

The Campus Church Constitution

To which is appended

Appendix 1: An Associate Membership clause (ratified December 2006)

Codicil (1) included in the section on Church Government (ratified March 2018)

Appendix 2: Sole Church Leadership Document (ratified July 2021)

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The Campus Church Constitution

Introduction

The Campus Church is an independent Baptist Church based on the teachings of Scripture alone. While no Confession of Faith can adequately summarise the teaching of Scripture, the Church nevertheless subscribes to the teachings summarised in the historic Baptist Confessions of Faith, in particular that which is common to the 1644 and 1689 Baptist Confessions of Faith.

We realise, and history has shown, that holding to any Confession of Faith, however faithful to the Scriptures, is no barrier to apostasy. We are therefore convinced that the best way to guard the Church from error is to guard the pulpit. For this reason only those who take a clear stand on the gospel of salvation through the sovereign grace of God in Christ alone, as outlined in what is commonly called "the Five Points of Calvinism", will be permitted to preach in the Church. The ministry in the Campus Church will be Christ-centred and God-honouring.

The purpose for which the Campus Church exists is to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:23); to edify the body of believers (Eph.4:16); and the fulfillment of the Great Commission to take the gospel to all nations (Matt.28:19).

The Head of the Church is Christ and the worship, preaching and ministry of the Church is centred on Christ. The church is the body of which Christ is the Head (Eph.4:15; 5:23); the bride of which Christ is the Bridegroom (Rev.21:2); the building of which Christ is the Chief Cornerstone (Eph.2:19-22; 1 Pet.2:6-7).

The final authority for all things concerned with doctrine and practice are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments alone. This being so, the Church should constantly examine the Word of God and submit to its teaching in all things.

Church Government

Codicil (1) – ‘At a meeting of members on 17 March 2018 it was agreed (1) that the description of deacons in the constitution should be amended to allow women to be appointed as deacons as well as men; and (2) that, by way of clarification, the spiritual leadership of the church is vested solely in the Elders (a category that today comprises pastor-teachers and evangelists [Ephesians 4:11]).’

1. Christ's government is exercised in particular local churches through duly appointed officers, namely elders and deacons, who teach and apply the Word of God.
2. All the recognised elders and deacons in the Church shall be men. We recognise that both men and women are equal before God, but they have different roles in the Church. In this respect the Church reflects the lordship of Christ (1 Cor.11:3). The role of women is important (Rom.16:1), but it is not that of teaching and authority over men (1 Tim.2:12; 1 Cor. 14:34). Women may be involved in teaching children and other women, but not in leading general public worship.
3. We welcome and desire to have fellowship and, where possible, co-operation with other like-minded churches, but at the same time we reject the right of any external

body to govern or control the affairs of the Church. Accordingly, the Church shall not enter into any association, union or denomination which could involve the loss of its independence or the right under Christ to self-government.

4. In view of the nature of their office, all elders and deacons must subscribe, without reservation, to the doctrinal basis and constitution of the Church as described herein. In particular they must hold to the following clearly taught doctrines of Scripture:
 - a. Salvation is a sovereign work of God for and in His elect whom He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).
 - b. It was for these elect that Christ died in particular, perfectly accomplishing the work of salvation on their behalf, thus meeting all the requirements of a just and holy God (Isa.53:8, 11; Matt. 1:21)
 - c. It is to the elect that the Holy Spirit applies the work of Christ, bringing them to repentance and faith in Christ.
 - d. This gospel should be preached to all, without discrimination, calling upon all sinners to repent of their sin and turn in saving faith to Christ alone for salvation.

Elders

The Scriptures use various terms to designate this office, such as bishops (overseers) pastors, teachers. The terms are used interchangeably in the New Testament and refer to the same office.

1. *Number and qualifications.* Whilst plurality of elders is desirable, only men with the necessary qualifications are eligible for this office. These are laid down in 1 Tim.3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
2. *Function.* The task of the elders is to oversee, rule and teach the Church. They are responsible for conducting public worship, the preaching and teaching ministry, the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, the preservation of purity of doctrine and the maintenance of discipline. All meetings and organisation of the Church come under their supervision. They are responsible for the appointment of leaders in all the realms of church life.

The regular ministry of the Word of God is committed to the elders. With the consent of the Church one of their number may be appointed as full-time pastor or they may invite a suitably qualified elder from another church to join them in this role.

3. *Appointment.* The right of nomination and recommendation to the eldership belongs to the existing elders. Nominees must be approved by 75% of the total church membership. Ordination to the office should take place at a meeting of the Church and be conducted by the existing elders
4. *Resignation or dismissal.*
 - (1) In the event of any serious accusation being brought against an elder, the procedure laid down in 1 Tim.5:19 is to be strictly adhered to.
 - (2) If an elder should prove not to be fitted for his office, or be unable for any other reason to fulfil his office, it is the responsibility of the other elders and the Church to recognise this and he should be asked by the other elders to resign or else be relieved of his office.

Deacons

1. *Number and qualifications.* As with elders, a plurality of deacons is desirable, but only men with the necessary spiritual qualifications are eligible for this office. These are laid down in 1 Tim.3:8-13.
2. *Function.* The task of the deacons in general is to relieve the elders from being burdened by the material affairs of the Church. They will work closely with the elders and all decisions will be made in conjunction with the elders. Final authority on all church life, including material matters, rests with the eldership who would normally delegate matters concerned with the material affairs of the Church to the deacons. Deacons, as spiritually mature men, may also be called upon by the elders to preach.
3. *Appointment.* The right of nomination and recommendation to the diaconate belongs to the elders. Nominees must be approved by 75 % of the total church membership. Ordination to the office should take place at a meeting of the Church and be conducted by the elders.
4. *Resignation or dismissal.* If a deacon should prove not to be fitted for his office, or be unable for any other reason to fulfil his office, it is the responsibility of the elders and the Church to recognise this and he should be asked by the elders to resign or else be relieved of his office.

Church Membership

1. *Its necessity.* For the Christian, belonging to a local church is a necessity. The New Testament assumes that all baptised believers will be added to the Church (Acts 2:41-42). These are local churches and many of the Epistles in the New Testament are addressed to local churches. They are important in God's eyes and every true believer should therefore be a member of a local church.
2. *Admission to membership.* According to the New Testament teaching admission to church membership is through baptism. Church membership is open to all who have exercised repentance towards God and faith in Christ alone for salvation, who have been baptised as believers, and who accept the Constitution of the Church. The elders shall inform the Church of new applications for membership and any member who has grounds for considering an applicant unsuitable for membership should make this known to the elders. A register of members shall be kept. Membership shall cease if a person does not participate regularly in the life of the Church.
3. *Responsibilities.*
 - a. True believers will seek the fellowship of other believers and to this end they will desire to meet for corporate worship as often as possible. Church members will therefore be expected to meet regularly with the Church for worship. Those who do not do so and who are unable to give a valid reason for their absence to the elders may, at the elders' discretion, be removed from church membership.
 - b. To make every effort to maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph.4:1-

6) and to avoid creating divisions (Ps. 133: 1).

- c. To give regular financial support to the Church as the Lord enables them, in obedience to the Scriptural principles (1 Cor. 16:2).
- d. To recognise and submit to the spiritual authority of the Church elders, inasmuch as this authority derives from the Word of God (Acts 17:11).
- e. To bear a consistent witness and testimony to the world.
- f. To minister to the temporal needs of all, as the need arises, and in proportion to their ability.
- g. To show concern for, and to make every effort to promote, the spread of the gospel of sovereign grace throughout the world according to their gifts, abilities and means.

4. *Privileges.*

- a. Members are entitled to partake of the Lord's Supper as often as it is administered.
- b. Members are under the pastoral care of the elders, to whom they have direct access for consultation and prayer whenever it is mutually convenient.
- c. At the discretion of the elders, church members will be consulted on matters relating to the life of the Church. In particular they have the right to express their opinion in the matter of the appointment of church officers.

Church Discipline

In the New Testament discipline takes one of two forms; admonition or withdrawal of fellowship. Any discipline exercised should be *remedial* and not *punitive* and should be carried out in a spirit of concern and love and for the glory of Christ alone (Gal 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:24-25).

In general, discipline may be necessary where a clear, deliberate and persistent breach of the responsibilities of membership has occurred. In particular, the New Testament indicates four main categories of offence requiring church discipline:

- a. Holding and propagating beliefs contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture and destructive of the gospel, or denying any truth fundamental to the gospel such as those summarised in the Church's Confessions of Faith (2 John 9-11).
- b. Creating a faction or division in the Church through party spirit or causing strife (Eph.4:2-2; John 7:20-23; Rom. 16:17).
- c. A deliberate offence committed against a fellow Christian which is not followed by an apology and restitution (Matt.5:23-24).
- d. Persistent behaviour unworthy of a Christian.

Procedures

- a *Charges against a member shall be submitted to the elders, who will investigate the matter.*
- b *The primary objective of the elders in dealing with matters of discipline shall be to bring the offender to repentance before God and into true fellowship with the church (Gal6:1*
- c *Offenders who refuse to listen to the elders and who persist in their offending conduct or beliefs may, as a first step, be required to refrain from participation at the Lord's Supper.*
- d *Persistent refusal to listen to the elders may, at the elders' discretion lead to the offender being excluded from church membership. In this case the church membership shall be informed of the elders' action.*

Church Ordinances

1. Baptism.

- a. Baptism is by immersion in water and is to be administered to those who profess faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord, and give evidence of regeneration.
- b. Since the New Testament indicates that baptism was the rite by which believers became members of the local church (Acts 2:41), those who are baptised in the Campus Church will normally be expected to become members of die Church.

2. The Lord's Supper.

- a. The Lord's Supper shall be administered as frequently as the elders deem desirable.
- b. It is the *Lord's Supper* and we meet around the *Lord's Table*. We therefore welcome to the Lord's Table all who are true believers and who have been baptised on confession of their faith in Christ.
- c. Believers from other churches, who are worshipping with us on a temporary basis because good and legitimate reasons prevent them from attending their own church, may be welcome to the Lord's Table. They should consult with the elders before participating of the Lord's Supper.

Meetings of Church Members

The church of Christ is a "theocracy", and not a "democracy". Christ is the Head of the Church (Col. 1:18; 2:19). In all things it should be governed and ruled by those whom He has appointed and entrusted with responsibilities in His church, the elders and deacons. However, from time to time the elders may deem it wise to consult the Church on certain practical matters relating to the life of the Church.

- a. An Annual General Meeting will be held at which the Church will be informed of the financial position of the Church and any other relevant matters.
- b. Church meetings may also be called by the elders for purposes such as:
 - (1) Reporting on the spiritual condition and life of the Church.
 - (2) Seeking the mind of the Church on the appointment of church officers.
 - (3) Projects involving large capital expenditure.
 - (4) Alterations to the Church constitution.

- c. Church meetings will be announced at the Church services on two Sundays preceding the date of the meeting.
- d. An authorised church meeting for the transaction of business shall consist of at least 50% of the total church membership who are geographically and physically able to be present at the meeting.
- e. Only members over 18 years old may vote at church meetings.
- f. Normally the elders should seek a consensus of church members at meetings, but where they decide to call for a vote the agreement of 75 % of those present will be required for any motions to be carried.
- g. Ballots will normally be open, but secret ballots may be held, at the discretion of the elders.
- h. The elders shall have full authority to exercise discretion over which matters will be placed on the agenda for church meetings.

Appendix 1 – Associate Membership

The Campus Church is a Baptist assembly; we believe our distinctive position on the subject of baptism and church government to be the plain teaching of the New Testament. In upholding these doctrines Christ is honored, and for them at times our brethren have suffered persecution. These precious teachings are helpfully summarized in the London Baptist Confessions of 1646 and 1689. Constitutionally therefore, only those who hold to such teaching may enter the formal, covenanting membership of this assembly.

Yet we recognize that other protestant, evangelical and true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who differ in their view of baptism and church government, are spiritual members of His body. Thus constrained by the love of Christ, in a day when biblical churches are relatively few, we desire to embrace all whom Christ has received and to encourage them in their gospel walk. We recognize our spiritual unity with those who, though differing in ecclesiastical polity, are members of this local church: worshipping faithfully and professing Christ consistently in our midst.

To this end we make provision for associate membership of the Campus Church for those who have a credible profession of Christ but are not Baptist and therefore cannot become formal members. The privileges and responsibilities of formal membership, as outlined in our church's constitution, will be theirs; save that they will not be permitted to hold office or have the right to vote in the business meetings or ballots of the Campus Church but have every liberty to attend such occasions. Associate membership may also be extended to believers who for a limited but significant period are resident in the local area but whose permanent home is elsewhere.

Application for associate membership is to be received by the Elders and will be under their governance. A list of all associate members will be kept, in the same manner as the formal membership.

Appendix 2 – Sole/No Church Leadership

Leadership when there is only one leader or no leaders at all

The Issue

The scripture clearly teaches, indicates and assumes that the leadership of Christ's local churches is mediated by Christ, through his word, to be put in place by a plurality of men (rather than a sole-leader) whom he has chosen and gifted for the task. (By the term 'man' we mean; a male person who is biologically male in gender and sex). The Biblical pattern therefore is not a single man serving on his own, but a group of men who are qualified (according to the qualifications set down in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4) to serve as leaders, under Christ, of his church. However, sometimes a local church finds itself in the undesirable but unavoidable situation where there is only one suitably qualified leader – or sometimes even worse – no leaders at all. If one of these scenarios were to be the case, what is the church to do? How does a church proceed in the most God honouring way? This is the issue that this document aims to deal with – to help us discern a scriptural way forward for a local church that finds itself with either of these two difficulties.

Introductory Comments

The *first* thing to say is how needful this is, both for the local church and for any leader of the that church. The issue is one of protection for both the church on the one hand and for the leader on the other. The church finds herself in a potentially difficult position when it is lead by only one leader as this could effectively enable him to rule in whatever way he might chose and to force the church to follow his every whim and fancy. In short there is little accountability. This can also work against the leader, for if church members were to disagree with or worse, attack the leadership of the church, where formerly it would be directed against the group of leaders and it could not be (or be perceived as) a personal attack on one leader, with only a sole leader, a personal attack is precisely what it would be (or at least could be perceived to be).

Secondly, it is important to state that it is not unbiblical to have one leader or no leaders in a church – for a limited time. Scriptures describes the early churches as functioning without leadership – see Acts 14:21-23. And, in other circumstances, Paul sent Timothy (probably an Evangelist, as well as some kind of Apostolic Assistant) to Ephesus to remove bad leaders and replace them with good ones (See 1 Timothy 1:3-7, 18-20 and 2:12-3:7). Therefore, we should not consider it wrong, disobedient, or sinful to have only one leader or indeed to have no leaders in a church for a limited time. **However, we must be clear; it is not scripturally desirable to have only one or no leaders in a local church. The aim is always for a plurality of biblically qualified men to serve as leaders of the local church. Therefore, the church must not be content with less than this biblical pattern.**

Thirdly, it would be tempting to deal with this in some pragmatic or other way rather than to do the hard work of searching out and conforming to the teaching and implications of scripture on these issues. Whilst we recognise the that Christians have differing views on leadership, and ones that could potentially solve the above issue (such as adopting a congregational or presbyterian view of leadership, or even just choosing some godly people in the church to form a committee or interim leadership group), Campus Church is scripturally and constitutionally a Leader-led (often known as Elder-led) church. The

worst-case scenario for the church would be to adopt procedures or practices that are not clearly scriptural to deal with this issue. And indeed, it would be far better to have one biblically qualified leader – or none – rather than to have one or more unqualified persons in positions they should never be placed in and would not have been (hopefully!) in other circumstances.

Scriptural Analysis

What then does the Bible say that we should do about these issues? Well, it says quite a lot in terms of principles, but very little in terms of direct statement.

First, in the scripture leaders lead – and nobody else does. That is to say that we never have an instruction or see a situation where church members act as leaders or do the tasks of leaders. If there is no leadership or a only a sole leader, the decision-making process for the church could be impaired, and so maintaining some form of Biblically exemplified plural leadership is vitally important to the health of the whole church.

Second, there was much more practical connection between the individual local churches of the NT. This resulted in a fluidity of ministry responsibility on the side of the leaders to minister in other contexts than their own local church, and a recognition of this by the believers as the leaders moved and ministered among the churches. For examples, see Acts 9:32-43, Acts 11:19-30, Acts 15:1-35, Acts 18:1-11, 18-23 and 24-19:1. This implies two things for us:

1. that we recognise that leaders of individual local churches can have ministry responsibilities to other believers elsewhere and we should release them to minister in this way, and
2. that we should be willing to accept and recognise and be willing to use the gifts of God to his churches in general (Ephesians 4:11) even if they do not normally minister in our congregation.

Third, the issue of accountability is a particularly important principle in the Bible. Whilst scripture encourages leaders in the importance of watching their own life and doctrine closely (1 Timothy 4:16), it is necessary for all of us, including leaders, to have those in their lives that will hold them accountable to standards laid down in scripture for leaders to maintain. Proverbs 12:15 says, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice” and Ecclesiastes 4:12 comments, “And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” (see also v.9-12). In fact, the very qualifications themselves, two of them in particular, imply direct accountability among leaders.

1. Blamelessness (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6). This is the overarching qualification for leadership and is the standard by which all the other qualifications are measured. In addition to the local church members keeping some accountability with the sole leader, another man or a few men who are functioning at a leadership level need to make sure other leaders are indeed held to the high standards of God’s word.
2. Holding firm to the trustworthy word, teaching that word and rebuking those who contradict the word (Titus 1:9). The context (esp. v. 10-16) clearly shows that other leaders are needed to do this. There needs to be those who can discern, challenge and correct leaders teaching where necessary. We also see this accountability among leaders play out in Acts 21:17-26 and in Galatians 2:1-10.

Campus Church Plan

With all of this said then let us turn to the practice of what a local church should do in either of these two circumstances.

1. What to do in a Singularity

We propose the following statement:

The sole leader should propose and appoint up to 3 currently serving Pastors (from this point referred to as Consulting Pastors) to assist the sole leader and the church with the following responsibilities (See below for how the Consulting Pastors will be chosen).

In regard to the sole leader:

- To provide support and accountability in regard to his own life and ministry according to the qualifications set down in scripture.
- To provide support and council in regard to church matters, when invited by the sole leader to do so.
- The sole leader should meet with or have face-to-face communication with one of the Consulting Pastors once per month.
- Any major decisions, or decisions deemed potentially difficult to the church – the sole leader will ascertain the thoughts of the Consulting Pastor(s) and to make these known to the church if the church so desires.
- To keep the sole leader focused on the primary spiritual and practical purpose of the church – ‘making disciples of all nations’ (Matthew 28:19), by equipping the church so that the church can build each other up into Christ-likeness and reach the lost.
- **To focus the sole leader on seeking the Lord and doing all he can practically to seek out at least one additional church leader – either self-supported or part-time/full-time supported by the church.**

In regard to the church:

- In a last resort, to be an option to any church member to approach with genuine concerns regarding the sole leader – either in his character or ministry.
- To be asked to be present at any members meeting. (It is assumed that this would be highly unusual and would therefore require very good reason for this step to be taken. The sole leader must be in agreement as it will be his responsibility to make this arrangement.)
- For one of these men to preach at Campus Church at least once per year. The sole leader to arrange this.
- To be a point of contact, in an emergency, when the sole Pastor is either away ministering or on holiday.

Choosing the Consultant Pastors:

The Consulting Pastors must be men chosen from churches that believe the same key doctrines of the faith as Campus Church which are stated in the churches Constitution. They must be currently serving in Leadership in ministry. In addition, they must understand and agree to promote the independency of Campus Church as a local church in its own right and agree not to use their role as an opportunity to gain some measure of authority or position in the church. Up to 3 Consultant Pastors could be chosen, although this many may not be necessary in normal circumstances. If the church or sole leader desires to have a retired Pastor (i.e. one who is completely retired and not serving in a ministry role) to act as a Consultant Pastor, he must be assisted by at least one other presently serving Pastor.

The Consulting Pastors will be chosen in the following way:

The sole leader will suggest men to the church members – and it is hoped that these will be accepted by the membership. The responsibility for approaching, vetting and appointing the potential Consultant Pastors lies with the sole leader.

It is important to note the following. If the church does find itself with a sole leader (and indeed with no leaders) we need to have already fostered good relationships with leaders from other churches, local and internationally, so that the process of finding Consultant Pastors can be a relatively simple one. Thus, proactivity in fellowship with local churches and having visiting preachers at Campus Church should continue to be an important part of our church life.

Powers or authority of Consultant Pastors in the above scenario

It is important to make clear that in the scenario where there is a sole leader, the Consulting Pastors do not have any power or authority in the Campus Church. (They are there to act as advisors and supporters to the sole leader and it is assumed that only in unusual circumstances would they need to act as such towards the church.) It is necessary that Consultant Pastors do not have authority in Campus Church so as to preserve the right under Christ of the church to self-government, as is the pattern laid down in scripture and explained in our constitution under the heading of church government.

2. What to do when there are no leaders

We propose the following statement:

Prior to the church being left with no leadership, as far as is possible, the sole leader is to have approached a Biblically qualified candidate to arrange to 'loan' an elder (from this point referred to as the 'loaned elder') for the express purpose of leading the church on an interim basis in the following key tasks:

- To keep the spiritual and practical focus of the church on its primary responsibility of 'making disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19) by; building each other up into Christ-likeness and reaching the lost with the gospel.
- To focus the church (both in prayer and in practical pursuit) on seeking the Lord for at least one leader but more ideally a plurality of leaders – whether self-supported or part-time/full-time supported by the church. They are to search for and recommend men as potential candidates who meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, 1 Peter 5 and who may suit the church in terms of Campus Church's identity, values and vision.
- To provide some regular teaching ministry at Campus Church.
- To lead the church members meetings.
- To assist in any personal or church crisis.
- To recommend/give advice when asked regarding other Pastors/Preachers to lead Sunday services and take Bible Studies – whatever the needs of the church are etc.

Notes: 1) It is possible that one of the Consultant Pastors (see discussion under the sole leadership scenario) could fulfil this role or indeed that two or more could share it between them. **2)** It would seem to be wise to agree a time limit, with an end date or an occasion for reassessing the situation. (Ideally, of course, when a permanent leader is found and appointed. However, it could be possible that another loaned Elder may be needed in addition to the one already in place or to replace the original loaned elder.)

Powers or authority of the loaned Elder

It is important to realise that for the Biblical pattern of leadership to continue to exist that the Campus Church membership recognise the authority of the Loaned Elder – as if he were the permanent leader of the church. However, the authority of the Loaned Elder has one goal and purpose – for him to lead the church to finding the man or men of God’s choosing for the work of the permanent leadership of Campus Church.

As scripture teaches that the church has the responsibility and willingness to pay its leaders (1 Timothy 5:17-18) – thus the church must also be willing to financially support the Loaned Elder if he should need such support.