

*Berean Church Fellowship*  
*Constitution of the Berean Fundamental*  
*Church Council*

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### **Organizational Chart to the Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc.**

# **CONSTITUTION OF THE BEREAN FUNDAMENTAL CHURCH COUNCIL, INC.**

## **I. Name of Organization**

- A. The official name of this organization shall be the Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc.
- B. Shortened designations for this organization in this document will include the “Berean Church Council,” and the “Berean Fellowship of Churches.”

## **II. Theme, Purpose, Vision, and Doctrine**

- A. Theme: “Plant a Church, Make Disciples, Reach the World”
- B. Purpose Statement:  
“The Berean Fellowship of Churches exists to establish and nurture a fellowship of interdependent churches and related ministries in strategic areas.”
- C. Vision:  
“To glorify Christ in our generation through aggressively establishing churches worldwide, training believers in Christ-likeness, and reaching the lost with the hope of the gospel.”
- D. Doctrine: See SECTION ONE, “Articles of Faith”

## **III. Organization of the Berean Church Council**

- A. General Statement
  - 1. The Berean Fellowship of Churches shall be composed primarily of locally incorporated Berean Fundamental Churches.
  - 2. The local churches shall participate in the affairs of the organization through representative participation in the District and the General Councils.
  - 3. The Berean Fellowship of Churches may include subsidiary organizations. Such organizations may be regional, national, or international.
- B. Governing Body
  - 1. The Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc. shall be incorporated and organized according to the Nebraska Non-profit Corporation Act.
  - 2. The Board of Directors
    - a) The Board of Directors shall be the governing body of the Berean Church Council.
    - b) Its organization, election, powers, duties, and privileges shall be as stated in this constitution.
    - c) The Board of Directors will conduct the business affairs of this corporation, formulate its policies, and administrate its organization.
    - d) The membership of the Board of Directors shall consist of not fewer than ten male members.
    - e) The voting members of the Board of Directors will be the executive officers of the Berean Church Council, the departmental directors, the district leaders, the assistant district leaders, and any others elected by the Board of Directors.

- f) The Board of Directors shall meet at least quarterly unless otherwise decided.
  - g) A quorum shall exist when two-thirds of the members of the Board of Directors are present.
  - h) Decisions will be by the majority vote of those present unless previously stipulated by the Board of Directors. Each member has one vote.
3. Executive Committee
- a) The executive officers of the Berean Fellowship of Churches shall consist of a President, an Executive Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Director of National Church Planting, a Director of International Church Planting, a Director of Planned Giving, a Director of Pastoral Development, and other officers considered necessary by the Board of Directors.
  - b) The President shall be recommended to the General Council by the Board of Directors and elected by a two-thirds vote of the General Council. He shall serve until his death, resignation, or removal by the Board of Directors for event of heresy, immorality, misconduct, incompetence, or failure to maintain a good testimony.
  - c) All other executive officers shall be recommended by the President to the Board of Directors for appointment and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors or until death or resignation.
  - d) All executive officers shall be authorized to sign legal papers on behalf of The Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc.
  - e) A quorum of two-thirds of the executive officers shall be authorized to transact urgent business on behalf of the Fellowship between the scheduled meetings of the Board of Directors.
  - f) The Board of Directors shall have authority to provide its own methods of further organization and to provide procedures to implement its constitutional mandate.
4. Executive Officers
- a) The President shall be the head of the entire organization, an ex-officio member of all committees and groups, the presiding officer of the General Council, and the chairman of the Board of Directors. He will provide oversight to the annual convention and the General Council.
  - b) The Executive Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the President. In the case of the death, resignation, or removal of the President, the Executive Vice-President shall succeed to the office of the President until the next meeting of the General Council. He will be an ex-officio member of all committees and groups. He will chair the Department of Mediation.
  - c) The Director of Pastoral Development will encourage the educational and spiritual development of Berean pastors. He will chair the Department of Pastoral Life and will provide oversight to the annual Pastors' Retreat.
  - d) The Director of National Church Planting will chair the Department of National Church Planting and oversee the National Church Planting Committee of the Berean Fellowship of Churches.

- e) The Director of International Church Planting will chair the Department of International Church Planting and oversee the International Church Planting Committee of the Berean Fellowship of Churches.
  - f) The Director of Planned Giving will perform all the duties pertaining to the office of planned giving of a religious organization, including such things as assisting with charitable gift planning, developing financial stewardship, and other fund-raising activities.
  - g) The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the acts and proceedings of all General Council and Board of Directors meetings, give all notices required by law or by this constitution, maintain the corporation's correspondence in a manner directed by the Board of Directors, and perform all the duties usually pertaining to the office of a secretary of a religious organization.
  - h) The Treasurer shall oversee the reception and disbursement of funds as approved by the Board of Directors. He shall see that proper books are kept of the accounts of the corporation, including any securities belonging to or held by it. He shall present financial reports as required by the Board of Directors, including a current report at the quarterly Board of Directors and annual General Council meetings or as otherwise directed by the President. An external audit shall be conducted annually.
5. General Council
- a) The Board of Directors shall give a printed report of its actions to the members of the General Council at the annual convention.
  - b) The membership of the General Council will include two representatives from each Berean Fundamental Church, normally one pastor and one delegate.
  - c) When a Berean Fundamental Church does not have a pastor to represent it on the General Council, it may send two delegates.
  - d) Each church may also have additional delegates when its yearly average attendance exceeds 99. For every 100 additional attendees, or portion thereof over 99, it may have an additional delegate. The average attendance will be based on the previous year's published average weekly worship service attendance in the annual report of the Berean Fundamental Church Council.
  - e) Delegates shall be men selected by the official board of each church from its own church membership to further the purpose of the Berean Fellowship of Churches in planting churches and making disciples.
  - f) Members of the Board of Directors who are not pastors or delegates of the local church are “at large” voting members of the General Council and not representatives of any specific local church.
  - g) The General Council shall be responsible for electing the President of the Berean Fellowship of Churches, voting on matters requested by the Board of Directors, and authorizing all constitutional changes.

- h) A quorum will exist when the number of delegates present is at least two times the number of Berean Fundamental Churches multiplied by two thirds.
  - i) Decisions will be by the majority vote of those present unless previously stipulated by the Board of Directors. Each member has one vote.
6. Departments and Committees
- a) The Berean Church Council, through its Board of Directors, may be organized into departments that may be created or dissolved as desired.
  - b) The departments shall submit reports to the Board of Directors as requested.
  - c) The standing departments will be the Department of Mediation, the Department of Pastoral Development, the Department of National Church Planting, and the Department of International Church Planting.
  - d) The departmental committees will normally consist of pastors and other members of Berean Fundamental Churches. Special advisors from other sources may be included by appointment by the Board of Directors.
7. Miscellaneous
- a) Official spokesperson: The Board of Directors shall be designated as the official spokesperson for the Berean Fellowship of Churches. No person, paper, organization, or other church body has this authority. Any written public policy statement issued by anyone other than the Board of Directors shall clearly contain appropriate statements indicating that the statement represents only the position of the particular author or local church and not necessarily the position of the Berean Fellowship of Churches.
  - b) Revolving Fund: The Berean Fellowship of Churches shall maintain a fund for ministry expansion. The Board of Directors shall establish policies for the use of this fund.
  - c) Annual meetings: The meeting of the General Council shall be held annually to receive a report from the President on the state of the Berean Fellowship of churches.
  - d) Berean Detail: The Board of Directors shall designate a place where the Berean Detail shall be safely kept and preserved. The Detail shall contain all official documents including the minutes of the General Council, the Articles of Faith, the interpretations of the constitution, and other documents, records, and statements as the Board of Directors shall consider necessary.
- C. Districts
1. The intermediate level of the Berean Fellowship of Churches is the District Council.
  2. The District Council shall be composed of all senior pastors and any other staff pastors of the Berean Fundamental Churches in a given geographic area. The District Council may also include lay delegates if desired by the district.
  3. The general purpose of District Council shall be to provide fellowship, accountability, and encouragement of the churches, to grow in grace, and to plant churches.

4. The Board of Directors may give additional responsibilities to the District Council. The district shall organize itself to carry out those duties.
  5. The District Council shall be accountable to the Board of Directors.
  6. Each District Council shall have a District Leader, an Assistant District Leader, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Secretary and Treasurer may be the same person. These officers shall be recommended by the District Council and appointed by the Board of Directors. They shall serve as long as mutually agreeable.
  7. The District Council shall meet at least quarterly unless otherwise decided.
  8. A quorum shall exist when two-thirds of the members of the District Council are present.
  9. Decisions will be by the majority vote of those present unless previously stipulated by the District Council. Each member has one vote.
  10. The District Council shall have the general oversight of all district matters, including mission churches and other duties as are given it by the Board of Directors.
  11. District Council pastors' wives are encouraged to attend district meetings for mutual encouragement and support.
  12. The District Council shall assist district churches in securing pastors.
- D. Local Churches
1. The legal or corporate name of each church in the Berean Fellowship of Churches shall be "The Berean Fundamental Church Inc. of \_\_\_\_\_"(insert the name of the local community or area served).
  2. Any other names used for local identification must be approved by the District Council and reported to the Board of Directors.
  3. The locally incorporated body, as outlined in this constitution, shall hold all church properties.
  4. The local churches shall have one common constitution written and approved by the Berean Church Council.
  5. The requirements, responsibilities, duties, and organization of the local church shall be as contained in the Berean Fundamental Church Constitution and in the Berean Detail.
  6. Local churches operating under the Berean Fundamental Church Constitution have the liberty to write specific policies, practices, and positions for their churches, providing that such does not violate the Berean Fundamental Church Constitution and that it is reported to their District Council.

#### **IV. Department Of Mediation**

- A. The Berean Fellowship of Churches shall provide a method of mediation for churches and subsidiary organizations affiliated with the Fellowship in matters pertaining to properties, authority, policy, procedure, heresy, immorality, or constitutional violation.
- B. The Department of Mediation will include all the District Leaders and be chaired by the Executive Vice-President.
- C. Disputes

1. A committee from the Department of Mediation will be designated by the Executive Vice-President to hear each dispute.
2. The committee will consist of no fewer than three men. Decisions will be by majority vote.
3. Any disputes not resolved at either the local church or District Council level shall be brought to the Department of Mediation for reconciliation.
4. Any disputes between districts or other organizations of the Berean Fellowship of Churches, except the Board of Directors, shall be brought directly to the Department of Mediation for reconciliation.
5. A special mediator appointed by the Board of Directors shall mediate disputes involving the Board of Directors.

#### **D. Mediation Process**

1. The purpose of this mediation process shall be to settle disputes in a manner that brings glory to God.
2. The request for mediation shall be given to the leader of the district in which the request originated and shall be forwarded by him to the Department of Mediation.
3. Requests from Fellowship departments or organizations not associated with a particular district will be given to the Executive Vice-President.
4. Mediation records will be filed with the official Fellowship records.
5. Should the mediation effort fail to settle the dispute, all parties involved have the right to appeal to the Board of Directors.
6. All decisions of the Board of Directors shall be given in writing and shall be final and implemented as directed.
7. All parties involved shall equally share the cost of all hearings.

### **V. Affiliation Of Churches**

#### **A. The establishment of new churches**

1. All new churches will be established under the direction of the Department of National Church Planting.
2. Berean church planters who start new churches without an existing group of people will establish Berean Fundamental Churches that are immediately under the authority of the Berean Fundamental Church Constitution.
3. When a group of people desires to have a Berean Fundamental Church, it shall meet with a representative of the National Church Planting Committee. It will be given a copy of the Berean Fundamental Church Constitution as well as a detailed explanation of the Fellowship's history, purpose, constitution, doctrinal positions, and church government.
4. Following the meeting, the group shall vote on becoming a church that is organized and affiliated with the Berean Fundamental Church Council. With a favorable vote of at least ninety percent of those present and voting, the request will be taken to the Board of Directors for action.

#### **B. Existing churches desiring affiliation**

1. At a specially called meeting, the membership of the congregation shall vote on a “motion of intent to join” the Berean Fellowship of Churches. The motion will require a favorable vote of at least ninety percent of those present and voting.
  2. Following the passage of a “motion of intent to join” the Berean Fellowship of Churches, the congregation will meet with a representative of the National Church Planting Committee. They will be given a copy of the Berean Fundamental Church Constitution as well as a detailed explanation of the Fellowship's history, purpose, constitution, doctrinal positions, and church government.
  3. Following the meeting of the congregation with the representative of the National Church Planting Committee, the membership of the church shall vote on becoming affiliated with the Berean Fellowship of Churches. With a favorable vote of at least ninety percent of those present and voting, the representative shall take their request to the Board of Directors for action.
- C. Existing churches desiring to disaffiliate
1. At a specially called meeting the membership of the congregation shall vote on a “motion of intent to disaffiliate” with the Berean Fellowship of Churches. The motion will require a favorable vote of at least ninety percent of those present and voting.
  2. Following the passage of a “motion of intent to disaffiliate” with the Berean Fellowship of Churches, the church congregation shall meet with their District Leader, or a representative of the Board of Directors, who shall be given an adequate opportunity to address the reasons given for disaffiliation.
  3. Following the meeting of the church congregation with the District Leader or a representative of the Board of Directors, the membership of the church shall vote on becoming disaffiliated with the Berean Fellowship of Churches. With a favorable vote of at least ninety percent of those present and voting, the District Leader shall take their request to the Board of Directors for action.

## **VI. Ordination And Licensure**

### **A. Ordination**

1. The Berean Fellowship of Churches shall have the authority to ordain and license men to the Gospel ministry according to the procedures established in this constitution along with any other requirements considered necessary by the Board of Directors.
2. Ordination is for men who have served at least one year as a full-time licensed minister of the Gospel.
3. Upon the request of the official Board of an affiliated church, the Board of Directors shall instruct its District Leader to convene the Ordination Council, with no fewer than three ordained Berean pastors, to examine the candidate for ordination.
4. Additional men who are not members of the District Council or the Berean Fellowship of Churches may also be invited to sit on the Ordination Council.

5. The examination will be conducted in four areas: personal life and character, Bible knowledge and doctrinal position, church history and church government, and the Berean Fundamental Church Constitution.
  6. When the examination is completed, the Ordination Council shall make its recommendation to the requesting church and candidate.
  7. The recommendation shall be in one of three categories with an explanation as to why the category was chosen:
    - a) Denial – the candidate is not yet qualified for ordination.
    - b) Approval with conditions – the candidate is presently not qualified, but could qualify if certain conditions were met.
    - c) Approval – the candidate appears qualified.
  8. Upon approval of the candidate by the Ordination Council, the requesting church will be notified of approval for ordination. The church will arrange for the public ordination of the candidate and shall provide the certificate of ordination. The District Leader shall forward a copy of the ordination certificate to the Secretary of the Board of Directors.
- B. Pastoral Licensure
1. A license for pastoral ministry in preparation for ordination may be conferred upon any man living a godly life. He must show fitness for Christian service and give testimony of being called of God to serve as a pastor in a local church. It shall be an endorsement of the character of the one licensed and shall serve as a recommendation to churches.
  2. The official board of the local church of which he is a member shall recommend the candidate and request the license. Following a favorable vote of the District Council, the District Leader shall authorize the license. The church shall provide the certificate of license.
  3. The license shall not exceed three years before renewal is required. The District Leader shall forward a copy of the license to the Secretary of the Board of Directors.
- C. Vocational Licensure
1. A license for vocational ministry may be conferred upon any man who meets the criteria established by the official board of the local Berean Fundamental Church where he is a member. It will be licensure to a specific vocational ministry (e.g., camping, music, administration) and is not to be considered in preparation for ordination. It shall be an endorsement of the character of the one licensed and shall serve as a recommendation to churches.
  2. The official board of the local church of which he is a member shall recommend the candidate and request the license. Following a favorable vote of the District Council, the District Leader shall authorize the license. The church shall provide the certificate of license.
  3. The license shall not exceed three years before renewal is required. The District Leader shall forward a copy of the license to the Secretary of the Board of Directors
- D. Lay Licensure

1. A license for non-vocational ministry may be conferred upon any man who meets the criteria established by the official board of the local Berean Fundamental Church where he is a member. It will be licensure to non-vocational ministry and is not to be considered in preparation for ordination. It shall be an endorsement of the character of the one licensed and shall serve as a recommendation to churches. A lay license does not confer the privileges of an ordained or of a full-time vocational minister.
  2. The official board of the local church of which he is a member shall recommend the candidate and request the license. Following a favorable vote of the District Council, the District Leader shall authorize the license. The church shall provide the certificate of license.
  3. The license shall not exceed three years before renewal is required. The District Leader shall forward a copy of the license to the Secretary of the Board of Directors.
- E. Revocation
- An ordination or license may be revoked or canceled by the Board of Directors in the event of heresy, immorality, misconduct, or failure to maintain a good testimony.

## **VII. Church Property**

- A. Use
1. All church properties are to be held by the local incorporated body in accordance with laws of the state in which the property is held.
  2. Property held by the local incorporated church shall be for the use of church ministry consistent with the doctrine, practice, and ministry contained within “The Berean Fundamental Church Constitution and Articles of Faith.”
- B. Titles
- All titles to church property real or personal shall be held by the local incorporated church, subject to “The Berean Fundamental Church Constitution and Articles of Faith” in its present form and as it may be amended.
- C. Dissolution
1. Of church plants: In the event of an unsuccessful church plant, all properties real and personal, shall revert to the Berean Fundamental Church Council.
  2. Of existing churches: If at any time there are insufficient members to continue a viable work in a community and a decision is taken to close the church, the church property, real or personal, shall revert to the Berean Fundamental Church Council.
- D. Disaffiliation
1. If a church votes to disaffiliate from the Berean Fundamental Church Council, as provided in Article V, C, the church may leave the Berean Fundamental Church Council with the continued ownership of its church property, real and personal.

## **VIII. Interpretation**

- A. Matters of clarification and interpretation of this constitution shall be done by the Board of Directors of the Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc.
- B. All interpretations shall be recorded in the official minutes of the Board of Directors Berean Detail, which is maintained at the home office of the Berean Fundamental Church Council.

**IX. Amendments**

- A. This constitution may be amended upon three-fourths vote of the General Council at which a quorum is present. (See SECTION THREE, Article III,5,h).
- B. Recommendations for proposed amendments to this constitution may originate from the local church or Departments and shall be submitted to their District Council for action and presentation to the Board of Directors.
- C. Upon approval, the Board of Directors will present the recommendation at the next convening or specially called General Council meeting.
- D. Written notice of the proposed amendment shall be mailed to all General Council members at least thirty days prior to the meeting of the General Council at which the amendment is to be considered.

**X. Prior Constitutions**

This Constitution of the Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc. supersedes and replaces all prior constitutions.

# The Berean Fundamental Church Council, Inc.

