



Constitution

January 28, 2009

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Preamble

To define our relations with one another, facilitate the transaction of business, conduct our various activities and promote harmony and co-operation between members and various organizations, all for the goal of doing the work our Lord has given His church, we the members of Sovereign Grace Bible Church (SGBC) do hereby adopt the following articles to be the Constitution of this church.

Article 1 - Name

The name of this church is Sovereign Grace Bible Church of Phoenix, Arizona.

Article 2 - Purpose

SGBC exists to honor the One true God revealed in His Son Jesus Christ and to faithfully proclaim His Word as the means of God's glory and mankind's true good.

Article 3 - Charter

The authority by which this church exists as an ecclesiastical body is received from the Lord Jesus Christ as expressed in the Holy Scriptures, and in all matters of faith and practice it acknowledges no higher authority.

The authority by which this church exists as a corporation is by the laws of the State of Arizona, under which it is incorporated.

Article 4 - Statement of faith

SGBC's statement of faith is given in the "Sovereign Grace Bible Church - Statement of Faith" pamphlet.

Article 5 - Membership

a. Requirements for Membership

Requirements for membership are defined in the "Requirements for Membership" section of the "Membership at SGBC" pamphlet.

b. Procedure for becoming a member

The procedure to be followed for receiving new members into SGBC is defined in the "Becoming a Member" section of the "Membership at SGBC" pamphlet.

c. Expectations of members

Expectations of members are outlined in the "Membership at SGBC" pamphlet.

d. Ending membership

Membership at SGBC may be ended in three ways, resulting in a member's ending status as indicated below.

By voluntary withdrawal - One may end membership by following the procedure, "Ending Membership" in the "Membership at SGBC" pamphlet. If the goals in the procedure are achieved SGBC will consider the member as ending membership in good standing. If the goals are not achieved one will be considered as having ended membership not in good standing.

By exclusion - If a member fails to show an active interest in SGBC after due efforts have been made to encourage his/her interest for a period of 18 months, he/she may be excluded from membership at the discretion of the eldership. If communication has been established and the procedure for voluntary withdrawal has been successfully accomplished, the member will be considered as having ended in good standing.

If there has been no communication between the member and the elders, a letter will be sent informing the individual

that his/her membership is ended and encouraging them to unite with another local body of Christ. In such a case the member will be considered as having ended in an "unknown standing" (this is a little fuzzy, discuss).

By excommunication - If a member has denied the faith and the attempts outlined in the "Church Discipline Policy" of the "Membership at SGBC" pamphlet have failed to renew him/her to faith and repentance, he/she will be excluded from membership and considered as an unbeliever and the object of loving evangelism as any other unbeliever. In such a case one's membership will be considered ended while under formal, public, discipline.

A member's ending status will be communicated to those churches and Christian institutions who inquire of SGBC regarding such.

e. Reinstatement of membership

Any member ending in good or unknown standing may be reinstated by following the procedure for becoming a member.

A person whose membership ended by excommunication may be reinstated by 1) resolving the matter which led to the excommunication, and 2) following the procedure for becoming a member.

f. Inviolate membership (not right par. label).

Once an individual has become a member of SGBC they may not profess (verbally or in writing) an end to their membership to avoid the process Christ requires of His church (see article 6) which may lead to excommunication.

g. Membership records

The elders are to maintain a membership list which includes the names of all current members and a list of all previous members and their ending status. The list of cur-

rently active members is to be distributed at the annual congregational meeting.

Article 6 - Church Discipline

a. Overall policy

Church discipline is carried out in accordance with the "Church Discipline Policy" section of the "Membership at SGBC" pamphlet.

b. Formal public discipline

In those cases that require that the church be informed in accordance with Matthew 18:17a, the following procedure is to be followed.

The individual under discipline is to be informed that the matter will be made known to the church.

A congregational meeting of members only will be held and the facts of the case made known. The facts of the case are to remain with church members only. The congregation will be exhorted to pray for, and speak with, the individual under discipline as a final attempt to bring him/her to a renewed faith and repentance.

A period of time will be allowed for the individual to "hear the church" (Matt. 18:17a), that is, to respond with a renewed faith and repentance.

c. Excommunication

If, after the allowed period of time, the individual has, "refused to hear the church", his/her membership will be ended by excommunication. A congregational meeting of members only will be held and members informed that the church's stance is that the individual is not a believer (Matt. 18:17b). At this meeting instruction is to be given regarding the admonitions of 1 Cor. 5:9-13.

When an individual has been excommunicated this does not mean he/she can no longer attend services. But, con-

sidered as an unbeliever, he/she will not be allowed to participate in the Lord's table, hold office in the church, or function in positions of service in the church. However, if the individual uses the privilege of attending to the public means of grace as a means of being factious, then they will be barred from attendance.

d. Restoration

If after excommunication, the individual's faith and repentance are renewed and they seek reconciliation with the Lord and His church, they are to be forgiven and lovingly reinstated in accordance with 2 Cor. 2:1-11.

Article 7 - Ordinances

The ordinances practiced by SGBC are defined in the "Sovereign Grace Bible Church - Statement of Faith".

Article 8 - Office Bearers

Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church. As Head He has ordained that individual churches be blessed with the spiritual rule and ministry of special office bearers. Therefore, it is the duty of the church to seek to discover those to whom Christ has imparted the necessary gifts for office bearing, and having formally recognized such by common consent, to set them apart by united prayer and to submit to their rule and ministry. Christ has ordained that the administration of the local church is to be by elders and deacons.

a. Elders

A plurality of elders forms the highest human authority within the local church and all elders are equal in authority to one another. Together they have general oversight of the church, its ministries, and functions. Elders are responsible to implement church discipline (article 6) and establish the practice of the ordinances (article 7) Christ has given to His church.

An elder is required to conscientiously affirm his agreement with SGBC's Statement of Faith and Constitution. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this known to his fellow elders and the church.

Elders are required to evidence the personal, domestic and ministerial qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Elders must seek to discharge their duties as set forth in the Scriptures, particularly such passages as Acts 20:17, 28ff, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and Hebrews 13:17.

b. Elders living off the gospel

One or more elders may be called by the church to devote themselves fully to the work of the ministry. In these cases they will be financially compensated, with the goal that they need not be employed outside of the service of the church. Historically such elders have commonly been referred to as pastors and are so referred to at SGBC. However, financially compensated elders do not have any additional decision making or doctrinal authority than any other elder.

c. Deacons

Deacons are required to evidence the personal, domestic and ministerial qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-4.

Deacons shall assist the elders in shepherding and caring for the spiritual and physical needs of the church membership, manage the providing of physical and financial assistance to those in need, oversee the maintenance of all church facilities, and manage facilities during church services. These activities shall be conducted under the supervision of the elders.

The deacons shall choose one of their members to function as head deacon to facilitate their organization.

The deacons shall meet as a minimum monthly to review and discuss the affairs of this church.

d. Calling of elders

The elders shall recommend for congregational approval individuals to serve in the office of elder (article 12.b,c).

A search/nominating committee shall be established to screen, interview and determine individuals for recommendation. The search/nominating committee shall consist of the elders and deacons. The elders may add non elder or deacon members to this committee from the church membership at their discretion.

Any member may nominate an individual to the search/nominating committee for consideration.

A minimum of one congregational meeting shall be held for the candidate to be questioned publicly by members of the congregation. Additional means of acquainting the congregation with a candidate may be used at the discretion of the search/nominating committee.

e. Removal of elders

An elder's service may end under any of the following conditions.

Completion of ministry - An elder may end his service as an elder of this church at any time if he so desires. When doing so a minimum of four weeks notice is to be given to the elders.

Dismissal - A majority consensus of the board of elders may call for the dismissal of an elder. In such cases a four week notice shall be given.

Discipline - If an elder requires discipline (see article 6) he will be removed from office if a matter has been confirmed

by two or three witnesses in accordance with Matt. 18:15-16 and remains unresolved (Matt. 18:17a).

Regarding accusations against an elder the instructions of 1 Tim. 5:17-20 are to be followed. An elder that responds in a godly manner to such reproof does not necessarily have to be dismissed.

f. Calling of deacons

Deacons shall be called from within the church and are required to have been members for a minimum of one year. The number of deacons will be determined by the existing elders and deacons. When there is a requirement to call a deacon the elders shall recommend for congregational approval individuals to serve in the office of deacon (article 12.b,c).

g. Removal of deacons

A deacon's service may end under any of the following conditions.

Completion of ministry - A deacon may end his service as a deacon of this church at any time if he so desires. When doing so a minimum of four weeks notice is to be given to the elders and deacons.

Dismissal - A majority consensus of the board of elders may call for the dismissal of an deacon.

Discipline - If a deacon requires discipline (see article 6) he will be removed from office if a matter has been confirmed by two or three witnesses in accordance with Matt. 18:15-16 and remains unresolved (Matt. 18:17a).

h. Installation of office bearers

Following the recognition of an elder or deacon by congregational approval, there shall be a portion of a regular worship service set aside, at which time the elder or deacon shall be formally set apart for his responsibilities by

the prayer of the whole church and the laying on of the hands of the existing eldership.

Article 9 - Official Board

The governing of SGBC, the management of its property, real and personal, and the supervision of its ministries shall be under the direction of the Official Board.

a. Members

The official board shall consist of the elders. The board shall choose one of its members to act as chairman and one of its members to act as recording secretary.

b. Meetings

The board shall meet as a minimum monthly to review and discuss the affairs of this church.

The head deacon, or his designee, shall attend all official board meetings.

The deacons shall meet with the board a minimum of four times a year.

c. Quorum

A minimum of two thirds of SGBC's elders are required in attendance to constitute a quorum for the transaction of church business and affairs.

Article 10 - Corporate Officers

a. Chief executive officer / president

The official board shall appoint one of the elders to serve as and be invested with the authority as the CEO/President of SGBC. This appointment shall be recorded in official board minutes and remain in effect until the appointment is changed.

b. Chairman of the board

TBD

TBD

c. Moderator

TBD

TBD

d. Statutory agent

TBD

TBD

e. Directors / trustees

TBD

TBD

Article 11 - Additional Organizations and Positions

Additional organizations (i.e. missions board, care commission, outreach commission, etc.) and positions (i.e. financial secretary, accountant, rental property manager, office manager, etc.) may be created and dissolved at the discretion of the official board as need arises. When an organization or position is created its purpose shall be defined in writing by the board and recorded in board minutes.

Article 12 - Congregational Meetings

Congregational meetings shall be announced to the members of the congregation a minimum of two Sunday mornings prior. Voting members at congregational meetings shall be those members who are age 16 or older.

a. Annual congregational meeting

An Annual Congregational meeting shall be held no later than February 28th. As a minimum a financial report of the previous year shall be given and a recommended budget for the current year reviewed. If the recommended budget is not approved at this meeting, the elders shall schedule

additional meetings as necessary to achieve an approved budget.

b. Special congregational meetings

Special Congregational meetings may be called by the elders as they are deemed necessary. Such meetings are required for the cases listed in c. below. Members may request that the elders call for a special business meeting.

c. Congregational approval of recommendations

Congregational approval of recommendations of the elders is required in the following areas: calling an elder, calling a deacon, the sale or purchase of property, establishing a long term commitment to a missionary or missionary organization, entering into formal associations with other organizations, and amending this constitution. Approval in other areas may be sought at the discretion of the elders. In the required cases a written ballot shall be used.

The percentage of members present approving recommendations listed in c. shall be at least 75%. The degree of required unanimity may be set higher at the discretion of the elders. Unanimity is to be sought by prayer, open discussion of the recommendation and searching the Scriptures.

d. Quorum

At any properly convened congregational meeting the members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of church business and affairs.

Article 13 - Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a two thirds vote of voting members present at any properly convened congregational meeting, provided that all proposed amendments be distributed, in written form, to the membership at least two weeks prior to such meeting.

Article 14 - Discontinuance

On discontinuance of SGBC, by purposeful dissolution or otherwise, its assets are to be transferred to a religious organization whose views of the authority of the Bible and its historic orthodox interpretation are in accord with the Statement of Faith of this congregation. This will be done under section 501C(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as amended. This act of dissolving SGBC will be based on a two-thirds majority vote of the church membership.