

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF BANGKOK

Adopted by Congregational Vote on February 24, 2008

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ARTICLE I. STATEMENT OF IDENTITY

This church shall be known as “The Evangelical Church of Bangkok, Thailand.” The Evangelical Church of Bangkok (ECB) is a multinational, multicultural and multigenerational congregation living in the unity of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit for witness in Bangkok and beyond, compelled to maintain our international heritage and identity and fulfill our mission to make disciples of all nations.

ARTICLE II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to serve the interests of Christ’s Kingdom by (a) furthering the cause of Christian missions, (b) furthering a Christian witness in the English language in Bangkok and (c) promoting spiritual growth for people of all nationalities through Biblical teaching, worship, prayer, fellowship, and service.

ARTICLE III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe that certain truths are indispensable for genuine Christian life and witness. Among these truths are...

- ✠ We believe that GOD has revealed Himself to us in His creation, in the Bible and in His Son, Jesus Christ. God is to be worshiped and obeyed as the source and Lord of all life.
- ✠ We believe the BIBLE to be the inspired trustworthy Word of God. It is our only rule of faith and practice. The Bible is to be taught and preached, applying its truth to everyday life.
- ✠ We believe that PEOPLE were originally created innocent and pure, but that the first of these fell through the sin of disobedience to God so all people and all creation since then have been separated from God. Therefore all people are corrupt in body, soul and spirit by nature and are in need of reconciliation with God.
- ✠ We believe that JESUS CHRIST is God’s unique Son, sent to our world as God in the flesh. He was fully God and fully man. He came to reveal God to us and to provide a way for us to know God personally and have eternal life with Him.
- ✠ We believe that God has graciously provided SALVATION through Jesus Christ who died on the cross as the substitutionary atonement for sin, and rose again from the dead to open the way to new life with God. All who place their complete trust in Jesus Christ are saved from their fallen condition by God’s grace alone, apart from works or merit.
- ✠ We believe that God’s HOLY SPIRIT gives new and eternal spiritual life to all who receive Jesus Christ by faith. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer, providing power for service and enabling a holy lifestyle.
- ✠ We believe in the TRINITY – that God is one but three distinct persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- ✠ We believe in the CHURCH as the body of Christ, both universal and local. We acknowledge the commission of Christ to the church to proclaim the Good News to all people and to make disciples. We acknowledge the command of Christ to love our neighbors, resulting in service to the church and society.
- ✠ We believe that the KINGDOM OF GOD has come to us in the person of Jesus Christ on earth and that He will return to earth to complete the establishment of God’s eternal reign over all creation.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

The public services and ministries of the church will be open to all people regardless of nationality, religious profession or background. Individuals may request membership at ECB if they:

- profess Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord;
- have received baptism (see Article VIII.A 'Baptism' for more details);
- attend the public worship services or participate in the ministries of the church on a regular basis;
- are age 18 or above;
- attend the ECB membership class;
- have read and are in agreement with the Purpose as listed in Article II;
- have read and are in agreement with the Statement of Faith as listed in Article III and;
- have read and are in agreement with the *Church Covenant*.

Upon approval by the Elders, an individual who meets the above conditions will be introduced to the congregation as a member and will be eligible to vote at congregational meetings. The Elders will oversee the maintenance of the membership roll. A member who is not active for six months or more may be removed from membership by the Elders.

Church discipline involving a member is a serious issue, with reconciliation, repentance and restoration as its goal, that shall be addressed by the Elders in line with Biblical principles. The Elders are responsible to develop the Church Discipline Policy and communicate its details with the congregation.

Membership does not involve any legal responsibilities nor does it indicate any affiliation with any group other than the Evangelical Church of Bangkok. Membership at ECB is not restrictive with regard to membership at other churches.

ARTICLE V. LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

ECB oversight shall be by a body of Elders assisted by a Board of Deacons to oversee administrative matters.

A. Elders

The Elders are a group of Biblically qualified men who are charged with leading ECB under the leadership of Christ Jesus. God raises up and selects men to be Elders; ECB recognizes God's calling through the selection process described below:

Qualifications

A nominee for Eldership shall be a Member of ECB who has served actively for at least six months prior to the date of his nomination. The time requirement can be overridden by unanimous Elder consent in special circumstances. The Biblical qualifications for this position are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1; 6-9; and 1 Peter 5:2-3.

Responsibilities

The Elders are responsible for the general oversight of all spiritual matters pertaining to the work of ECB (1 Timothy 5:17); shall protect against doctrinal error (Acts 15:6-29; Titus 1:9); shall lead ECB (1 Peter 5:3); shall pray for the sick (James 5:14); shall preach and teach (1 Timothy 5:17); shall develop and appoint leaders (2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Timothy 4:14); shall welcome visitors (Acts 15:4); shall supervise themselves and all ECB members (Acts 20:28); and maintain church discipline (1 Thessalonians 5:12). The Elders shall regularly report to the congregation the affairs and status of ECB and its ministries.

Term

Elders shall serve three year terms. Following two full years of service, the congregation shall reaffirm an existing Elder at the next Annual Congregational Meeting. Thus, the first term of an Elder selected mid-year will be less than three years.

Selection

When the need arises, the Elders may choose, examine, and recommend one or more men for affirmation by the congregation to be new Elders. Members of the congregation may also suggest names to the Elders for consideration. The Elders will notify the congregation of those selected to be Elders at least two months before the congregational vote of affirmation providing evidence of each potential Elder's qualifications for service. After prayer and consideration, the congregation will affirm each new Elder through a congregational vote. The minimum number of Elders serving at ECB is seven. In the case of a vacancy during the year, the Elders shall appoint qualified individuals to serve until the Annual Congregational Meeting.

Removal of an Elder

An Elder may relinquish his position prior to the expiration of his term upon his request.

Following the biblical approach outlined in 1 Timothy 5:19-20 and Matthew 18:15-18, any two or more church members may request the removal of an Elder after prior avenues have been exhausted. This request shall be placed before the Board of Elders for consideration on whether there is sufficient cause. The Board of Elders may remove an Elder from his position if two-thirds of the Elders so vote (not including the Elder in question). If an Elder is to be removed from his position other than upon his own request, the Elder shall be given at least two weeks notice of the meeting before the Board of Elders. Every effort will be made to effect reconciliation and restoration of an Elder removed for disciplinary reasons.

An Elder may also be removed, apart from approval by the Elders, by a congregational vote of 75% or greater of all ECB members. In this unfortunate event, the congregational vote may only proceed two weeks or more after written notice (including member signatures of 25% or more of ECB members) requesting removal is presented to the church.

Leadership Among the Elders

The Elders shall appoint from among them one person who shall be the "leader amongst equals." He will be known as Head Elder. The Head Elder will provide leadership to the Elders as they lead the congregation in the execution of its mission, the pursuit of its vision and the ef-

efficient and productive implementation of all church programs. The Head Elder will also oversee the paid Elders, paid Deacons and other staff of the church in day-to-day affairs. Except in unusual circumstances, the Head Elder will be a full-time paid staff member of ECB (fulfilling what is commonly recognized as the role of Senior Pastor).

Elders should strive in all governance decisions to be unanimous in the spirit since the Elder body operates as a union. In the event of disagreement among the elders, decisions shall be by simple majority of all Elders.

ECB has a special relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. At least one of the Elders shall hold pastoral credentials with the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

B. Deacons

The Deacons shall consist of qualified men and women who serve the church by working to provide logistical and material support so the Elders can concentrate their effort on the Word of God and prayer. God raises up and selects men and women to be Deacons; ECB recognizes God's calling through the selection process described below:

Qualifications

A nominee for the Deacons shall be a Member of ECB. The biblical qualifications for this position are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Responsibilities

In the spirit of Acts 6:1-6, Deacons shall be responsible to serve the church's administrative needs in areas including, but not limited to, facilities management, benevolence ministry, day-to-day financial management, church development and building and human resources.

Authoritative teaching is a role reserved for the Elders. All teaching conducted by any other servant of Christ within the church body shall be under the authority of the church Elders.

Policies, procedures and other documents describing the implementation of this constitution and practices of ECB shall be drafted and maintained by the Deacons with annual review. Any changes to these documents must be approved by the Elders.

Term

Deacons shall serve one year terms. Each year, the congregation shall have opportunity to reaffirm existing Deacons at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

Selection

Each year, the Elders and Deacons will choose and examine members of ECB to be Deacons. Members of the congregation may also suggest names to the Elders for consideration. By the end of each year, the Elders will announce the names of those recommended to the congregation for affirmation as Deacons. The congregation will affirm the Deacons each year at the Annual Congregational Meeting. If needs arise during the year for additional Deacons, the Elders

may choose, examine, and appoint biblically qualified men and women on a provisional basis until the next Annual Congregational Meeting. At a minimum, there shall be 9 Deacons in addition to any Elders leading the Deacons.

Additionally, the Siam Mission of the Christian and Missionary Alliance will appoint one biblically qualified person to serve each year as a Deacon.

Removal of a Deacon

A Deacon may relinquish his or her position prior to the term's expiration upon request.

Following the biblical approach outlined in 1 Timothy 5:19-20 and Matthew 18:15-18, any two or more members may request the removal of a Deacon after prior avenues have been exhausted. This request shall be placed before the Board of Elders for consideration on whether there is sufficient cause. The Board of Elders may remove a Deacon from his or her position by majority vote. In the case where a Deacon is removed apart from his or her choice, every effort will be made by the Elders to affect reconciliation and restoration.

Leadership of the Deacons

The Elders will choose Elder(s) as necessary to provide guidance and leadership to the Deacons. This Elder will lead any meetings of the Deacons and facilitate communication between the Elders and the Deacons. Decisions of the Board of Deacons shall be by simple majority with a two thirds quorum of those eligible to decide.

C. Other Leadership

All positions of leadership associated with ECB shall be filled with members. This includes all teaching positions (Sunday School, home groups, etc.), the leading of worship services, and leadership positions for all other recognized ministry areas. All teaching and preaching from these leaders is expected to be consistent with the Statement of Faith of ECB and is practiced under the authority of the Elders. In special circumstances, the Elders may invite other qualified Christians to minister at ECB.

ARTICLE VI. FINANCES

In order to be above reproach before God and one another as stewards of all the Lord has entrusted to ECB, it is important to establish proper financial accountability (I Timothy 6:9,10; I Corinthians 16:3,4). To ensure this accountability, the Deacons will exercise oversight of all financial matters of the church, under Elder authority. To support this responsibility, a Treasurer (must be an Elder or Deacon) shall be assigned by the Elders and provide an account to the Deacons for all ECB finances. The duties of the Treasurer are described in ECB's financial policies and procedures.

A. Annual Procedures

- The financial year for ECB shall run from January 1 to December 31.
- The Treasurer shall compile a new calendar year budget, based upon input from the Elders, the Deacons, and other ministry leaders. The budget shall state all financial data including the re-

ceipts, expenditure and originally budgeted amounts for the current year for each ministry and the proposed budgeted expenditure for the following year for each ministry. It shall be presented first to the Deacons, then to the Elders, and then to the congregation for review at least one month prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting. Members will affirm the annual budget at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

- Whenever the Deacons and Elders must make significant budget adjustments (altering a single budget line item by an amount that is 10% or more of the total annual budget or taking action that alters multiple budget line items by amounts that total an amount that is 25% or more of the total annual budget), these must be presented to the congregation for questions and comments at least one month prior to formal adoption.

The Deacons shall annually engage an appropriate independent auditor to audit the year's financial records and report findings back to the Deacons and Elders.

B. Salary Compensation

Salaries and benefits to be paid to ECB staff shall be individually approved by the Deacons as recommended by the Treasurer and a Deacon-led human resources team, and follow the same procedure for approval as the annual budget. Any person receiving compensation from the church shall not be in a position to approve the amount of the salary or benefits. Staff salary and benefits shall be reviewed annually. ECB will comply with all Thai laws governing volunteer and paid service.

Contingent on funding approval through the budgeting process, the Elders shall determine who to hire as staff. Dismissal of staff is also determined by the Elders. The Deacons will assist the Elders in managing staff benefits and other administrative issues. Details can be found in ECB's staff policies and procedures.

C. Records

The official records of all church officers are the property of the church. The church shall maintain the following records and reports:

- a. Adequate and correct books and records of accounts (financial records).
- b. Minutes of the proceedings of its members, Elders, Deacons and special meetings.
- c. A record of its members, including their names and addresses.
- d. A record of persons baptized at ECB.
- e. Contribution statements shall be issued to donors annually.

D. Other Financial Policies and Procedures

Financial policies and procedures including, but not limited to use of funds, collection of funds, audits, and authorized signatories may be found in ECB's financial policies and procedures.

ARTICLE VII. CHURCH MEETINGS

A. Sunday Services

ECB will hold Sunday morning worship services as well as other times of prayer, praise, and Bible teaching. These meetings are intended to complement one another so that the church body will be provided with a balance of those elements essential to Christian worship (e.g. corporate prayer, teaching, preaching, sharing, mutual edification, praise, singing, Christian ordinances, exercising of spiritual gifts, etc.). These meetings may be regularly scheduled or impromptu, in any case, upon approval of the Elders. In addition ECB shall offer Sunday ministries for children and youth.

B. Group Meetings

Throughout the week there may be smaller group meetings for specific purposes such as: home fellowship, discipleship, youth activities, etc. All such meetings organized, announced and or coordinated by ECB staff shall fall under the teaching authority of the church Elders.

C. Elder Meetings

There shall be at least one meeting of the Elders each month to pray, address shepherding issues, and conduct business associated with oversight of ECB. Additional meetings may be called by the Elders with a frequency sufficient to meet all responsibilities of the Elders.

D. Deacon Board Meetings

The Deacons shall meet together with a frequency sufficient to address the administrative needs of ECB and all other responsibilities of the Deacons.

E. Congregational Meetings

Town Hall Meetings

Prior to any church congregational business meetings (annual or special), the Deacons shall organize informational "town hall" meetings to facilitate congregational review and questioning. Representatives from the Deacons and Elders are required to attend all town hall meetings. There shall be at least two town hall meetings with one on a weekend and one on a week-day after normal business hours, practically.

Business Meetings

There shall be at least one annual ECB meeting (Annual Congregational Meeting) for conduct of business that affects the entire church body. The meeting will be within the first 60 days of each new year and will include the congregation's affirmation of the annual budget and affirmation of church leadership.

In addition, other (special) congregational meetings may be called for business as required. These additional meetings shall be approved by the Elders and may be requested by any member of ECB.

Notification of members for special congregational meetings is to be given in the Sunday morning worship services for two consecutive Sundays prior in a manner to ensure maximum congregational participation.

Congregational meetings requiring a vote (except removal of an Elder) shall be held with a voting quorum of at least two thirds of ECB members present. The vote shall be a private ballot vote, with a simple majority of members voting in support required for affirmation. Elders shall ensure all votes are valid.

Disciplinary Meetings

Congregational meetings for removal of an Elder shall be held with a voting quorum of at least three fourths of ECB members present. The vote shall be a private ballot vote, with a 75% majority of members voting in support required for removal. This meeting shall be conducted by a Deacon, selected by a majority of Deacons. Elders shall ensure all votes are valid.

ARTICLE VIII. ORDINANCES

ECB recognizes that the Lord has established two ordinances to be faithfully observed in the church. These are: *baptism*, following conversion; and *the Lord's Supper*, which is celebrated regularly.

A. Baptism

Water baptism is symbolic of the Christian's spiritual union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). According to the Biblical pattern, a new Christian is to be baptized after conversion at the earliest convenient time as an expression of personal faith in Christ and public identification with the Church, consistent with the New Testament practice (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:10, Acts 8:36-40). A believer, who regards infant baptism as valid, will not be required to undergo baptism as a condition of membership.

A person desiring to be baptized should contact the church office, who will arrange a meeting with the candidate at the earliest convenient time. Two Elders are to interview the candidate to hear his or her profession of faith. The candidate for baptism should demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of sin, repentance, substitutionary atonement, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Particular care should be taken to ensure the candidate understands the meaning of baptism as an important act of obedience and outward profession, but not a condition of salvation. If the men conducting the interview determine that some of these issues remain unclear after the first meeting, further instruction and additional meetings may be required. Children who seek baptism must meet the same requirements as adults.

If the one desiring baptism gives a credible profession of faith, arrangements shall be made for a public baptism service at the earliest convenient time. Before the candidate is baptized, he or she is to be given opportunity to give a public profession of faith in Christ either through a testimony or by answering questions asked by the one performing the baptism.

B. The Lord's Supper

Because the Lord exhorted us to do this in remembrance of Him (1 Corinthians 11:24), and in light of the practice of the early church (Acts 2:42, 20:7), ECB usually observes the Lord's Supper on a monthly basis. The ordinance shall be carried out under the supervision of the Elders. Participation in the Lord's Supper is open to all who profess faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. Those who partake should examine themselves as to whether they have unresolved sin against God or another believer (Matthew 5:23-24; 1 Corinthians 11:28-29).

ARTICLE IX. RELATIONSHIP

The church is organized under the sponsorship of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. It functions independently under the governance of the Elders and administration of the Deacons.

ARTICLE X. PROPERTY

In accordance with the property laws of Thailand, title to all lands and buildings of the Evangelical Church of Bangkok Thailand is vested in a church foundation of the Gospel Churches of Thailand until such time that property laws of Thailand or church legal status change to allow for direct ownership by the church.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the quorum required at an annual meeting or specially called congregational meeting provided the proposed amendments are unanimously made by the Elders and announced one month prior to the annual meeting. A copy of this Constitution shall be filed with and kept by the Christian and Missionary Alliance.