall proceed. The person making the allegation shall be notified of the decision.

If the authorized persons determine, on a preliminary basis, that the allegation requires further investigation, then a hearing shall be convened by the authorized persons, and the Ministry Partner against whom the allegation is made shall be deemed to be under discipline of the Church and shall not be entitled to withdraw as a Ministry Partner without the consent of the Elders Council. The Elders Council, in its discretion, may suspend the Ministry Partner from any office, or other official position within the Church, until the completion of the disciplinary process.

A hearing to consider the allegation shall be convened and the Ministry Partner shall be given a minimum 14 day written notice of the date, time, and place at which the hearing will be held, by phone, email, or regular mail at the last known address, unless all parties agree to an earlier date. The notice shall briefly explain the nature of the allegation and advise the Ministry Partner that the allegation will be considered at the hearing. The Ministry Partner is entitled to attend the hearing to listen to the details of the allegation made and to respond. If the Ministry Partner states at any time during the 14-day notification period a refusal to attend the hearing or refuses to give 24-hour notice of not attending, the authorized persons will proceed immediately with the disciplinary process.

The hearing is not open to the public, nor to other Ministry Partners outside of the authorized persons. The Ministry Partner is entitled to be accompanied at the hearing by two other Ministry Partners who may act as witnesses during the hearing, but who are not authorized to participate. No recording devices shall be allowed by any party present.

The Ministry Partner and authorized persons may call any witnesses or evidence that is relevant to the allegation being made. No party to the hearing shall be represented by legal counsel.

There shall be equal time allotted for presentation of evidence by the authorized persons and the Ministry Partner. The authorized persons may designate a time limitation on the hearing provided the limitation provides equal and adequate time for both parties to present evidence and provided the Ministry Partner is notified of the time limit at least 3 hours in advance of the scheduled start time.

All evidence presented in the hearing shall be kept confidential, except such summary facts that the Elders Council determines must be presented to the Ministry Partnership at a subsequent Ministry Partnership meeting.



If a Ministry Partner currently under discipline attends any other church and that other church does not seek a letter of reference from Harvest Bible Church, a Pastor/Elder will be authorized to verbally notify the other church that the Ministry Partner has been disciplined by the Church.

If the Ministry Partner is under the age of 18 years old when an allegation is made, then the discipline procedure as described in this section will be modified to require any notification to be also shared with the parents or legal guardians of the Ministry Partner, and they will be entitled to attend the hearing.

MINISTRY PARTNER MEETINGS

A business meeting of Ministry Partners can be called at the discretion of the Elders Council, as they see the need. Attendance at the business meetings of Harvest Bible Church will be open to all who regularly attend the church. Participation shall be limited to Ministry Partners in good standing. A Ministry Partner in good standing is one who is not under church discipline and is actively participating in ministry.

The Elders Council shall make financial statements available to the Ministry Partnership through a Ministry Partnership Meeting no later than March 31st of each year, which shall include:

1. Financial statements for the immediately preceding year, including the Auditor's report thereon.
2. The approved budget for the immediate fiscal year.
3. The transaction of any other necessary business (new construction, new ministry opportunities, etc.).

The Chief Officer (or his designate appointed by the Elders Council by Resolution) shall act as chair of all Ministry Partner meetings.

ARTICLE VIII: CHURCH GOVERNMENT

TWO CHURCH OFFICES

The two key biblical texts on church offices are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9. Three terms are used for offices of the church: bishop, elder, and deacon. However, a careful analysis of these terms reveals that bishop and elder refer to the same office, with "bishop" emphasizing the aspect of a ruling or leading elder.

The Pastors of the church have the spiritual authority of the Elders. However, apart from the Senior Pastor, they will serve on the board only as needed and at the request of the Elders Council.

ELDERS COUNCIL

DEFINITION OF THE ELDERS COUNCIL

The administrative affairs, temporal affairs and spiritual oversight of the Church shall be the responsibility of the Elders Council of no fewer than 3 Ministry Partners as determined by the



Elders Council and announced to the Ministry Partnership. The Elders Council shall be deemed to be the Directors of the Corporation.

SELECTION

When the need arises for additional Elders, a nominee will be recommended by the existing Elders Council. In keeping with clear biblical guidelines regarding authority structures of the Church, only men will be considered for the office of Elder. The nominee must complete the Elder Application, followed by an in-depth interview to determine if the nominee is biblically qualified. The congregation will then be notified of the nomination by church bulletin, email, or an announcement at a worship service three weeks prior to the date of appointment. If greater than one-fifth of the Ministry Partnership give written expression of concerns to the Elders Council, the person's qualifications will be reviewed again, and a consensus decision will be made on the suitability of the nominee. If one-fifth of the Ministry Partnership do not express concern, then the Elder nominee shall commence his duties as a member of the Elders Council on the date of his appointment.

QUALIFICATIONS

Biblical qualifications for elders are clearly defined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9:

- Above reproach
- Able to teach
- Husband to one wife
- Not addicted to wine
- Temperate
- Not antagonistic
- Prudent
- Uncontentious
- Respectable
- Free from the love of money
- Hospitable
- Manage own household
- Not a new convert

Therefore, practical qualifications include:

- Male over the age of twenty-one years old
- Actively involved within the Church
- Fulfills spiritual qualifications listed above
- Is in full agreement with the Church constitution (by-laws)
- Recognizes the duties of an elder primarily to be servant-leadership through preaching and teaching Scripture, providing comprehensive oversight to the Church, guarding against error



Recognizes the duties of an elder to include active involvement and leadership in ministries of the Church as needed

Is not an undischarged bankrupt

TERM

Scripture does not indicate fixed terms for Elders, so no fixed term of office is recommended. However, each elder shall be asked for a three-year commitment. This commitment will be reviewed at the end of the three years, along with a possible recommitment and reaffirmation by fellow Elders.

During this review, both the individual and the other Elders shall evaluate his continued service as an elder, considering the biblical qualifications, as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. Service as an elder may be discontinued by his own decision or by a consensus decision of the other Elders.

A person leaving the Elders Council may be considered again for future service, subject to the regular selection process.

DUTIES

The Scriptures are clear that the elder's responsibility is the spiritual oversight of the congregation. The Elders Council shall be responsible for the overall spiritual, doctrinal, organizational, and financial affairs of the Church. It is their responsibility to make or cause to be made for the Church, in its name, any kind of contract which the Church may lawfully enter.

The Elders Council shall be authorized to carry out the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Ensuring that the doctrine of the Church remains purely biblical; all doctrinal issues in the church will be settled by the Elders Council.
2. Ensuring that the direction of the Church remains consistent with our Mission Statement and the four pillars as outlined in the Constitution.
3. Administering in love and humility the biblical process of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20 and Galatians 6:1-4.
4. Supporting the Senior Pastor and Staff Pastors who also fulfill the office of elder as defined in Scripture, in respecting their authority and assisting in implementing such ministries as are determined appropriate in mutual support of such spiritual leadership.
5. Ensuring that all employed personnel of the Church are accountable to the Lead Pastor and are followers of the Christian faith, confessing Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and are in full agreement with and subject to the authority of the Church pursuant to the Constitution.
6. Taking steps as necessary to enable the Church to acquire, accept, or receive legacies, gifts, grants, settlements, bequests, endowments, and donations of any kind whatsoever for the purpose of furthering the objects of the Church.



7. Appointing agents and hiring Church staff as needed.
8. Establishing other offices and/or agencies elsewhere, either nationally or internationally, as required on behalf of the Church.
9. Developing, amending, and overseeing the budgets and funds of the Church on behalf of the Church.

STRUCTURE

All Elders will have equal authority and responsibility. The Senior Pastor will work in cooperation with the Elders Council Chief Officer to ensure healthy ministry development and strong accountability. Agenda items for Elders Council meetings shall be submitted to the Chief Officer prior to the meeting. An Elders Council meeting may not be held without most of the Elders present and all the Elders informed. The Chief Officer will be selected by consensus decision of the Elders Council with no fixed term. The Chief Officer may not be one of the pastors. The Elders Council will consist of the Chief Officer, the Senior Pastor, the Church Secretary, the Church Treasurer, and additional Elders, who will assume responsibility as agreeable and necessary.

DECISION BY CONSENSUS

The Book of Acts reveals that the authority for the direction of the affairs of the church was vested in the Elders. The Elders are responsible to be sensitive to the leadings of the Holy Spirit and to discern on behalf of the congregation the Holy Spirit's direction.

It is the responsibility of the Elders to discern direction of the Holy Spirit through the truth of Scripture, prayer, and understanding of the pertinent issues at hand. Input from Ministry Partners may be required in specific situations, however, the decision-making process is firmly in the authority of the Elders Council.

RESIGNATION

If the personal circumstances of any Elder make it difficult to devote the necessary time or energy to the responsibilities of leadership, then that Elder shall be free to resign from the Elders Council without embarrassment or stigma.

If an Elder chooses to resign, then they must give 30 days written notice to the Senior Pastor, who in turn will notify the Elders Council. The written notice must explain the reasons for the Elder's departure.

VACANCY IN THE ELDERS COUNCIL

The position of an Elder shall be automatically vacated if any of the following situations occur:

1. He resigns.
2. He no longer fulfills all the qualifications of an Elder as described in the Constitution.
3. He is found to be mentally incompetent or of unsound mind.
4. He ceases to be a Ministry Partner.



5. He has evidenced unethical or immoral behavior that is unbecoming of a Christian contrary to Biblical principles, or is no longer willing to either comply with, adhere to, or submit to the scriptural authority and procedures set out in the Constitution.
6. He is determined by a Resolution of the Elders Council to be unsuitable as a Harvest Bible Church Elder for any reason.
7. He dies.

PASTORS

SELECTION

All members of the pastoral staff will be chosen by the Elders Council. The Senior Pastor will automatically be a member of the Elders Council.

QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications are equivalent to the biblical qualifications of an Elder.

TERM

All pastoral staff members will serve for an indefinite period. The Senior Pastor is responsible and accountable in the performance of his duties to the Elders Council. All other staff members are responsible to the Elders Council through the Senior Pastor. A staff member may only be dismissed by a consensus decision of the Elders Council.

DUTIES

SENIOR PASTOR

The responsibilities of the Senior Pastor will be the following:

1. Faithfully preaching God's Word and modelling the priority of discipleship within the Church.
2. Providing spiritual leadership to the Church and working in conjunction with the Elders in implementing spiritual leadership.
3. Working with the Elders Council in formulating and recommending Policy Statements for the Church as necessary.
4. Hiring and providing oversight and direction to all ministry staff.
5. Fulfilling the qualifications of an Elder and ensuring his lifestyle does not evidence unethical or immoral conduct that is unbecoming of a Christian and contrary to biblical principles.
6. Submitting to and upholding the Constitution.

OTHER PASTORAL ROLES

If the Elders Council determines it necessary, other pastoral roles shall be created and filled for the purpose of fulfilling ministries the Elders Council determines a worthy endeavor. Each of these pastoral roles will be clearly defined by the Elders Council.



CALLING OF A SENIOR PASTOR

When a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor occurs, the Elders Council shall compose a Pastoral Search Team and may appoint at their discretion others to this team as well.

No Staff Member or Ministry Partner of the Church shall be given preferential treatment based on position or connections within the Church. The role of Senior Pastor is a solemn calling that must be navigated methodically under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Pastoral Search Team shall be responsible to recommend to the Elders Council the calling of a Senior Pastor.

In the interim, a temporary preaching team should be formed to carry the responsibility of leading the congregation in faithful, unapologetic preaching until a permanent Senior Pastor is found.

ADDITIONAL PASTORAL/MINISTRY STAFF

Ministry descriptions of the remaining pastoral staff will be established by the Elders Council in keeping with the giftedness of the individual and agreed upon at the time of hiring.

When a vacancy occurs or the need for additional staff is recognized, the Elders Council and Senior Pastor will form a Search Team to seek an individual with the required giftedness for the necessary role.

DEACONS

The office of deacon is one that exists biblically to give leadership to the serving functions of the church (Acts 6). The qualifications for deacons are the same as elder in character, but different in aptitude. Elders are to be “apt to teach” while the deacons are to be “able and proved as servants”. Both qualified men and women may serve as deacons.

Staff deacons and deaconesses are commonly called Directors, and lay deacons and deaconesses are called Team Leaders.

SELECTION

Then the need arises for additional deacons, a person will be recommended by a staff person or ministry director, interviewed, and appointed to service.

QUALIFICATIONS

Biblical qualifications for elders are clearly defined in 1 Timothy 3:8-12:

- Individual of dignity
- Above reproach
- Not double tongued
- First tested as servants
- Not addicted to wine



Spouses must be faithful
Dignified
Temperate
Not fond of sordid gain
Holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience
Husband of one wife
Manages household well

TERM

Scripture indicates no fixed term for deacons, therefore no specific limit of office is recommended. Instead, each deacon, upon appointment, shall be asked for a three-year commitment and reaffirmation by their supervisor. An individual's service as a deacon may be discontinued by his own decision or by the decision of their supervisor.

DUTIES

Deacons will be responsible for ministry and team leadership under the authority of the Elders Council and Pastors of the Church.

STRUCTURE

Deacons will be devoted to the service of their respective ministries and not to a Board of Deacons. Such a Board will not exist at Harvest Bible Church. Deacons will be accountable to their direct supervisors and the Elders Council.

CHURCH CLERK

This position belongs in the category of either an Elder or Deacon and, therefore, will require the qualifications stated above.

The duties of the Church Clerk shall be as follows:

1. Note and record all business of Ministry Partnership Meetings.
2. Conduct correspondence on behalf of the Church arising out of such meetings.
3. Publish the time and place for all Ministry Partnership Meetings with due notice in accordance with procedures set out in the Constitution.
4. Keep and organize all papers and documents of the Church and keep all such records on the church premises or in a secure location agreed upon by the Elders Council.
5. Carry out other duties as directed occasionally by the Elders Council.

In the absence of the Church Clerk, these duties shall be performed by a Ministry Partner at the direction of the Elders Council.

CHURCH TREASURER



This position belongs in the category of either an Elder or Deacon and, therefore, will require the qualifications stated above.

The duties of the Church Treasurer shall be as follows:

1. Responsible for distribution of monies on behalf of the Church.
2. Ensure an accurate check record is kept.
3. Issue and sign checks on behalf of the Church.
4. Ensure payroll records are maintained and provide for remitting and reporting of taxes and contributions as required by law.
5. Ensure accounts payable records are maintained.
6. Ensure all accounts and authorized expenses are paid by check whenever practical and possible.
7. Invest funds belonging to the Church as directed by the Elders Council.
8. Responsible for the collection of monies received by the Church.
9. Ensure monies received by the Church are deposited into the proper bank accounts.
10. Ensure an account of all monies received by the Church and an accurate account of all assets, liabilities, receipts, and disbursements of the Church is kept according to accredited bookkeeping practices and the direction of the Elders Council. This will include the following:
 - a. Church income and receipts
 - b. Church fund disbursements
 - c. Preparation of monthly bank reconciliations
 - d. Preparation of quarterly financial statements
11. Ensure an accurate record of all contributions to the ministry fund and any other fund of the Church as may exist for specific needs.
12. Ensure no Officer receives any remuneration from the Church unless such monies are for purposes of reimbursement of legitimate expenses incurred on behalf of the church.
13. File financial reports as governments may require.
14. Carry out other duties as directed by the Elders Council.

In the absence of the Church Treasurer, these duties will be performed by a Ministry Partner as directed by the Elders Council.

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

We affirm the significant and God-ordained role that women are to play in the establishment and leadership of the local church. We believe that every opportunity of leadership is open to women except those that are excluded by Scripture. We do not feel any pressure to re-examine the clear biblical teaching on the exclusion of women from the office of elder simply because the unregenerate world is clamoring for the church to do so. We stand with the 2,000 year-old historical consensus on the teaching of Scripture that women are not to be placed in positions



within the church where they would exercise authority over the male leadership or where they would teach doctrine to the adult members of the congregation. We do not see this as an issue of equality, for men and women are equal under God in every way. We see this as an issue of sameness. Men and women are not the same. The Bible makes that very clear. Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different in function and responsibility yet equal, so it is with the relationship between men and women. While we reject the movement within Christianity to see men and women as the same, we do stand against the other extreme, which de-emphasizes the significant leadership role of women in the church. We want to see female leadership when qualified candidates are available, in any leadership position other than elder.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution will be made as needed by the Elders Council.

ARTICLE X: DISSOLUTION

In the case of dissolution of Harvest Bible Church Paris, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities, all assets of Harvest Bible Church Paris shall be distributed to one or more religious nonprofit organizations that are qualified as exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, as determined by the Elders Council.

If the Elders Council fails to designate such organizations, the assets shall be distributed by a court of competent jurisdiction in the county where the principal office of Harvest Bible Church Paris is located, exclusively for religious, charitable, or other 501(c)(3) exempt purposes.



REVISION NOTES

1. Original document created May 2022 by A. Robertson
2. Revision 1 - created Aug. 31, 2022 by A. Robertson
 - a. Added article #'s to final 4 sections
 - b. Edited Article V
 - c. Added revision notes
3. Revision 2 – created Sept. 13, 2024 by A. Robertson
 - a. Added section regarding “dissolution”