

# Constitution of Scofield Memorial Church

As approved March 26, 2017

## **Article I – Name**

The name of this church shall be Scofield Memorial Church of Dallas, Texas, doing business as Scofield Church.

## **Article II – Government**

This church acknowledges only the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head, and receives the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide in matters of faith, church-order, and discipline, and is accountable to no other ecclesiastical body.

Although Scofield Church is an independent congregation, we seek to cooperate with other like-minded churches, believers and ministries in carrying forward the commission of Christ in Matthew 28:16-20.

The government of the church is vested by the members of the body of believers in the leaders they approve to lead it. Any majority vote of the congregation (which is defined in this document as voting members) at a duly convened meeting shall be final, except when specified otherwise. In this sense, we are a locally governed, congregational church.

However, we confirm our leaders (elders and deacons) under the guidance of God, expecting most matters of ministry vision, business and government to be carried on by those leaders. In this sense, we are governed by elders, with deacons assisting in elder-assigned roles.

Those matters considered to be of major importance should be presented to the membership at a business meeting for approval, such as incurrence of indebtedness, adoption of budgets, approval of supported missionaries, very large expenditures (5% or more of the church budget), calling, approving, and setting apart pastors and church leaders, and any formal ecclesiastical affiliations.

All business and government must be conducted in accordance with the stipulations of this constitution. In addition, elders may establish policies and procedures to ensure church administration and operations are performed in a manner consistent with Christian principles and best practices for church and non-profit organizations.

## **Article III – Membership**

### **Section 1 - Requirements for membership.**

The requirements for membership are:

- A. Faith- A profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- B. Baptism- Prior baptism or baptism by immersion upon membership approval.
- C. Doctrine- General agreement with the doctrinal statement of the church.
- D. Commitment- Members commit to “live by the Spirit” (Romans 8) and to lovingly hold each other accountable to this promise as described in our membership application form.

### **Section 2 - Membership process.**

The membership process is the responsibility of the elders, and requires the following steps:

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- A. Completion of an elder-authorized Scofield Church membership instruction course;
- B. Interview with a member of the elders;
- C. Submission of a completed, signed membership application which includes affirmation of membership commitments and general agreement with the doctrinal statement;
- D. Affirmation of prior baptism OR baptism by immersion upon membership approval;
- E. Approval by a two-thirds vote of the elders present at a duly convened meeting;
- F. Presentation to the church congregation in a worship service or congregational meeting.

**Note:** Scofield Church does not accept letters of recommendation from other churches, nor does the church grant letters of recommendation. Upon acceptance into membership at Scofield Church, other church memberships should be resigned. Exceptions to this policy may be requested for temporary ministry purposes (e.g. international mission assignments, seminary attendance) and must be approved by the elders.

### **Section 3 - Membership rights and responsibilities.**

Scofield Church members are mutually committed to a full-time, covenantal relationship with each other. Only members shall be eligible for appointment to the office of elder or deacon. Only members who have reached the age of 18 are eligible to vote in any congregational meeting.

### **Section 4 – Withdrawal, dismissal, and reinstatement of membership.**

Members may withdraw from the church roll upon their own request. After prayerful consideration, any name may be removed from the church roll by the elders. Reinstatement of membership shall be at the discretion of the elders.

### **Section 5 - Membership reaffirmation**

In order to retain an up to date membership roster of the flock of believers, the elders shall have discretion to call for a periodic membership reaffirmation in which all members are asked to confirm membership commitments including general agreement with the doctrinal statement. Those who do so will continue as members in good standing, but those who do not may be removed from the membership roster at the elders' discretion. The elders shall allow a reasonable time for the completion of the reaffirmation process.

## **Article IV – Church Leadership**

Scofield Church shall be governed by a team of Biblically qualified men (1Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9), who are members of the church, serving in two capacities: elders, who have responsibility for the oversight of the ministry as described by the New Testament; and deacons, who have responsibility for designated duties essential to the church, as enumerated and determined by the elders.

### **Section 1 – Elders**

- A. Relationship to body:

The New Testament calls the church to respect, love and obey its leaders (elders and deacons); the leaders are to elicit and earn this respect by their own loving and godly example.

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## B. Appointment

Elders and deacons may be appointed by the existing elders at any time, subject to congregational confirmation.

The manner and means of confirmation shall be determined by the elders. Church members are at liberty to informally and privately recommend to the elders those they deem to be qualified for church offices at any time.

Any member with reason to believe that an appointee is unqualified for an office should express such concern privately to the elders.

There shall be a minimum of five elders, presuming the availability of qualified men. The elders may establish their own officers, meeting schedule, sub-committees, and ministry assignments as needed for the oversight of the church.

## C. Term and number

The New Testament recognizes no distinction between elders and pastors. Pastors are elders and elders are pastors. Therefore, the elders, as the pastoral leaders of the congregation, shall have liberty to supervise pastoral staff and other ministry positions, outlining responsibilities and lines of accountability.

In general, our pastoral staff will be part of our elder team; some pastoral workers may be brought into the ministry under the elder team as pastoral ministry directors until such time as they are invited into the elder team, at the elders' discretion.

Non-vocational elders may be appointed for two consecutive three-year terms after which time a sabbatical year is called for. At the conclusion of the first term, there can be discussion concerning a mutually agreed upon second term. After a sabbatical year, an elder may be invited back into an active elder role by the elders. The needs of the leadership team should be considered and care should be taken to stagger terms. Those who are set apart to serve the body as vocational pastors are not subject to terms.

The elders shall fix the terms of the deacons, normally in three-year increments.

## D. Discipline

The discipline of elders and deacons shall follow the spirit of the teaching found in 1 Timothy 5:19-22. Individual elders and deacons are subject to the will of their fellow elders in such discipline.

No elder or deacon may act on his own or without authorization in conducting official business of the church, taking care to preserve the practice of plural leadership.

## E. Removal of elders

Any elder or pastoral staff member may resign by notifying the elders in writing.

If the elders believe there is sufficient reason to remove another elder, pastor, deacon or pastoral ministry director, the elders shall make such a recommendation to the congregation with a two-thirds majority vote. A two-thirds congregational vote shall confirm the termination.

## F. Duties of elders and deacons

Elders shall carry out their oversight in the spirit and manner prescribed in the New Testament, which shall include, but not be limited to:

- The prayerful leadership of the ministry.

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- The preaching and teaching of the Word of God.
- The pastoral care and spiritual direction of the congregation.
- The careful management of church programs, ministry, property, and staff. (This includes the responsibility to appoint/relieve officers, teachers, ministry teams and directors, etc. as needed, at any time, for the carrying on of the ministry. Such appointees shall report to the elders or their designee.)
- The wise assignment of service to the body. (This includes the responsibility to make assignments and fix terms for those appointed to service in the ministry of the church).
- The judicious stewardship of church finances. (An annual accounting shall be made to the congregation at the time of the annual meeting by the elders or their designees).
- The earnest representation of the church in the community. (This includes official authorization to act as the representatives of the church in the community for matters pertaining to the life and ministry of the church.)

## **Section 2 – Deacons**

Deacons shall be assigned to designated duties by the elders, reporting also to the elders and shall be accountable to the same.

## **Article V – Staff (vocational) Pastors**

### **Section 1 – General information**

The elders are responsible for those duties generally associated with the biblical outline of their office, preaching the Word, caring for the spiritual welfare of the members and having general oversight of the regular services and activities of the Church. The elders shall delegate and assign these responsibilities amongst themselves, the vocational pastoral staff, and any other pastoral ministry directors.

### **Section 2 -- Calling and Setting Apart of Vocational Pastoral Staff**

At the discretion of the elders, Pastoral Search Committees may be formed to search for vocational, full time pastoral staff, and shall consist of members in good standing. Current pastoral staff may be assigned to the committee as members at the discretion of the elders. Any candidate recommended to the church should be in agreement with the constitution of this church and pastoral searches should comport with existing church policy.

The pastoral search committee shall report to the elders regarding the final candidate selected by the committee. Upon two-thirds approval of the elders, such a candidate will be recommended to the Church congregation for a vote on extending a call to the pastoral staff. The vote is to be taken at a business meeting of the congregation, and shall require a two-thirds majority for approval.

## **Article VI – Committees/Congregational Meetings**

The elders shall form and approve committees and teams for ministry purposes at their discretion and under their oversight.

An Annual Meeting of the Church shall take place at a reasonable time following the end of the church's fiscal year, as designated by the elders. Financial, personnel and ministry plans shall be highlighted.

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Special congregational business meetings may be called by the elders at any time, provided that (except for urgent matters) notice of the meeting be given at the Sunday services before the meeting is to be held.

Congregational meetings may also be called upon a written request of at least thirty (30) voting members in good standing of Scofield Church to the elders.

At the Church business meetings, there shall be at least seventy-five voting members present to constitute a quorum to transact business for the Church. A majority of the voting members present is needed to approve any action except for those matters otherwise specified in this constitution.

The elders shall appoint one of their own to preside at congregational meetings.

## **Article VII – Ordinances**

### **Section 1 - The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper shall be observed as frequently as the elders shall order, and shall be open to all who profess faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Section 2 - Baptism**

Candidates for baptism shall be approved through personal interviews with the elders or those designated by the elders. Given the many different views and modes of baptism along with the wide range of religious backgrounds in our culture, attention will be given to a baptismal candidate's age, understanding of salvation, sufficiency in the scriptures, and commitment to discipleship. Immersion shall be the mode of baptism.

## **Article VIII - Ordination**

Ordination of men to the Gospel Ministry shall be administered only upon the recommendation of the elders after their satisfactory examination of each candidate. Men may be licensed to preach only upon recommendation of the elders after their satisfactory examination of each candidate.

## **Article IX – Church Discipline**

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension for a definite period, deposition from office, excommunication or other suitable action (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14–15; 1 Timothy 5: 19–20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

The purpose of such discipline should be:

- For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined.
- For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them.
- For the good of the corporate witness of the church.
- For the protection of the purity of the body of Christ.
- Supremely, for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

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## Article X - Marriage

### Section 1 - General information

We pledge by God's grace to honor the Lord by committing ourselves afresh to the first institution ordained by God – marriage. We believe that marriage is a union of one woman and one man in which they commit, with God's help, to building a loving, faithful relationship that lasts for a lifetime. Marriage is formed by virtue of a solemn oath, uttered to God, with all proper and customary legal sanctions, which forms a permanent, covenantal, unbreakable union of family and kin. God has established this union for the benefit of humanity, its purposes including:

- Loving, lifelong companionship
- Procreation and nurture of children
- Expressions of sexual intimacy according to biblical standards
- A lasting and God-honoring family legacy
- A vision of God's own covenantal love and redemption
- A husband and wife are to seek unity of purpose in their marriage, understanding that the husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are made in God's image. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church. A wife is to respect her husband as the church gladly respects Christ as the head of the church.

We believe that when marriage is true to its design it brings spiritual, physical, emotional, economic, and social benefits not only to a family but also to the church and to the wider culture. Therefore, we all have a stake in the well-being of marriages. So we pledge to fight for intact, loving and fruitful marriages. We obligate ourselves to prepare, strengthen, and support strong Christian marriages.

We pledge to fight off the evil influences that lead to divorce, cohabitation, adultery, and diminished interest in and poor preparation for marriage. We pledge to nurture the marriages in our midst. We will not settle for the unscriptural pathway of divorce but pledge to seek to restore broken and troubled marriages.

Thus, we will pray for marriages, we will encourage people to marry as they are ready and prepared, we will educate young people concerning the responsibilities and meaning of marriage, and we will seek to influence the wider culture to uphold the ordinance of marriage.

(Sources consulted: The Baptist Faith and Message, Article XVIII, A Christian Declaration on Marriage – 2000.)

### Section 2 - Wedding Ceremonies

According to the inspired scriptures, our conviction is that God established marriage as a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman and that all other intimate sexual activities outside the marriage relationship, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or otherwise, is immoral and therefore sinful. We therefore cannot promote or sanction such activities under any circumstances (Gen. 2:24-25, Ex. 20:14,17, 22:19, Lev.18:22-23, 20:13, Matt. 19:4-6, Rom. 1:18-31; ICor.6:9-10, 15- 20; I Tim. 1:8-11; Jude 7).

We further believe that God created the human race as male and female and that all conduct with the intent to adopt a gender other than one's birth gender is outside of God's declared will and is therefore sinful and misguided.

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Thus, neither Scofield Church or School or any other ministry or official of the church can sanction or officiate weddings involving those of the same sex or those involving so-called “transgender persons,” under any circumstances, but can only sanction and officiate weddings for one man and one woman and only for those who embrace their birth gender and present themselves as fully male and female, according to the realities of their birth gender. Although we are glad to sponsor and officiate weddings for our attendees and members as a service, if the Scofield ministry is ever legally required to perform or sanction same sex weddings or the weddings of those “transgendered” according to this bylaw we will cease to officiate or sanction any weddings for those not members of Scofield Church, and may elect to opt out of officiating weddings altogether.

Further, given these convictions, neither Scofield Church or School will be able to provide special accommodations for so-called “transgendered persons.” All such persons will be asked to use our facilities consistent with their birth gender.

## **Article XI - Dissolution Clause**

In the event this church body is dissolved, disbands, or ceases to function as a church for any reason, the title to all property, both real and personal, shall pass to and be vested in the Dallas Theological Seminary of Dallas, Texas and Camino Global (Formerly CAM International) of Dallas, Texas. In such an event the trustees of Dallas Theological Seminary are hereby authorized and directed by the congregation of Scofield Church to take possession of all property, both real and personal, belonging to Scofield Church and shall pay out of such properties and assets all indebtedness of said church as quickly as reasonably possible. After the payment of all debts of the church, the remaining assets are to be equally divided between the Dallas Theological Seminary and CAM International under the direction of the Board of Trustees of the Dallas Theological Seminary, 3909 Swiss Avenue, Dallas, Texas.

## **Article XII - Changes in This Constitution**

This constitution may be changed according to the following guidelines:

- The changes must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the elders;
- A notice of the proposed change(s) must be submitted to the congregation, allowing a minimum of two weeks study before calling an official church meeting to approve the proposed changes;
- The changes must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote at a congregational meeting.

The doctrinal statement may be changed only as provided in Article XIII, The Doctrinal Statement.

## **Article XIII - Doctrinal Statement**

The doctrinal statement of Scofield Church is provided in Appendix A and hereby incorporated in this Constitution.

The doctrinal statement may only be changed by a three-fourths vote of the congregation at a regularly convened meeting, only upon recommendation by three-fourths vote of the elders and only after notice of the proposed change has been announced and posted at least six months prior to such congregational meeting.

## **Article XIV - Approvals**

Constitution amended and approved by congregation on March 26, 2017.

Doctrinal Statement amended and approved by congregation on June 4, 2017.

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## Appendix A. Doctrinal Statement

As amended and approved by congregation on June 4, 2017

(Note: This Doctrinal Statement can only be changed in accordance with Article XIII of the Constitution of Scofield Memorial Church.)

Introduction: Most churches publish a doctrinal statement or statement of faith in which they set out their essential and distinctive beliefs. We recognize that there are some doctrines which have been primary and universal within all the historic Church, such as what we find in the great creeds. And we accept that guideline which states all believers should take care to hold what has been believed by all believers, everywhere, in all times. However there are also a number of secondary doctrinal beliefs to which we have committed our church. On these matters there are differing convictions across the body of Christ. Complete agreement on every point is not required for the sake of membership in Scofield Church, but it should be known that we will preach, teach and propagate both the primary truths and secondary matters to which we have committed ourselves. In this we try to follow the rule of: “in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things, charity.” If some secondary aspect of our doctrinal statement is a concern, we invite discussion with an elder or pastor.

The Scriptures. We accept the 39 books of the OT and the 27 books of the NT as the infallible, written Word of God, inspired by God and inerrant in all they affirm, including such matters as history and chronology. This Bible functions as the church’s only inspired rule of faith and practice. (2Tim. 3:16-17. 2Pet. 1:21, Jude 3)

God. We affirm that there is one true God, the uncreated Creator of all things, revealed by the Bible, who exists eternally in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, each having the same nature, attributes and perfections, being one in essence, yet distinct in personhood. (Gen. 1:1, Matt. 28:18-19, Mk. 12:29, Heb. 1:1-3)

Angels. We acknowledge the existence of an innumerable company of created, sinless, spiritual beings called angels who exist to serve and worship God. We also acknowledge that Satan is a fallen angel and took with him numerous angels in his fall and rebellion, who are now demons and exhibit warfare against God and humanity. (Matt. 26:53, 2Cor. 4:4, Eph. 6:10-12, 1Tim. 4:1, Heb. 1:14, 2Pet. 2:4, Jd. 6, Rev. 7:11-12)

Humanity. We affirm that humanity was originally created in the image and likeness of God. Having been tempted by Satan, our first parents rebelled against God and as a consequence, all of humanity is naturally dead in trespasses and sin, being sinners by nature, and thus subject to the power of the devil, alienated from the life of God and under His judgment. Only divine grace can remedy the fallen state of the sinner. (Gen. 1:26, 3:1-19, Ps. 51:5, Jer. 17:9, Rom. 3:10-19, Eph. 2:1-3)

Christ. We believe that Christ entered the world according to the prophecies of scripture to become our Redeemer. He was born of a virgin and was sinless in His humanity, retaining full and absolute deity, being fully man and fully God. In infinite love for humanity He became a divine sacrifice for sin, receiving God’s judgment for sin in Himself, in order to provide reconciliation to God. He rose from the dead to display His victory over sin, death and hell, and ascended to the Right Hand of God, from whence He

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shall return. (Luke 1:26-33, John 1:1-2, 29, 3:16, Acts 2:22-24, 2Cor. 5:14, Phil. 3:5-8, 20, 1Tim. 2:6, Heb. 10:11-14, 1Pet. 3:18)

Salvation. Salvation is received by those who repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, through the miracle of regeneration, passing out of death and into life, being freely declared righteous by God, each believer being fully and completely saved as God's child forever from the moment of saving faith. Salvation is therefore by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, apart from any good works, religious deeds or rituals, or any other human efforts or merit, as the blood of Jesus is applied and new life implanted by the Holy Spirit, according to the sovereign operation of God's grace. (John 1:12, 5:24, Acts 13:38-39, 16:30-31, Eph. 1:7, 2:8-9, Titus 3:4-7)

Sanctification. Sanctification is the progressive setting apart of the believer to God. Through the various means of spiritual growth, the believer is to grow in grace through the power of the Holy Spirit. The sinful nature is not eradicated but the believer is called to subdue the flesh and mortify sin through the Spirit. Rom. 6:12-14, 2Cor. 3:17-18, 7:1, Eph. 4:17-24, 1Thes. 5:23)

The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Holy Trinity, with God the Father and God the Son, comes to dwell in each believer at the moment of conversion. He becomes the believer's source of power for sanctification and service. The Spirit seals the believer for the day of redemption and fills the believer with His presence and power. No gift of tongues or healing or any so called second work of grace is a necessary sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Each believer is gifted by the Spirit for service in the body of Christ, and wholly apart from the benefits of salvation the Lord promises to acknowledge and reward each believer for His service to the Lord at the Bema of Christ. We recognize that some of the miraculous gifts from the Apostolic era are not normative for the church today. (John 16:7-15, Rom. 8:9, 1Cor. 12:13, 13:8, 2Cor. 12:12, Eph. 2:20, Heb. 2:1-4)

The Great Commission. The Lord Jesus, before His return to heaven, commanded that His followers preach the gospel to all creatures, seeking to make disciples of all nations. (Matt. 28:18-19, Mark 16:15, Luke 22:19-20, Acts 1:8)

The Church. All believers are united to Christ and are members of the body of Christ, who is the Head of the Church. Membership in Christ's body is to be reflected by a commitment to membership in an organized local church, under qualified leaders, in which the believer serves the Lord and others, keeping the unity of the spirit in love. Matt. 16:18, Acts 2:42-47, 14:23, 1Cor. 12:12-27, Titus 1:5)

Ordinances. We recognize two ordinances, water baptism (believer's baptism) which testifies of individual conversion, and the Lord's Supper, observed by the assembled body, which testifies of Christ's saving work. (Matt. 28:19, Luke 22:19-20, Acts 10:47-48, 18:8-9, 1Cor. 11:23-26)

God's Plan for the Ages. We see a continuity in God's plan throughout Scripture to call out a redeemed people for Himself but also believe that God has used successive, distinct administrations in his dealings with humanity, such as the period of the Mosaic Law, the present period of grace in which the church is revealed, and the future era of the millennial kingdom. Though the privileges and responsibilities in these dispensations vary, the way of salvation has always been the same, by grace through faith. We firmly hold to the hope of the return of the Lord Jesus to judge the living and the dead (and so warn every person), with the resurrection of the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to eternal condemnation. (Col. 1:24-26, Heb. 1:1-2, 1Pet. 1:10-12)

We recognize that there has never been universal agreement in the historic church relative to the end times; however, for well over 100 years Scofield Memorial Church has held to and propagated the following prophetic outline: the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy is the blessed hope of

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Jesus coming to receive to Himself the church, prior to the Great Tribulation, which is a time of judgment over the whole earth. The Great Tribulation will conclude with the Second Coming of Jesus in great glory to bring this age to a close and to usher in the millennial kingdom of Christ upon the earth. Following this, the Great White Throne judgment will seal the fate of the devil and all unbelievers who will be consigned to eternal punishment in hell, while the saved enjoy the presence of God forever in a new heaven and a new earth. (Dan. 9:27, Matt. 24:15-31, John 14:1-3, 1Cor. 15:51-52, 2Cor. 5:8, Phil. 3:20, 2Thes. 1:5-10, Titus 2:13, Jude 7, Rev. 20:1-15)

[This doctrinal statement may be changed only by a three-fourths vote of the congregation at a regularly convened meeting, only upon recommendation by three fourths vote of the elders and only after notice of the proposed change has been announced and posted at least six months prior to such congregational meeting.]