



MAKING
DISCIPLES
OF ALL
NATIONS
Matthew 28:19

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

July 2016

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**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF
TRINITY BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL CHURCH
LEIDSCHENDAM, THE NETHERLANDS**

PREAMBLE

We the members of Trinity Baptist International Church (also known as Trinity International Church) declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member, and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

NAME

This body shall be known as Trinity Baptist International Church. The body is domiciled in Leidschendam. The body is a Church corporate, and has corporate capacity in the sense of Article 2 of Book 2 of the Civil Code of the Netherlands, and is as such recognized according to Dutch law.

ORGANIZATION

Trinity Baptist International Church was organized to be an evangelical, Baptist church. This fundamental right of origination is inviolate and cannot be amended or altered.

The government of this church is vested in the body of members who compose it.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church.

This church is an independent body, and as such is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. However, it recognizes and sustains the concepts of mutual counsel and cooperation inherent in the International Baptist Convention (IBC).

TRINITY BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL CHURCH COVENANT

We are a fellowship of people who trust in Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord and God. We are committed to each other in love as a unified body of diverse people.

Our purposes are to celebrate in worship of our Lord, to proclaim the Gospel, to nurture and instruct believers, to encourage a vision for and support of missionary work in our community and around the world, and to promote Christian standards in the wider community.

MISSION STATEMENT

To bring glory to God by:

- Worshipping God together and individually (Romans 12:1, Hebrews 10:25)
- Equipping one another for growth towards Christian maturity and ministry (Colossians 1:28, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Loving and caring for one another (John 15:12, Acts 2:42)
- Proclaiming and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, beginning with our communities (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8)

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

In dependence upon God's wisdom and power, we are providing the greater Den Haag area with an English speaking international ministry that is inspiring the community to spiritual renewal.

The ministry is submitting itself completely to the lordship of Christ, requiring the active participation of every member, committing itself to being biblically focused, and is seeking to please God in everything that is done.

We are a church reaching a growing number of people, attracting those of every spiritual condition, bringing each person to spiritual maturity, and sending people world-wide to further God's kingdom.

CORE SPIRITUAL VALUES

Background

At Trinity, our Core Spiritual Values are those deeply held convictions that define who we are as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and they are intended to form and shape our attitudes and actions both as individuals and as a local church seeking to do the will of God where He has placed us.

Our Core Values give direction to our goal setting, decision making, problem solving and indeed influence all our actions and attitudes regarding our relationship to one another within the body of believers and to the secular community in which we find ourselves.

We affirm six Core Values which serve as a daily guide for our walk with Jesus Christ, namely;

Biblical Authority

Prayer

Worship

Caring Relationships

Discipleship

Evangelism

Biblical Authority

We value the Holy Bible as the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God and as the sole and final authority for faith and practice and for everything our church believes and does.

We treasure the central truth in scripture regarding the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to redeem us through the uniqueness of His death on the cross and resurrection and through whom we have the only way to be accepted by God the Father.

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit we preach and teach the Word of God and we proclaim and exalt Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We are guided by the witness of the Holy Bible in proclaiming that “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God’s people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Our members should be striving to live out God’s Word daily. Learning and living the Bible should be natural and normal to our church.

Prayer

We are committed to making prayer a central focus of our church. We value prayer as the primary work of God’s people and vital in our relationship with God. Powerful, persistent, passionate and prevailing prayer should precede and permeate every work of ministry we undertake for the sake of God’s kingdom. “Pray continually”, 1 Thessalonians 5:17

It is in the intimacy of our personal prayer life that God meets us at the core of our being and through the Holy Spirit guides us in the direction He wants us to go.

It is in our corporate prayer life that when we pray in harmony with others we discover how God uses and directs our prayers through the Holy Spirit for the advancement of His kingdom. As we pray together it binds us in love and in unity of purpose.

We acknowledge that we are called to pray for one another, for the advancement of the Gospel both in our local community and around the world and for the infilling of the Holy Spirit to empower us both as individuals and as a church to do the work of ministry.

Worship

We value the tradition of Christ-centered worship with the ultimate purpose to glorify God in all that we think, say and do. This is the core and true purpose and ultimate reason for which everything was made. The call is to worship in spirit and in truth.

We follow the biblical principle to meet together for worship. Times of worship may include music, singing, praying, Bible reading and preaching, celebrating communion and giving. Worship also overflows into our everyday lives including fellowship with other believers and contacts with the world. Just as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us so we seek to honor Him by extending love to all those around us and serving them through prayer, teaching and acts of kindness, not expecting anything in return.

“Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only”, Luke 4:8

Worship is one way to express our love, gratitude and honor for God particularly for what He has done for us in Christ Jesus. It is a dedication to the activity of worship, consumed with a desire to devote ourselves to *doing good* to all, *sharing* our blessings with all, and *praising God*, who is the source of all goodness and every blessing in Christ Jesus.

Caring Relationships

We value the community of the church based solely on our shared faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. As Christians we are more effective in living out our faith when we practice it as part of a community of believers as we love and serve each other and as we reach out to the world around us. Jesus said,

“May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent Me and have loved them, even as you have loved Me” John. 17:23.

Being a church that is made up of diverse nationalities, denominations, personalities and giftedness and knowing that we are one in Christ, we are encouraged by Romans 12: 9-18, to show brotherly love, rejoice with one another, show hospitality, prefer one another and to be at peace with each other.

Our diversity enriches our gathering together for worship and fellowship. Our serving together is enhanced as we share our individual experiences and giftedness. Through recognizing and combining each other's uniqueness we are helped towards becoming more effective in how we serve and care for each other and also in how we extend our Christian service to our neighbours.

Discipleship

We are committed to equipping, encouraging and growing believers as they practice their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We seek to bring each member to spiritual maturity through understanding what it means to be a follower of Jesus. We emphasize the nurturing function of the church whereby personal experience in faith is sustained and dynamic. All believers should be learning, growing and maturing as Christ lives His life through them.

The teaching of the Word and the mentoring and encouraging of one another is essential in us developing a deeper relationship in our individual walk with the Lord so that we may bear much fruit for Him. Every Christian should be growing in grace and the knowledge of Christ.

Evangelism

We strongly adhere to the Great Commission of Matt. 28: 19 through personal evangelism, community outreach and the sending out of well-equipped persons for service to the world. We live in the time between Jesus' ascension and His imminent return. This brings a sense of urgency to our task of proclaiming Christ *until* He comes! We are admonished to make the most of every opportunity and our individual lives should reflect the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Col 4: 4-6)

God in His providence has planted Trinity Church in this international community in The Hague. We want to live up to the expectations God has for our church and let everyone know who Jesus is. With single-minded passion we want to both know Jesus and make Him known wherever God has placed us, both as individuals and as a local church. Our passion is in how much we can grow the body of Christ in the world.

All Christians have the responsibility of sharing their faith. We encourage and help members to discover and use their own way of witnessing.

BASIC BELIEFS

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT OF FAITH REPRESENTS THOSE ESSENTIAL CHRISTIAN TRUTHS ADHERED TO BY MEMBERS OF TRINITY BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL CHURCH.

“We believe:

That there is one **God**, the creator and sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three equally divine persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;

That the Holy Bible is the **Word of God**, divinely inspired, inerrant, and the final authority for faith and practice;

In the deity of the Lord **Jesus Christ**, the incarnate Son of God; His virgin birth; His real and sinless humanity; His death on the cross, bodily resurrection, and ascension to God’s right hand;

That **humanity** was originally created in the image of God, but through willful disobedience became sinful. As a result, all have become separated from God because of sin. Reconciliation to a right relationship with God is unattainable by human means;

That the Lord Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world, a perfect substitutionary sacrifice, and the sole ground for **salvation** from sin’s penalty, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His atoning death and shed blood;

That the **Holy Spirit** convicts the world of sin, indwells all believers, and empowers them to live godly lives in fellowship with the Lord;

That all **believers** have been chosen by God, saved by grace through faith, and are baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, inheriting in Christ every spiritual blessing to live a godly life;

That all believers are fitted for the work of **proclaiming** to the world that Christ is Lord and Savior;

That the **church** is God’s present instrument to advance His kingdom, and that all believers are part of the church, together making up a royal priesthood;

In the **ordinances** of baptism and communion as the biblically prescribed means of visibly and publicly demonstrating our identification with Christ;

In the bodily and visible **return of the Lord** Jesus Christ, in the bodily resurrection of believers and unbelievers; of believers to eternal life in God’s glorious presence, and of unbelievers to separation from God in eternal judgment.

SCRIPTURAL JUSTIFICATION AND FURTHER DEFINITION OF TBIC STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. The Scriptures:

The Holy Bible, consisting of sixty-six books, Old and New Testaments, is God’s inspired Word, written by men moved by the Holy Spirit. The Bible is God’s revelation of Himself and His will, which in its original form was without error and is entirely trustworthy and supremely authoritative in all matters of faith and conduct.(Ps 19:7-9; 119:89; John 10:35; 17:17; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Pet 1:19-21)

II. God:

The Godhead

God is Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His nature. He is the creator and sustainer of all life. The Bible confirms that there is one God, who eternally exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Gen 1:1; Deut. 6:4; Isa 44:6; Ps 90:2; Matt 3:16-17; Acts 17:24-28; I Cor 8:4-6)

A - God the Father is:

- Among His attributes holy, righteous, and merciful (Lev 11:44; Ps 107; I Pet 1:15-16; I Jn 1:9)
- Omnipresent, yet dwells in Heaven (Ps 113:4-5; 139:7-12; Jer 23:24)
- He who sent the Son and Holy Spirit (John 5:37; 14:26)
- The Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed in Him (John 14:7-12; Col 1:15)
- The Father of all as their Creator, and in a special way the Father of all who believe (John 1:12-13; 20:17; Rom 8:15; I Cor 8:6)

B - God the Son - Jesus Christ:

- Is God (Isa 9:6; John 5:17-23; 10:30; Phil 2:6; Titus 2:13)
- Was preexistent in eternity past (John 1:1; 17:5)
- Was manifest in the flesh (John 1:14; Phil 2:5-8)
- Revealed the Father (John 1:18)
- Died for the redemption and justification of sinful mankind (Isa 53:5; John 1:29; Rom 5:8; I Jn 2:2)
- Was born of a virgin (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:20-25; Luke 1:34-35)
- Was tempted in all points as we are, yet lived a sinless life (Heb 4:14-15; I Pet 2:22)
- Died on a cross, a substitutionary death for all (Isa 53:6-12; Gal 3:13; Eph 1:7; I Pet 2:22-25)
- Was raised to life from the dead (John 20:19-29; I Cor 15:1-8)
- Ascended to heaven where He serves as advocate with the Father on the believers' behalf (Acts 1:9-11; Rom 8:34; Heb 4:14-16; 7:25; 1 Jn 2:1)
- Is head of the church (Eph 5:23; Col 1:18)
- Will personally return and reign over a new heaven and new earth, where every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Acts 1:10-11; Phil 2:9-11; Rev 20:4)

C - God the Holy Spirit:

- Proceeds from the Father and is sent by the Son (John 15:26)
- Bears witness to Jesus Christ (John 15:26; 16:13-14)
- Regenerates the unbelieving (John 3:5-6; Tit 3:5)
- Baptizes the believer (I Cor 12:13)
- Indwells the Christian (Rom 8:9; I Cor 6:19)
- Reveals and teaches truth (John 14:16-17; 16:13)
- Desires to fill the believer (Eph 5:18)
- Seals the believer as belonging to Christ (Eph 1:13; 4:30)
- Grieves over sin (Eph 4:30)
- Intercedes for us in prayer (Rom 8:26)
- Distributes spiritual gifts among the body of Christ as He wills (I Cor 12:7-11)
- Guides believers (Rom 8:14)
- Empowers the believer (Acts 1:8; Eph 3:16)

III. Humanity

- Was created by God in His own image and innocent of sin in order to be in fellowship with Him and bring glory to God (Gen 1:26-27; Eph. 1:4-6, 12; James 3:9)
- Is both material (body) and immaterial (soul and spirit) (Gen 2:7; Ecc. 12:7; I Thes. 5:23)
- Through Adam, was tempted by Satan, chose to disobey the command of God, fell from its original state of innocence, and brought death into the world (Gen 3:1-7; Rom 5:12; Eph 2:1)
- Inherited a flawed nature that prefers sin to righteousness and is at enmity with God (Ps 14:1-3; John 3:19; Rom 3:9-18)
- Through sin, causes the whole of creation to suffer (Gen 3:17; Rom 8:20-23)
- Is unable to remedy its lost condition by its own merits (Rom 3:19-24)

IV. Spirit Beings

- Are created by God, arranged in rank and order (Dan 12:1; Jude 9)
- Include angels who both serve at God's throne and minister to humanity (Isa 6:1-3; Zech 1:9-11; Heb 1:14)
- Include, as well, those who have fallen, Satan and his demons, who serve to thwart God's purposes (Gen 3:1-10; 2 Cor 4:3-4; I Pet 5:8-9; 2 Pet 2:4)

V. Salvation

- Is God's plan, before the foundation of the world, to rescue humanity from the effects of sin (Gen 12:3; Eph 1:4-6; I Pet 1:18-21)
- Is offered as a free gift, solely on the basis of Jesus' shed blood, death, and bodily resurrection (John 3:16; Rom 3:23-25; I Pet 1:3-5)
- Is received by personal repentance and faith in Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior (Acts 2:37-38; Eph 2:8)
- Results in a changed life for those who truly believe in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 5:22-25; I Pet 1:13-16)
- Will culminate in the believer being in the joyful presence of God in heaven (I Cor 15; Rev 21)

VI. The Church

- Is a body of believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel (Acts 2:41-47; Eph 3:6)
- Encompasses the redeemed throughout history who compose the universal Body of Christ, regardless of their race, sex, nationality, class, or denominational affiliation (Gal 3:26-28)
- Observes two ordinances of Christ, namely believer's baptism, and the Lord's Supper for all who believe (Acts 2:41-42; I Cor 11:23-26)
- Is committed to prayer and His teachings, and to the mutual love and encouragement of one another (Matt 28:20; Acts 2:42; Heb 10:24-25)
- Is the recipient of spiritual gifts, and is called for the purpose of building up the body of Christ (Rom 12:3-8; I Cor 12-14; Eph 4:8)
- Is commissioned to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor 5:19-20)
- Is called to submit to Jesus Christ as the Head of the church (Eph 1:22-23)
- Has as its Scriptural officers pastors, elders and deacons, whose principal function is to equip the body of royal priests to carry out the ministry of the church (Acts 20:17-28; Eph 4:11-12; I Tim 3; I Pet 2:9)
- Is called to submit to the ruling authorities of the land, without compromising Christ's commands (Matt 22:21; Rom 13:1-7)

VII. Last Things

- History is purposeful, headed towards a final consummation (Ecc 3:1-11; 2 Pet 3:5-13)
- There will be a second coming of the Lord Jesus, which will be visible, personal, and glorious (Matt 24:30)
- At His return, there will be a transformation of the living and a resurrection of the dead (I Cor 15:20-23; 2 Cor 5:1-5; I Thess 4:13-17)
- The believing, those who have accepted God's offer of salvation, will be judged for their works done as Christians, and the unbelieving, those who have rejected God's offer of salvation, will be judged and cast into eternal punishment (2 Cor 5:10; 15; Rev 20:11-15)
- The final state of the believer is in heaven, the end of the struggle against the flesh, the world, the devil, where one will worship and serve the King forever. (Rev 19-20)

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

General

This is a sovereign and democratic church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual life and organization of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Candidacy

All attendees may express interest in membership at Trinity by contacting the church office, pastor(s) or elders. Candidates will be informed of the conditions and responsibilities of membership, the essential beliefs of the Christian faith and specific items relating to the organization and ministries at Trinity by the pastors and/or elders.

Every candidate must affirm the following before being accepted into membership:

- Profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour
- Agreement with Trinity's Basic Beliefs and acceptance of its Core Spiritual Values
- Agreement to support Trinity Baptist International Church with his/her prayers, presence, gifts and service.
- Agreement to be governed by this church constitution.

Candidates wishing to enter into membership after meeting the aforementioned requirements will be presented to the church by the pastor or an elder at any regular service.

Distinctions and Rights of Members

A person is considered a member after the requirements for membership listed under Candidacy have been met and accepted.

Because of very valid requirements to maintain membership ties with a church fellowship in the "home country" (especially in the case of missionaries receiving support from the home church), some Trinity members maintain membership concurrently with a church in their home area. This is acceptable and the requirements and rights of those who do so are the same.

Members have the following rights and privileges:

Every member aged 18 years and older is entitled to vote in all elections and on all questions provided the member is present, or provision is made for absentee balloting;

Every member aged 18 years and older is eligible for consideration as a candidate for elective office in the church according to the requirements for that office.

Young people may become members at age 12. Youth have all rights/responsibilities as adult members except in areas of voting and holding office.

Termination of membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- Death of the member; or
- Formal, permanent leave of the church; or
- Transfer of letter to another church; or

- Upon request or proof of membership in another church (except for those holding membership jointly as described under “rights of members” above); or
- Removal by action of the church; or
- Personal written request; *or*
- Absence from church meetings for a period of twelve months.

Church Discipline

It shall be the practice of this church to take every measure to assist and restore any troubled member. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for restoration rather than punishment.

Should some serious sin condition exist, which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor and elders will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 and 2 Cor 2:5-8. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a three-fourths vote of members present at a duly called church meeting is required. All such proceedings shall be conducted in the spirit of Christian Biblical principles, prayer, forbearance and love.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon the request of the excluded person, recommendation of the elders, and confirmation by the elders of the person’s repentance and reformation. Once these conditions are met, a majority vote of the members present is required.

ARTICLE II: CHURCH LEADERSHIP, OFFICERS, STAFF, AND MINISTRIES

Leadership Structure

While the Word of God gives some insight into the leadership structure of the early church, there appears to be freedom to develop an organization that meets the specific dynamics of Trinity Baptist International Church. In light of this, the following structure would seem to be most effective for the carrying out of Biblical ministry. It is composed of congregation, pastoral staff, elders, deacons and ministry groups.

Congregation

The congregation is a spiritual democracy at work, directly accountable to the ultimate authority, the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word. Authority is not resident in the believer - priests as individuals, but in the body as a whole. Together, the body is called to elect leadership and dismiss those who stray from godly teaching.

Officers of the church

All who serve as officers of the church shall be members of the church, and are accountable to the church membership. The following are officers of the church:

- Pastoral Staff
- Elders
- Deacons
- Clerk
- Chairman of Finance and Administration Committee
- Treasurer
- Assistant Treasurer

Officers who are not pastoral staff or elders will be appointed as deacons as required for the selection of deacons.

Senior Pastor

Qualifications and duties of the senior pastor

The senior pastor is charged with teaching and preaching the word, shepherding the flock, and giving oversight and leadership to the church. The office of pastor as Biblically supported (Eph 4:11-12), must be filled by a person meeting Scriptural qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), and comes with many God given responsibilities (1 Pet 5:2-3; 1 Tim 5:17; Acts 6:4; James 5:14; Titus 2:7-8). The senior pastor automatically becomes a member and elder upon installation.

Other particular responsibilities include:

- The format, conduct, and leading of all public worship services (in consultation with the elders and worship ministries)
- With the elders and deacons, lead and encourage the church in every aspect of its Christian ministry (i.e. witnessing, visitation, Bible study, etc.)
- In consultation with the elders, make arrangements to fill the pulpit on those occasions when he is absent (vacations, conferences, illness, etc.)
- Serve as ex-officio member of all church organizations and committees
- The day-to-day supervision of all paid and volunteer staff
- Serve as the official representative of the church at all regional and convention meetings of those organizations in which the church holds membership

In the event of illness or emergency that incapacitates the pastor and prevents him from fulfilling these and other normal duties, the elders are responsible for the execution of such duties. In case of vacancy, the elders will be responsible for recommending an interim pastor to the church, if necessary.

Selection of the Senior Pastor

Whenever the need arises a pastor search committee shall be called. The elder board will interview candidates nominated by the congregation to determine their qualifications and sense of call. Afterward the elders will recommend specific candidates to be affirmed by the congregation by a three-quarter vote of those members present at a duly called church business meeting. This committee is elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time, and that only after the candidate has received the endorsement of the elder board. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks' notice has been given. Election shall be by ballot, with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those eligible members present being necessary. The pastor, having accepted the election, will become a church member and shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the terms of the contract, by his request or by the church's request. Contract terms, salary and benefits for the pastor shall be negotiated between the prospective pastor and the pastor search committee in consultation with the finance and administration committee and approved by the elder board, and will be presented to the church for approval by majority vote at a duly called church meeting.

Severance of the Senior Pastoral Relationship

The pastor or the church may sever the relationship by giving at least two months written notice. (The pastor may be released earlier if circumstances merit less time, as recommended by the elder board to the church). Action to sever the relationship by the church shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two week's public notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of the elder board, or by written petition signed by more than one fourth of the church members. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot, and shall require a vote by three-fourths of the eligible members present and voting. Any compensation for the pastor will be determined on the recommendation of the elder board and affirmed by the church.

Elders:

The role of elders

Elders of Trinity Baptist International Church have three principal roles:

- a. **Pastoral care**
 - Called to take care of the church (1 Tim 3:5), shepherd and care for the people (Acts 20:28,35; 1 Pet 5:2), feed the flock (1 Tim 5:14,17), pray for one another (Eph 3:14-21).
- b. **Guidance**
 - Setting spiritual direction (Acts 6), establishing goals, policies, future course.
- c. **Protection**
 - Maintaining doctrinal soundness (Titus 1:9; 1 Tim 4:14), guarding the spiritual health (1 Thess 5:12; Heb 13:17), watching over the church (Acts 20:28).

The nature of an elder

By the nature of the terms and their usage (there are two interchangeable terms: presbuteros - “to preside”; and episkopos - “to see over”) elders are those members of Trinity who are men of wisdom, experience, and maturity, called to govern the church.

The elders are visionaries, who set the course, establish policies, minister to the flock, and are recognized as such by their giftedness and sense of call.

The qualifications of an elder

The Biblical criteria call for unwavering spiritual character. An elder must be spiritually mature and seasoned; self-controlled; hospitable; able to teach; not violent, but gentle; not quarrelsome; not a lover of money; not a recent convert; having a good reputation with outsiders; not overbearing; not quick-tempered; a lover of what is good; upright; holy; disciplined; above reproach; the husband of one wife; temperate; respectable; not given to drunkenness; managing his own family well; seeing that his children obey him; not pursuing dishonest gain; and holding onto the truth. (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)

They must be men of prayer who have a heart for the ministry. Above all, they must serve as examples. (1 Pet 5:1-3) In keeping with our Baptist heritage, elder candidates must be baptized as believers.

The authority of elders

Elders serve the Lord first, and with the attitude of Christ, offer themselves as servants of the church, sensitive to the needs of the congregation. They do not exercise their authority independently from but in concert with the wishes of the corporate body of Trinity Baptist International Church.

The elders constitute the decision making board of the church, and should meet regularly (at least twice a month) to pray, to shape and implement vision and strategies, care for the body, and oversee the progress of the ministry (see also “Ministries” section: “relationship of ministries to elders”).

It is the congregation that makes ultimate decisions, recognizing that the authority of the church lies in Jesus Christ and His Word. A careful balance must always be sought; a wise symmetry that allows leaders to lead while at the same time respecting the will of the church family of Trinity as a whole.

The selection of elders

It is God who appoints the elders of Trinity Baptist International Church (Acts 20:28 - “which the Holy Spirit made you overseers”). The responsibility of the congregation is to discern the will of the Spirit through prayer, recognizing those members whom God has called.

The elder board will interview candidates nominated by the congregation to determine their scriptural qualifications and sense of call. Afterward the elders will recommend specific candidates to be affirmed by the congregation by a three quarter vote of those members present and voting at a duly called church business meeting. Upon selection, a setting apart service is in order. The number of elders varies according to the size and needs of Trinity. However, the minimum number of elders will be five.

The congregation's responsibility to the elders

The Word of God gives four principal duties:

- Appreciate (1 Thes 5:12)
- Esteem (1 Thes 5:13) - to honor and affirm the leadership and teaching of the elders
- Obey with a submissive spirit (Heb. 13:17) - willing to be equipped for the various ministry needs
- Hold accountable (1 Tim. 5:19-20)

The relationship of staff and elders

The pastor is the first among equals within the elder board. This does not suggest he has the final authority, nor higher rule. Given his call and training, as well as the nature of his task (immersed in the day to day operations), it is worthy to take seriously his counsel. He should not serve as chairman, so as to guard against unhealthy control. This relationship will ensure he maintains a healthy accountability to the other elders.

The pastor has three essential tasks before God: To pray for the people he is called to shepherd; to minister the Word of God effectively; and to aid in the spiritual direction of individual lives, as well as the corporate body. The elders are godly men, committed to an efficient organization of ministry, so that in part, they may insure that the pastor keeps to his essential pastoral acts...in which they too should share.

As for the other staff, their status as elders is determined by elder qualifications, the will of the elders, and the approval of the congregation.

Elder structure

The selection of chairman, as well as all elder assignments, shall be done within the board, in consultation with the pastor. The chairman sets the agenda, is responsible to chair the meetings, guide discussion, and see that wise decisions are made. A vice-chairman is also to be selected among the elders, responsible to chair meetings in which the chairman is absent. A secretary shall also be selected from amongst the elders, and shall be responsible for taking careful minutes, seeing that they are distributed to all officers and leaders as appropriate.

The term of office of chair and vice chair shall be set within the board and will automatically expire when that elder's term of office ends.

Each elder will be assigned to a ministry group(s). These ministry groups shall not be chaired by an elder. The principal function of an elder is to be a bridge for communication. The elder's first responsibility is to carry out his stated roles, and this must never be compromised because of administrative detail, most of which is to be accomplished within the ministry groups.

Elder terms

Once the congregation recognizes elders, their service will be dependent upon meeting the qualifications. They serve a fixed term of 3 years, which may be renewed, on the recommendation of the elders and by congregational affirmation. With the exception of pastoral staff, elders may serve no more than two terms without taking a one-year break.

Elder Discipline

Any elder who fails to live up to the biblical requirements of an elder shall be subject to the same procedure outlined under pastoral severance.

Deacons:

The role of deacons

Deacons of Trinity Baptist International Church have the principal function of serving in the practical operation of ministries, to insure that they are effective and efficient. Their role centers on rendering service to others, carrying out the tasks necessary to the smooth functioning of the body.

The nature of a deacon

While the Word of God gives little hint as to the specific duties of deacons, by its usage and term, diakonos is focused upon the ministry of service. The roots of the office go back to Acts 6, where the initial task was clear, to facilitate the administrative needs of ministry so that the leadership could concentrate on the ministry of the Word and prayer. This implies that much of the day to day operations should be dealt with at a deacon level, within one's respective ministry area.

The authority of a deacon

The order presented in scripture is "elder and deacons" (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-12). This suggests that deacons always functioned alongside, but worked under the leadership of elders. The deacons are responsible to lead within their particular ministry assignments, but have no need to meet as a body.

The qualifications of deacons

Each deacon must meet the qualifications of 1 Tim 3:8-12. Unlike the qualifications of an elder, deacons can also be female (modeled in Luke 8:1-3, as well as declared in Romans 16:1, where Phoebe is referred to as a diakonos in the church).

The selection of deacons

In keeping with the model of Acts 6, deacons are members of Trinity Baptist International Church, nominated by elders, and affirmed by the church with a three quarter vote of those present and voting at a duly called business meeting. Determination of deacons comes after careful assessment of ministry needs and qualifications of those presented.

The congregation's responsibility to the deacons

1 Tim 3:13 encourages a congregation to hold deacons in high standing, particularly if they have served well. Because of their act of service, the body is always responsible to extend gratefulness (Eph 5:20).

Deacon assignments

There is no set number of deacons. Rather, the number is determined by the ministry needs that demand the office of deacon. According to their giftedness and desire, they shall serve in the appropriate ministry areas. The elder board will determine those positions requiring deacon-qualified individuals.

Deacon terms

Once the congregation approves deacons, their service will be dependent upon meeting the Biblical qualifications. Annually, they shall be reviewed by the elders and submitted for reaffirmation by the congregation.

Deacon Dismissal

Any deacon who fails to live up to the biblical requirements of a deacon shall be subject to the same procedure outlined under pastoral dismissal.

Clerk:

The church clerk will be a deacon of the church.

The duties of the clerk are listed below:

- Keeping minutes and record and maintain records of all discussions and actions taken at church business meetings, distribute copies to all officers and post to congregation;
- Establish, and confirm, a quorum for each meeting
- Have necessary items ready for business meetings, working in conjunction with church office.

Finance and Administration Committee:

The Finance and Administration Committee is responsible for the execution of all financial and administrative functions related to the running of church affairs. The scope of responsibilities for the committee include:

- Annual budget preparation in cooperation with the various ministry leaders for approval by the elders and affirmed by the members at a Members Meeting;
- Setting up and maintaining expenditure and cash control procedures;
- Preparation of Income and Expenditure statements and reporting performance against budget;
- Collecting and banking all income and accounting the amounts to the church records.
- Making all payments on behalf of the church;
- Maintain a register of church assets;
- Maintain insurance cover for the church as required;
- Oversee all church contracts before they are signed by ministry leaders who are authorised to do so;
- All personnel administration matters including the preparation of employment and termination contracts, recommending salary increases for the staff to the elders and maintaining a register of vacation entitlements for the staff;

The committee will be made up of a number of deacons, namely:

- Committee Chairman.
- Treasurer
- Assistant Treasurer
- Deacon Personnel Administration

Depending on the workload the committee may recommend additional non deacon members to be added to the committee with the approval of the elder board. These appointments would be for a maximum of one year and could be extended for successive terms of one year on the recommendation of the committee and the approval of the elder board.

The committee chairman will report to the elder board on all of the committee's activities through an elder nominated by the elder board.

The details of the activities, functioning and procedures of the committee and the various deacon committee members is set out in the Finance and Administration Committee Charter.

The charter and any changes thereto must be approved by the elder board.

This charter can be viewed by all church members and is available by request through the church office.

Pastoral and Non-Pastoral Staff

The senior pastor will be responsible for day-to-day supervision of all paid and volunteer pastoral and non-pastoral staff. Decisions concerning the hiring and the initial salary/benefits of paid pastoral staff shall be made by the search committee in consultation with the elder board, finance and administration committee, and require a three quarter majority vote of the church members present at a duly called business meeting. Decisions concerning counselling and disciplining pastoral staff shall be made by the elder board. Decisions concerning releasing pastoral staff require recommendation of the elder board and approval of the church membership.

The qualifications, duties, hiring, releasing, and salary/benefits of non-pastoral staff shall be determined by the elder board with initial contract approval being given through a majority vote of the church members present at a duly called business meeting.

Because of the often highly sensitive nature of personnel situations, decisions to release or discipline non-pastoral church staff will require the concurrence of the elders and may be kept in confidence at their discretion.

Ministries

Composition of ministries

Ministries of Trinity Baptist International Church are composed of elders, deacons, and other appropriately gifted individuals, all of whom are committed to carrying out the ministry goals of Trinity. They are led by deacons, who call meetings as necessary (as a rule, not less than once every eight weeks). The focus is on ministry... not meetings.

Relationship of ministries to elders

The elder serves to facilitate communication between elder board and ministry group. The chairperson of each ministry should be a deacon as opposed to an elder. Each ministry group shall have the authority and responsibility to fulfill their particular ministry objectives. The ministry groups, via their chairmen, will be accountable to the elders, who oversee the progress of ministry on behalf of the church. Issues of budget adjustment, or any other actions that must come to the congregation, must first be approved by the elder board. The elders shall also guide spending priorities, particularly when church economics necessitate such decisions. Ministries areas may include, but are not limited to: Outreach, Missions, Assimilation, Christian Education, Worship, Care & Fellowship, Youth, Men's and Women's Ministries, College and Career, Administration, Personnel, Bookstore, Benevolence, Growth Groups, Finance, and Building and Grounds.

Financial Authorities

Unless otherwise stated in the Constitution and By-laws or formally approved by the church in a duly called meeting, all financial authority rests with the membership. In principle, financial authority is delegated to the elder board. The elder board further delegates financial authority to the finance and administration committee, church officers, committee chairmen, and church staff as set out in the Finance and Administration Committee Charter for the orderly conduct of church affairs. Where these delegations are unclear, all financial matters under question should be presented for approval at a church business meeting.

Financial matters that must be approved by the church membership include:

- The annual budget programme,
- Non-budgeted items exceeding €5,000 ,
- Budgeted individual expenditures exceeding €10,000,
- The purchase, sale or disposition of church property exceeding €10,000,
- Any planned expenditures which would cause the total approved budget to be exceeded by more than 10 percent,
- The execution of all contracts that exceed €15,000 or that exceed 3 years in duration, with the exception of updated, revised compensation packages.

Financial obligations or contingent liabilities for all church contracts must have been approved as part of the annual budget or in another church business meeting. The legal execution of church contracts must be performed by church officers.

ARTICLE III: CHURCH ORDINANCES

The ordinances of the church are open to all believers who profess Jesus Christ as their lord and Saviour. An ordinance is simply a command of the Lord that we hold in high esteem. We do not elevate these commands over the other commands in Scripture, but we do emphasize them as an important part of our walk of obedience together.

BAPTISM

Baptism is an ordinance of the church and an act of obedience by the individual Christian. It is done:

- **To picture ourselves** as dead and buried to our old way of life as a slave to sin, but now raised to walk in newness of life with Jesus as Lord, ruler and master (Rom 6:3,4);
- **To picture the work of the Holy Spirit** in immersing us in the life, power and person of Jesus, thus cleansing us from all sin (Rom 6:3,4);
- **As an act of obedience** to the command of Jesus to baptize all who accept the Good News of His own death being applied to our debt toward God (Mt 28:19; Jn 14:15,21,23; 1 Pet. 3:18; Heb 2:14-15; Col 1:22; Rom 6:23); and
- **As an act of witness** to the church congregation, and to the world as a whole, of the saving grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and our personal commitment to the Christian faith;
- **As a way of following the example of Jesus Christ** (Mt 3:14-15).

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Appropriate instruction in the meaning of baptism and living a life of Christian discipleship will be given by the pastor and/or elders to all persons requesting baptism.

The practice of Trinity Baptist International Church is Baptism by bodily immersion in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

This is a memorial of the finished work of Jesus Christ by His shed blood and death, and the expectation of His imminent return. The unleavened bread is symbolic of His body that was broken for us, and the drink from the grapes is symbolic of His blood that was shed as the payment for our sins. (Matt 26:26-29)

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper on a regular basis (preferably at least once a month). The church shall offer the Lord's Supper to all Christians, with the admonition that they must first examine themselves in light of 1 Cor 11:23-30.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH MEETINGS

WORSHIP SERVICES

The church will endeavor to meet regularly each Sunday for the worship of Almighty God. Other church activities are also planned for Sunday and evenings during the week in accordance with the desires and needs of the church membership. Prayer, praise, preaching, teaching and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The pastor (or in his absence an elder or pastoral staff member) shall direct worship services in a spirit of orderliness as described in 1 Cor 14:40.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Special services essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar. The pastor in agreement with the elders would arrange such services. Requests to use church facilities for special services or events (by individual members or outside groups) will be referred to the elders. If approved by the elders, such a request will then be referred to the appropriate ministry committee or church staff for decision on terms and conditions (eg. care of facilities, reimbursement of costs, etc.) within approved church policy.

BUSINESS MEETINGS

- The vice chairman of the elder board, or alternate designated by the elders, will chair church business meetings.
- The church will hold a minimum of two business meetings per year to keep the church membership informed, and conduct church business requiring action by the whole church membership. Two weeks' notice of the meeting must be given.
- The church may conduct special business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. These meetings require two weeks' notice unless the elder board determines that special circumstances exist that necessitate one week's notice. The notice shall include the subject, date, time and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all members have a reasonable opportunity to know of the meeting.
- A special business meeting may be called by the senior pastor, the elder board, or by petition of more than one quarter of the church membership. Such a petition must include the subject matter to be discussed and the reason for requesting the meeting.
- When a Members Meeting or a special Members Meeting is called, any member can by written application, request that the elders allow such a member to cast his/her vote by means of absentee balloting. Such application should be delivered to the church at least one week in advance of the meeting and will be considered provided that the members' physical presence at the meeting is prevented due to reasons such as (i) personal illness or disability, (ii) business travel or (iii) family or other emergency.
- If approved by a simple majority of the members present, any issue brought to a church meeting can be referred to the elder/deacons for more complete study, discussion and/or recommendations. Public discussion will immediately cease and the elders/deacons will bring the results of their discussion and/or recommendation to the church as soon as possible.
- All proposals and amendments to proposals presented and discussed at a duly called church meeting require a three-fourths majority of members present and voting plus the number of absentee ballots received prior to the meeting where provision was made for absentee balloting for decisions to be affirmed.
- The quorum for church business meetings consists of a minimum of one fourth of the church membership recorded on the membership roll at the time of the meeting. The clerk shall calculate the quorum needed prior to each business meeting and will confirm to the chairman that a quorum is present so that binding decisions can be made.

- Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church. A copy of Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is available in the church office. In the case of any conflict between the Rules and any clauses in this Constitution, the latter shall take precedence.

ARTICLE V: DISSOLUTION

If for any reason the church is dissolved, the Officers of Trinity Baptist International Church, assisted by the International Baptist Convention (IBC), will arrange for the sale and distribution of all Trinity assets. After satisfying all outstanding debts, any remaining church assets shall be given to Christian Missions.

ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENTS

Changes to the constitution may be made at a business meeting of the church provided

- Notice of the purpose of the meeting is made through all appropriate church publications and during the church service for two weeks prior to the meeting; and
- Written copies of the proposed amendments(s) are made available to church members for two weeks prior to the meeting. Amendments to the constitution shall be by three-fourths vote of the eligible church members present voting.
- The fundamental right of origination is inviolate and cannot be amended or altered.