

**The Constitution and Bylaws of the  
INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH**

**Jurbise, Belgium**

**Preamble**

We, the members of International Baptist Church, Jurbise, Belgium, do solemnly and prayerfully declare and establish this constitution, recognizing the Lordship of Jesus Christ over this church, covenanting together to be governed in an orderly manner, respecting individual liberties, vesting the government solely in the body of its members, and voluntarily uniting with the European Baptist Convention and cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention, USA.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of this body is to glorify God in everything we do; to provide regular opportunities for public worship; to sustain the ordinances, doctrines, and ethics of the Baptist faith as set for in the New Testament for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ; to disciple its members through a program of Christian education and ministries; to channel its tithes and offerings to the support of the Kingdom work through the European Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention, USA; and to preach and propagate among all people the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord as revealed through the Word of God. To this end, we aim to Glorify God, Edify and Build up the Body of Christ, and to Reach the Lost with Good News of Jesus Christ.

**Church Covenant**

Believing we were led by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in the presence of God and this assembly, we earnestly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

Therefore, we commit ourselves, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to grow in the knowledge of the will of God; to pursue holiness, and to practice discipleship; to sustain the worship, ordinances, and doctrines of the Baptist faith; to contribute cheerfully and regularly through offerings, tithes, and talents to the support of the local ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through all nations.

We also pledge to establish and maintain family and personal devotions; to teach our children from God's Word; to seek the salvation of our relatives and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our promises and exemplary in our conduct; to refrain from any act or habit that might detract from our Christian witness or become a stumbling block to others or hinder our relationship to God; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further pledge to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer to aid each other in sickness and distress; to live in harmony with one another; to be

slow to take offense; but always ready for reconciliation, mindful of the Biblical instructions of our Savior in order to bring about reconciliation without delay. When we move from this place we commit ourselves to unite with another church of like faith and message, as led by the Holy Spirit, as soon as possible.

### **Statement of Faith**

We believe the Bible has God for its author, salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. We believe mankind is separated from God because of its conscious and deliberate sin and rebellion and the only hope for reconciliation is by grace, through faith, in the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the cross. We affirm the 2000 statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as our doctrinal guideline.

### **Bylaws**

#### **Article 1: Membership**

**Section 1.** The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who publicly confess Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and hold convictions in harmony with the faith, doctrine, and practice of this church.

**Section 2.** Full Membership is granted by the church in the Worship Service at which the person(s) present themselves by meeting one of the following conditions and by the affirmative voice vote of the members present.

- A. Profession of faith in Jesus Christ followed by baptism by immersion.
- B. Statement of faith in Jesus Christ and a promise of letter of transfer from another Baptist church of like faith and order. If an unfavorable letter of transfer is received, the original vote of acceptance becomes invalid and a vote of readmission will be held after examination of the individual by the Pastor and/or deacons.
- C. Statement of faith in Jesus Christ and statement of baptism by immersion.
- D. Declaration of faith in Jesus Christ and baptism by immersion in a church of similar faith and doctrine, which is acceptable to this church and statement of desire to become a Baptist in accordance with the 2000 statement of The Baptist Faith and Message.

**Section 3.** Associate membership is granted to those person(s) other than those seeking full membership who exhibit a spiritual kinship to our people and wish to participate with our church in Christian worship and service. Associate members are voted for in the same manner as full members in Section 2 above. Associate membership incorporated the following requirements and guidelines:

- A. Associate members must meet all the requirements of Section 1 of Article 1 and be willing to assume the responsibilities outlined for all members in this Constitution and Bylaws.

Associate members, who agree to teach the Bible according to the church's statement of faith, may be allowed to serve as teachers if interviewed and approved by the Pastor and/or

deacons. They may also serve on Ministry Teams whose purposes do not involve doctrinal issues, constitutional issues, church policy, or the call of a pastor or staff member.

- B. Associate members may not serve as church officers, called staff ministers, church elected messengers, church elected organizational leaders, or any office requiring ordination.
- C. Associate members can vote in the election of deacons, and on all matters of church business except those involving doctrinal position, church policy, constitutional revisions, or the call of a pastor or staff member.
- D. Associate membership ends when the member moves from the IBC area or requests to be dropped from the church roll.

**Section 4. Responsibilities of members:** All members shall be expected to practice Godly stewardship by contributing time, talents, and material possessions for the spiritual discipline of themselves and others in this church and for the advancement of Christ's work in the community and the world.

**Section 5. Transfer of Full Membership:** Membership in this church will be transferred on request of letter from another Baptist church and by majority vote of the church in business meeting.

**Section 6. Termination and Restoration of Membership:**

- A. Membership may be terminated if a member becomes an offense to Christ and to this church. Upon recommendation of the Pastor and deacons to the church, membership may be terminated for scriptural cause only after due notices and hearings, and after faithful efforts for reconciliation guided by the principles set forth in the Bible, specifically Matthew 18; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24; and 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15, have been prayerfully used to bring such members to repentance and restitution.
- B. Dismissal action must first be considered by the deacon body then presented by the deacon body for discussion and a vote at a business meeting. Dismissal is effective upon two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present.
- C. The church can vote no earlier than two weeks after notification of such action has been delivered to the member in question.
- D. Any person whose membership has been terminated in accordance with these guidelines may be restored by as majority vote of the church upon evidence of repentance and reformation.
- E. Any member's request for termination of membership must be referred to the deacon body. This request will be presented by the deacon body to the church and will be voted upon at a regular business meeting.

**Section 7.** All members of this church will receive a copy of this Constitution and Bylaws, and a copy of the 2000 statement of The Baptist Faith and Message upon membership into this body of Christ and/or when this Constitution and Bylaws are revised, so that they may know and understand the responsibilities that they have assumed.

**Article 2. The Pastor.**

**Section 1. Duties.** In accordance with the New Testament, the Pastor is to be the under-shepherd of the local church (Ephesians 4:8-12 and 1 Peter 5:1-4). His duties will include but not be limited to the following:

- A. The Pastor shall have in his charge the welfare and oversight of the church.
- B. The Pastor is responsible for the pulpit and pastoral ministries of the church, the leadership and conduct of the services, and administration of the ordinance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- C. The Pastor will work with the deacons in providing spiritual and physical care of each member. This cooperation includes arranging pulpit supply, obtaining revival leadership, and supervising special activities.
- D. The Pastor will preside at all business meetings except as otherwise provided for in the Bylaws.
- E. The Pastor is an ex-officio member of all Ministry Teams and organizations to provide guidance and unity for the overall church program.
- F. The Pastor will oversee the use of the church facilities.
- G. The Pastor will supervise all staff, both paid and volunteer.
- H. Dismissal actions of non-elected or called staffed members will be handled by the Pastor in consultation with the deacon body.
- I. The Pastor shall oversee any mission points established by IBC.

**Section 2. Qualifications.** The pastor or pastor candidate, must possess the attributes identified in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9, and be an ordained Southern Baptist Minister. The pastor or pastor candidate must be a man of highest moral and spiritual belief and principles, capable of functioning in a culturally unique environment, and possess the ability to relate and minister to Christians of diverse backgrounds.

**Section 3. Call.** The church shall elect a pastor search committee consisting of seven (7) full members. The committee members will earnestly pray and seek God's guidance in searching for a pastor who meets the aforementioned qualifications. The committee shall elect a chairperson who will bring regular reports of the committees work to the church body. If a committee member is unable to fulfill their position on the committee due to moving or any other reason, the church body will elect a replacement.

All recommendations for the position of pastor are to be given to the pastor search committee. These recommendations may come from (1) within the church body, (2) friends or former members, and (3) the EBC office which keeps a file of candidates list of eligible and willing candidates interested in pastoring English language churches in Europe.

- A. Calling a pastor independently or through the assistance of the EBC.
  - 1. The committee will follow the Procurement guidelines located in the Annual EBC Minutes.
  - 2. The committee shall recommend to the church that a candidate, being considered in view of a call, be brought to Belgium for a personal interview, and to deliver a sermon from the pulpit. The church will be responsible for all expenses of such request. Before any

such request is sought, taped sermons and/or video taped sermons should have been made available to the committee.

3. The committee shall bring before the church only one name for consideration by the church in view of a call. The committee's recommendation will constitute a nomination and does not require a second. Only the pastor search committee shall make nominations.

4. The committee shall hold a special business meeting to vote by secret ballot on the nominee. A quorum consisting of two-thirds (2/3) of the full members must be present to vote on the call of a pastor. A call will be extended upon an affirmative vote of 70% of the ballots cast. If the nominee should fail to receive the affirmative vote, the committee will be instructed to seek out another candidate. After the vote, the meeting shall be adjourned without debate.

**Section 4. Time of Service.** The pastor shall serve a minimum of three years after his call, or for a longer period if agreed to by the pastor and voted upon by the church. Nine months prior to the end of the contract period, the pastor and church shall collectively decide whether to continue or terminate their relationship. If the relationship is continued, the pastor shall not be under any time-constrained contract. If called by the Lord to serve elsewhere, the pastor will provide the church with as much advance notice as possible.

**Section 5. Dismissal.** The dismissal of the pastor is a very serious action and importance. Should the pastor be accused of unchristian conduct, immorality, or a breach of pastoral responsibilities, a council equivalent to that formed for minister ordination must be called to review the situation and hear all evidence. After the hearing, the council will advise the church as to the proper course of action. Dismissal of the pastor shall require a meeting called for the sole purpose of addressing such action. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Dismissal action will require an affirmative vote of 70% of two-thirds of the full members. If dismissed, the pastor shall be given three months salary and benefits and immediately relieved of his pastoral duties.

### **Article 3. The Deacon Body**

In accordance with Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-12, deacons are the servants of the church. The desired size of the deacon body shall be one active deacon for ten church family units (family or individual members).

**Section 1. Qualifications.** Deacons shall be men of highest spiritual and moral qualities as presented in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-12 and who are concerned and prayerful about the Kingdom of God and the church. Nominees for office of deacon shall be (1) a full member of IBC for a minimum of three months, (2) a minimum of 21 years of age, and (3) willing to discuss their eligibility and their calling to serve the IBC church with other active deacons and the pastor.

**Section 2. Nomination and Election.** The church membership has the spiritual responsibility to select men for the office of deacon in accordance with Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3, and this Constitution and Bylaws.

**A. Nomination.**

1. The deacon body will determine the number of deacons required in accordance with the desired representation above and seek church approval during a regular business meeting.
2. An announcement that nominations for the office of deacon are open will be made from the pulpit and published in the church bulletin a

Each of the candidates on the list will be asked to give a public testimony during a regular Sunday

3. Nomination forms will be distributed two successive weeks and collected by the deacons to be tabulated on completion of the nomination period.
4. Church members (full and associate) may nominate the total number of men from the list of potential candidates equal to the number approved by the church.
5. Each nominee must receive 10% of ballots cast to be considered eligible for election to the office of deacon.

**B. Election.**

Upon completion of the previous proceedings to nominate deacon candidates for election, the active deacons will tabulate the list of nominated candidates who received a minimum of 10% of the ballots cast and meet with each of them to hear their testimony and ascertain their eligibility and willingness to serve as a deacon. The active deacons and the pastor will then finalize the worship service prior to the election.

1. Church members will vote by using prepared written forms containing the list of candidates, and may only vote for one candidate per deacon vacancy, not to exceed one vote per eligible candidate.
2. The dates for the election will be announce from the pulpit and in the church bulletin one week prior to the election.
3. The voting period will be two successive Sundays following the election announcement. To be elected to the office of deacon, the candidates mush receive a majority vote based on the total ballots received.
4. The Chairman of the deacon body will inform the candidates of the election results. He will also present the list of elected deacons to the church membership during a Sunday morning worship service.

**C. Ordination.** Men who are elected as deacons who are not already ordained will be ordained by the church during a scheduled worship service prior to the commencement of their service as deacons.

**D. Duties.** As servants of the church body, deacons are called to serve alongside of and uplift the pastor in fulfilling his pastoral ministry, spiritual welfare, and evangelistic responsibilities in the church. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Preserve the unity of Spirit within the church.
2. Actively support the deacon family ministry program.
3. Assist the pastor in the conduct of the church services and in ministering the church ordinances.
4. Engage in soul winning activities of the church.
5. Support church visitation programs for prospective and new members, inactive members, and sick or distressed members.
6. Advise and counsel the pastor in matters of church discipline, restoration and reconciliation.
7. Administer deacon lead spiritual growth programs.
8. Conduct deacon led prayer periods.
9. Administer the church benevolence fund for emergency relief of the needy in the church and community.
10. Specific duties will be annotated in a deacon continuity file, given to each active deacon.

E. **Deacon Body.** The deacon body consists of active deacons. The active deacons will elect a Chairman and results of the election will be presented to the church body during a regularly scheduled business meeting. For emergency purposes, the Chairman of the deacons may be a signee on the church account and may be authorized by the church to transact church financial business at the specific direction of the church.

F. **Deacon Family Ministry Program.** The deacon body will develop and conduct a family ministry program. They will ensure that each church member family unit is assigned a deacon to provide a forum to share and pray for intimate concerns of family members in a loving and confidential atmosphere.

G. **Meetings.** Deacons will meet monthly and as called by the Chairman. Minutes, if prepared, will be filed in the church office.

**Article 4. Church Officers.** All church officers must be full members of IBC. Church officers are nominated and voted upon by the church body during a scheduled business meeting. All church officers will serve until they can no longer fulfill the requirements of their position.

**Section 1. Clerk.** The church shall elect a church clerk whose duties include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Keep a record of the proceedings of all church business meetings. These will be read and approved at the next respective meeting and preserved on file in the church office.
- B. Determine that a quorum is present prior to the start of each business meeting.
- C. Maintain a record of the membership in a roll book provided by the church to include a record of baptisms.

- D. Request church letters of recommendation for new members and issue appropriate letters of recommendation as directed by the church body.
- E. Prepare the annual letter to the EBC.
- F. Ensure that timely and official notices of all church business meetings are given.
- G. In the absence of the clerk at a business meeting, the moderator (as determined elsewhere in the Bylaws) will appoint a full member to record the minutes of the meeting.

**Section 2. Treasurer.** The church shall elect a treasurer and an associate treasurer. The treasurer and the associate treasurer shall be the only members of the church authorized to handle any transactions involving church funds. Any allocation of church funds shall require the approval of two persons (Pastor, treasurer, and Ministry Team leaders are designated as appropriate approval authorities). The treasurer shall pay all bills according to operating instructions from the church council. The treasurer shall make monthly and yearly reports to the church council. In the absence of the treasurer, the associate treasurer shall assume the treasurer's duties. All financial instruments and records of the church shall be available for audit at the direction of the pastor or the church body. The treasurer should tender their resignation three months prior to departing Belgium.

**Article 5. Ministry Teams.** Ministry teams are established to fully incorporate and assimilate new members into the ministry of the church and to provide an organized method of growing the Kingdom of God. They shall consist of Administration, Worship, Education, Outreach/Missions, Fellowship, Youth, and Properties. Ministry teams should meet on a monthly basis or as determined by current events. Each team will develop and submit an annual budget sufficient to effectively perform its ministry. Team budgets will be submitted in sufficient time to enable the Church Council to develop the church-wide budget by Nov 15. Leaders of each team shall be full members and be nominated and elected by the church body during a regularly scheduled business meeting. They will serve until they can no longer fulfill the requirements of their position.

**Section 1. Administration.** The Administration team's responsibilities include, but are not limited to: preparing written correspondence on church activities (newsletters, bulletins), procuring and maintaining supplies for the church office, and providing oversight of the media library. This team will also recruit, interview, and recommend prospective employees, in cooperation with the pastor, and place the new employees on the job following official action by the church, when required. Additionally, the team will recommend policies to the church concerning personnel services, monetary compensation and benefits.

**Section 2. Worship.** The Worship Team is responsible for all aspects of providing worshipful music for all services, and shall have general oversight and direction of all the music programs, instruments, and the sound system.

- A. Weekly bulletin production is the responsibility of the Worship Team.
- B. This team also handles usher services and will appoint an usher coordinator; usher services include greeting people as they arrive,

seating latecomers quickly and quietly, distributing bulletins and visitor packets, and receiving the tithes and offerings.

- C. This team is responsible for the general appearance and comfort of the sanctuary to include flowers if needed, and will coordinate with the Deacon of the Week for heating and cooling of the sanctuary and filling the baptistery for baptisms as needed.
- D. The leader of this team shall serve as the music director and is directly responsible for all musicians & praise teams. The Worship Team leader is also responsible for the church choir and oversees all other choirs.

**Section 3. Education.** The Education Team is responsible for all areas of discipleship and education of church members. This includes, but is not limited to: children's ministries (including AWANA), Sunday School, adult discipleship training, and men/women's ministries. This team will plan, coordinate, and execute various educational programs and arrange for leadership training classes.

**Section 4. Outreach/Missions.** The Outreach/Missions Team is charged with the responsibility of training individuals and/or groups in witnessing and discipleship. Additionally, the team will plan, execute and evaluate local and regional missions activities to involve the church body in reaching the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The team leader will be the central point of contact for liasoning with outside mission agencies and will coordinate the activities of partnership churches. The team leader, in conjunction with the Education team, will also maintain a current church prospect file for reaching the unsaved, the unchurched, and church visitors.

**Section 5. Fellowship.** The Fellowship Team is responsible for planning and conducting events that deepen the sense of biblical community within the church body. This team arranges and supervises all aspects of church-wide social functions. Additionally, they will also make arrangements for all other social functions in which the church participates. They are responsible for acquiring kitchen supplies and maintaining the kitchen equipment.

**Section 6. Youth.** The Youth Team shall consist of, as a minimum, the team leader, parent representatives of youth group members, and at least two youth representatives. This team should plan, execute, and evaluate youth ministries, including outreach, Bible study, discipleship, fellowships, outings, and meetings with other Christian Youth Groups. Sunday School and discipleship material is a responsibility of the team leader.

**Section 7. Properties.** The Properties Team is responsible for the care, maintenance, furnishings, and equipment of the buildings and property. This team will also control the scheduling and maintenance of church vehicles. The Properties team shall develop a rolling plan to ensure church furnishings and equipment are updated. New construction of church buildings may be delegated to this team at the direction of the church body.

**Article 6. Church Council.** The church council is composed of the pastor, treasurer, chairman of deacons, church clerk, and the leader of each ministry team. The church council may invite others to participate in the meetings in a non-voting status. The tasks of the church council are to:

- A. Help the church understand its mission and define its priorities.
- B. Coordinate studies of church and community needs.
- C. Recommend to the church coordinated plans for evangelism, missions, Christian development, worship, stewardship, and various church ministries.
- D. Coordinate the church's schedule of activities, special events, and use of the facilities.
- E. Develop a proposed budget with the ministry teams for the upcoming financial year no later than 15 November.
- F. Ensure all obligations and expenditures of church funds are in accordance with the church approved budget. The church must approve any reallocation of budgeted funds.
- G. The church council shall initiate all recommendations concerning the calling, extending, or dismissal of called staff members.

**Article 7. Church and Financial Year.** The church and financial year shall run from 1 January through 31 December.

## **Article 8. Meetings.**

### **Section 1. For Worship.**

- A. Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day and on some regular evenings of the week, or as determined by the church.
- B. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated at least once a quarter.
- C. Baptismal services will be observed as required.

### **Section 2. For Business.**

- A. The pastor shall serve as moderator for all business meetings of the church. In the event of his absence, the chairman of deacons shall serve as moderator. In the event of his absence, the church clerk will serve as moderator pro-tem.
- B. The regular business of the church shall be transacted during a scheduled business meeting on a bi-monthly basis. Business shall be conducted only if a quorum is present. A quorum shall be  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the membership, or a minimum of 25 members, whichever is less.
- C. All church business shall be determined by a simple majority vote, unless otherwise directed by this Constitution and Bylaws.
- D. Obligating church funds not in the current budget, except for emergency maintenance or repairs, requires a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of attending members.
- E. Calling, extending, or dismissing called staff members requires a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of attending full members.

- F. Special business meetings of the church are to be called by announcement of such meetings during the preceding regular church service.
- G. *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be used as a *guide* in conducting business meetings.

**Article 9. Private Organization Status.**

**Section 1.** At least 51% of the membership must possess a valid US Department of Defense Identification card to maintain private organization status. If the membership falls below this level, this Article shall become null and void, and private organization status may be revoked.

**Section 2.** The IBC will not engage in activities that compete with those of any appropriated fund (APF) or non-appropriated fund (NAF) activity.

**Section 3.** Approval authority for private organization status is Commander, 80<sup>th</sup> ASG, Chievres, Belgium, APO AE 09708.

**Section 4.** The membership of IBC shall be liable to all creditors if assets of the IBC are insufficient to discharge liabilities.

**Section 5.** This organization is established according to AR 210-1 and USAREUR Regulation 210-1.

**Article 10. Amending this Constitution and Bylaws.** This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended under the following conditions:

- A. The proposed change shall be presented at a business meeting in writing and must receive a favorable interest vote from the majority present.
- B. The proposed published change must be made available to the church members at least two Sundays preceding the vote.
- C. The change must receive a majority vote by a quorum consisting of two-thirds (2/3) of the full members.
- D. Vote will be by secret ballot.

Adopted by the International Baptist Church of Jurbise, Belgium at the business meeting of 23 August 2009.

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Reverend Al Weeks  
Senior Pastor

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Mr. Srikant Mantravadi  
Deacon