

Constitution of the International Baptist church of Cologne

I will build my Church, and the powers of death shall never conquer it.
Matthew 16:18

Believing it to be the will of God that the followers of Jesus Christ associate themselves in fellowship for the worship of God and for mutual encouragement in the Christian life, we do hereby declare our common Christian heritage and purpose by establishing this Church under the following articles.

I. NAME

This body shall be known as the International Baptist Church Cologne, and shall remain affiliated with the European Baptist Convention, the German Baptist Union and the Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden in Deutschland and the Southern Baptist Convention, U.S.A.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the IBC shall be to establish and maintain for the English-speaking community a Christian fellowship which provides opportunities for the worship of God and Christian education. The Church shall seek further to invite and encourage others to profess their faith in Jesus Christ. The worship and activities of IBC shall be conducted in the English language in order to make its ministries available to the international community of the area. **IBC shall further endeavour to maintain fellowship and a spirit of cooperation with other churches and bodies of Christians both in its area and throughout the world.**

III. COVENANT

We joyfully confess our faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ. We affirm our belief that through this Church we can express our commitment to Him in an effective way. As members of this Church we will: Worship together; seek to know more about God and about how to live as followers of Jesus Christ; encourage others to become Christians; nurture relationships with fellow believers; support this Church by our personal involvement, attendance, prayer, and financial contributions. Relying on the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit we seal this covenant with one another and with God as we pray: **“Almighty God, Creator of all life, grant us Your presence and strength as we engage in fulfilling this commitment, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.”**

IV. MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all who confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ, who are in agreement with the purpose of this church, and who affirm the spirit of its Covenant. One may join the IBC as a Regular Member or as a Covenant Member. **Both are considered “church members”.**

Regular Membership

Individuals are received as a Regular member in one of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith in Jesus Christ followed by believer's baptism;
2. By transfer of membership from another Baptist Church;
3. By affirming that one has personally accepted Jesus Christ and was baptized by immersion as a believing Christian.

Those who wish to transfer from churches which do not observe believer's baptism will be offered instruction in the meaning of this baptism. Those who feel that to receive believer's baptism would imply a refutation of their former experience with Jesus Christ may join IBC as Covenant Members on the basis of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

Covenant Membership

Covenant members enjoy the privileges and responsibilities of Regular Members with the **exception of voting concerning the dissolution of the church or concerning changes in the Constitution and Bye-Laws**. One may become a Covenant Member by declaring his/her intent to participate in the support of this church and its activities without severing relations with another church.

Termination of Membership

A letter of transfer and/or recommendation to some other church shall be granted upon request to any Regular or Covenant member in good standing. Membership may be terminated whenever desired by written notice to the Church Council, but unless requested to the contrary will automatically cease when the member moves from the area.

V. FINANCING

The activities of the IBC are financed through member's tithes and offerings and by donations and contributions from other interested persons.

VI. REPRESENTATION

IBC is represented by the congregation, and the Church Council.

VII. GENERAL MEETING

Within 4-months following IBC's business year end (December 31st), the annual General Meeting will be held. Members will be given notice of the meeting by the Church Council during Sunday services or by mail, in either case at least 15-days prior to the meeting. It is the member's responsibility to inform the Church Council of his/her current postal address. One-third (1/3) of the church membership shall constitute a quorum at the General Meeting. Other meetings of the membership shall be called as necessary to conduct specific items of business.

VIII. PASTOR

The Pastor of this church should be an ordained Baptist minister recommended by the Church Council and elected by the church. Salary, conditions and benefits shall be determined at the time of the call but the term of service shall be for a maximum period of 2-years. **Contract can be renewed for one (01) more year period with the approval of the majority Church vote. The Pastor shall lead in the spiritual development of the congregation by preaching the gospel, visiting members and prospective member's, administering baptism and the Lord's Supper, and giving general guidance to the life of the church. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the Church Council.**

IX. CHURCH ORDINANCE

Lord's Supper

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least monthly. The Lord's Supper is understood as a proclamation of the atoning work of Jesus Christ and as a symbol of our faith in Christ and our resulting fellowship with God and one another. All of those who know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour are invited to the Lord's Table.

Baptism

The pastor shall administer the ordinance of baptism in the traditional mode of immersion to those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and who wish to unite with the church as Regular Members. Baptism is understood as the decisive testimony of a person's experience of salvation, of the movement from disbelief to faith. The time for this symbolic action is the beginning of the new life in Christ. Baptism is also offered to those who have had a previous experience of faith in Jesus Christ in another church but have not experienced believer's baptism, if they feel it would be meaningful for their Christian life.

X. CHURCH COUNCIL

Purpose

The Council shall be the general administrative body of the church, recommending objectives and policies of the congregation. It should supervise the Church premises, social welfare, and administration of the church in all legal matters and be responsible for the Spiritual oversight, vision and Pastoral care of the Church Body.

Election

The Council shall consist of a minimum of five (5) members and the maximum will be defined by the needs of the ministry of the church. Regular Members shall constitute a majority of the total. Nominations are made by the members of the church, assessed by the present leadership team and Pastor and presented to the church as candidates for election Term of office – it is expected that a term of 1-year will be served with review, to enable some continuity in the group. Council members will be elected annually by the membership during the General Meeting upon recommendation by the Council. Vacancies during the course of a year shall be filled by the Council.

The regular tenure of such persons on the Council will be subject to the normal election process at the next General Meeting. **The pastor, Church Treasurer, Financial and Church Secretary, are ex-officio members of the Church Council.**

Competence

The Council resolves all those matters regarding the IBC which are not by law or by this Constitution and its Bye-Laws accorded to the congregation. The Council decides, by the majority vote, concerning the authority of Council members to sign for IBC.

Main Responsibilities

During the General Meeting, the Council **shall submit for the congregation's approval the financial report of the previous years and the proposed budget for the next year.** The council shall work with the treasurer in preparing a budget of income and expenditure for each year. It shall authorize expenditure consistent with the approved budget. **IBC Cologne shall hold quarterly business meetings.** Additional or special meetings may be called by the Council or Pastor.

The Council shall appoint such committees from the membership and/or Council as are necessary to conduct church affairs and shall coordinate the programs of these committees and the auxiliary organizations of the church. All actions of the Council shall be subject to the authority of the full membership of the church.

XI. SECRETARY

The secretary shall be elected by the congregation at the General Meeting. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the congregation, of the Council, handle official communications, and keep a current record of members. It is expected that a term of 1-year will be served with review, to enable some continuity. **The Church Secretary shall be an ex-officio member of the Church Council.**

XII. TREASURER + FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The treasurer and the Financial Secretary shall be elected by the congregation at the General Meeting. The treasurer shall receive all monies, keep an accurate account of the finances of the church, issue payments as authorized, and present a report at the General Meeting and/or as requested by the Council.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for conservation of the treasury **and for generating income for the Church.** The Treasurer shall deposit all collections with the Bank, taking a

receipt. The Treasurer would work with the Financial Secretary directly or indirectly to oversee how money is spent or authorizing it as required. It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to ensure that the Church has enough money to carry out their stated aims and objectives, and that they do not overspend. During Church Council meetings, the Treasure can also report to the Church Council the financial status of the Church to ensure checks and balances. Accurate records and supporting documentation must be kept to a reasonable level of detail that provides a clear audit trail for all transactions.

It shall be the duty of the Financial Secretary to, **disburse cash when due necessary from any source** and to give official receipts for same. The Financial Secretary shall write all checks drawn and report in writing at a regular meeting of the Church Council giving the amount of monies received and paid out during the previous active calendar months as stipulated by the Constitution. The Financial Secretary shall furnish the Council with all the financial activities of the Church. S/He shall keep a record of all activities initiated, suspended, and or executed as regards **Finance**. The Financial Secretary shall not make said record of all activities to anyone except as stipulated be the BYLAWS of the Church. The Financial Secretary shall keep an inventory of all records and property of the Church in regards to **Finance**, the same to contain, when possible, date of purchase and amount paid for each article. S/He shall notify all members in arrears of the amount in indebtedness and turn over her/his books for audit and approval when called to do so. S/He shall, on the demand of the Church/ Council, produce her/his books for examination and audit.

The Treasurer + Financial Secretary shall be an ex-officio member of the Church Council. It is expected that a term of 1-year will be served with review, to enable some continuity.

XIII. BUSINESS YEAR

The business year shall begin on January 1st and end on December 31st.

XIV. AMENDMENTS

The Majority vote of the Regular Membership shall constitute a quorum for purposes of amending the Constitution. This Constitution and Bye-Laws may be amended during any General Meeting by a majority vote of the quorum, provided that written notice of such a meeting and of the proposed amendment(s) has been given to the Regular Members at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.

XV. DISSOLUTION

By Faith we believe that IBC Cologne will never be dissolved.

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Matthew 16:18**

In case of the dissolution of IBC, all property and moneys shall be distributed evenly between the European Baptist Convention (EBC) and the European Baptist Federation (EBF).

Approved by majority vote of the IBC Church Business Meeting: Date _____
Signed by the Church Council:

Billy D'almeida Francis Adoga Kingsley Edosomwan Linda Akinyi Okundaye

Marianne D'almeida Solomon Idemudia Vivian von Piechowski