

COVENANT AND  
CONSTITUTION OF  
CENTRAL MOUNTAINS  
BAPTIST CHURCH



## Central Mountains Baptist Church Covenant

### (Our promises to each other and the Lord)

Having been lead of the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on publicly admitting our faith in Him, having been baptised (totally immersed) in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this local church, sincerely and joyfully enter into this promise to each other, as one body in Christ.

We purpose therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church as we grow in knowledge, Christ likeness, and comfort of the Scriptures; to encourage its spirituality and to help it to prosper; to attend its services regularly; to support its worship, ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper), discipline, and doctrines; to give it its proper priority over all human organisations and activities, to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as the Lord has prospered us, to the support of the work of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We also purpose to maintain family and personal devotions; to train our children according to the Word of God; to live in proper family relationships as set out in the Word of God; to do all that we can toward the salvation of family, friends, and acquaintances; to live out our Christian lives with wisdom in the world; to be just in all our dealings, faithful in our promises, and being examples in our conduct; to avoid all gossip, slander, and unrighteous anger; to abstain from all forms of activity which may dishonour our Lord, cause stumbling to a fellow believer, weaken our own resistance to sin, or hinder someone's salvation; to be enthusiastic in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Saviour; and to give Him the pre-eminence in all things. We further understand that the sale and use of alcoholic drinks, or other mind altering substances can affect our reputation and victory over sin. We purpose therefore to deal with these things as we grow in Christ, as well as any other habit that may be hurtful to our Christian lives- like gambling, viewing of questionable videos and the like.

We further purpose to encourage one another in the exciting certainty of our Lord's return; to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offence, but always ready to put things right, and, remembering the heart of Christ to seek reconciliation without delay.

We moreover purpose that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like faith and practice where we can carry out the spirit of these promises and the principles of God's Word. If there is no such church, we shall seek, with the Lord's help, to establish one.

# **Constitution of the Central Mountains Baptist Church, New South Wales, Australia.**

**Adopted 25th June, 1995.**

## **The Preamble**

Trusting wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, and trusting Him only, believing in the teachings of the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of the Living God, we have committed ourselves to one another as a body of baptised (immersed) believers, and we adopt this constitution as a declaration of our convictions and preferences so that we may carry on the Lord's work decently and in order.

## **Article I-Name**

The name of this organisation shall be Central Mountains Baptist Church Inc. It is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of NSW.

## **Article II-Purpose**

Our purpose individually and as a church body is to be like Christ, thereby bringing glory to God.

The means for achieving our purpose is by conducting a Baptist church in accordance with the Word of God.

Our single purpose will require that we promote the worship of our God, build each other up in the faith, teach the whole counsel of God, baptise and remember the Lord's supper, seek to win the lost to Christ through personal witnessing and the preaching of the gospel, carry on a vigorous missionary programme around the world, establish other Baptist churches, defend the faith, and maintain a good testimony for Christ in our community by godliness, kindness, and genuine love for others.

In summary we purpose to be loving in character (to God and to men) and we purpose to be witnesses in terms of our role.

## **Article III-Associations**

This church is autonomous, being free of all external religious hierarchy. It is subject only to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. It has the right to cooperate and associate with other Biblical groups on a voluntary basis. There cannot be, and will not be any cooperation with apostates, or groups that permit the presence of apostates. An apostate in this constitution is a person who now denies the fundamentals of the faith.

## **Article IV-Articles of Faith.**

### **1. The Scriptures.**

We believe in the sufficiency and authority of the Holy Bible; that every word of the original writings were inspired (verbal inspiration) in all of the sixty-six books (plenary inspiration), being the product of spirit-controlled men, and therefore the Bible is absolutely reliable and without error in all matters of which it speaks.

We believe that God preserved His Word down through the centuries, so that the Bible accurately reflects the original manuscripts.

We believe the Bible to be the true centre of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct and belief shall be tested. With the last written book of the New Testament we believe that God completed what He wanted to reveal to man in this age.

II Timothy 3:16-17, II Pet 1:19-21.

### **2. The True God**

We believe there is one and only one eternally living and true God, who is an infinite Spirit, the Maker and supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honour, confidence and love. We believe the Father is God, the Son is God and the Spirit is God; yet we believe in one God. The Father, Son and Spirit are equal in every perfection, but exercise distinct and harmonious roles as they act. In particular they had different roles in the great work of redemption.

Exodus 20:2-3, I Cor 8:6, Rev 4:11.

### **3. Jesus Christ.**

#### **A. His Identity.**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the one and only Son of God who has always existed eternally with God. He is the Saviour whom God sent into the world to redeem the world. He is, in Himself, truly God.

John 1:1-34.

#### **B. His Incarnation.**

We believe that He took upon Himself a body and lived amongst men; being fully God and fully Man.

Philippians 2:6-8.

### C. His Virgin Birth.

We believe that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can be born of a woman, and that He is both the Son of God and God the Son.

Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:35, John 1:14

### D. His Death.

We believe He died on the cross as man's substitute, suffering the full force of God's righteous anger against sin, thereby paying the penalty of sin for each and every individual. We, who have believed in Him, are therefore no longer servants of sin, but belong to Christ. Because of the penalty He paid, Christ is said to have redeemed us.

Matthew 27:35-54, I Corinthians 15:3, Luke 23:33, II Corinthians 5:21, I John 2:2, Titus 2:14, Romans 6:17-18.

### E. His Blood.

We believe that His blood, which was given in death at Calvary, is the only permanent and sufficient cleansing for the sins of men.

Hebrews 9:22, Ephesians 1:7, I John 1:7.

### F. His Resurrection.

We believe that He rose bodily from the tomb, and through His resurrection, each redeemed individual, has new life in Christ now, and will experience a resurrection like that of Christ, in the future.

Luke 24:1-7, I Corinthians 15:4, Romans 4:25.

### G. His Ascension.

We believe that He ascended into (went back to) Heaven from whence He came and is now at the Father's right hand, carrying on His ministry of prayer for us (intercession), as our High Priest.

Luke 24:50-51, Acts 2:31-33, Hebrews 7:25, 12:2, I John 2:1, Hebrews 2:17, 5:9,10.

### H. His Return.

We believe that the Lord will return bodily before the tribulation period, in order to take His people home. After the tribulation period, He will return to earth in judgement, before the millennium, where He sets up His Kingdom. (See also Section 19. "The Things to Come".)

I Thessalonians 4:13-5:9, Revelation 19:11-20:6.

## **I. His Lordship.**

We believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, being the Head of the Body of Christ, His church.

Acts 2:36, Colossians 1:18, I Corinthians 12:13.

## **4. The Holy Spirit.**

We believe the Holy Spirit is a person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; He restrains both the world and the Evil One until God's purposes are fulfilled; He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgement; He convinces of the truth of the Word of God in preaching and testimony; He is the one who gives the new birth; He seals, enables, guides, teaches, bears witness, and helps the believer setting him/her apart unto God. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells each and every believer from the moment he receives Jesus Christ as Saviour; simultaneously the believer is given a 'gift of the Spirit' for the purpose of building up other Christians and reaching others for Christ. We believe the sign gifts, namely Healing, Working of Miracles, Tongues, and Interpretation of Tongues were temporary for the purpose of confirming and authenticating the message of the apostles and others in the apostolic era. We believe the Spirit-filled life is to be the normal experience of every Christian, and that regardless of one's occupation or profession, he is filled with the Spirit when he is in fellowship with Jesus Christ and His Word.

John 14:16-17, Matthew 28:19, Hebrews 9:14, John 14:26, Luke 1:35, Genesis 1:1-3, John 16:8-11, Acts 5:30-32, John 3:5-6, Ephesians 1:13-14, Mark 1:8, John 1:33, Acts 11:16, Luke 24:49, Romans 8:14,16,26,27, I Corinthians 6:19-20, 13:8-13, 14:22, Hebrews 2:3-4.

## **5. The Devil, or Satan.**

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; that he was created by God as an angel, but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of His Creator; that he became the unholy god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness; that he is justly destined to judgement in the eternal lake of fire.

Matthew 4:1-11, II Corinthians 4:4, Revelation 20:10, Ephesians 2:2, John 8:44, Isaiah 14:12-21, Ezekiel 28:12-19, Colossians 2:15, I Peter 5:8, John 16:11.

## **6. Creation.**

We believe the Biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels and man; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race.

Genesis 1,2, Colossians 1:16-17, John 1:3.

## **7. The Fall of Man.**

We believe that man was created without sin, in the image and likeness of God- under the law of his Maker. By choice Adam disobeyed God, falling from his happy and sinless state; thereby incurring not only physical death, but spiritual death which is separation from God; that all men sinned in Adam, so that all men are sinners by nature, partaking of Adam's fallen nature, demonstrating their nature by acts of sin, and are therefore under just condemnation without defence or excuse.

Genesis 3:1-6 Romans 3:10-19, 5:12, 19, 1:18, 32.

## **8. Salvation.**

We believe that sinners are saved by God's initiative and His heart of grace (undeserved favour to us) through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by the appointment of the Father voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and honoured God's law by His personal obedience, thus qualifying Himself to be our Saviour; that by the shedding of His blood in His death He fully satisfied the just demands of a Holy God regarding sin; His death being a voluntary substitution in the sinners place (not just an example), the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His body on the tree; that having risen from the dead He is now on His throne in Heaven, and uniting in His Person the tenderest sympathies with godly perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Saviour.

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition that needs to be filled before a person is saved. Repentance is a change of mind and purpose toward God, prompted by the Holy Spirit, and is always present with saving faith.

Salvation is open to each and every individual through the gospel; nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner except his own rejection of the gospel which rejection means that he is condemned already.

Jonah 2:9, Ephesians 2:8, Romans 3:24, Matthew 18:11, Philippians 2:7-8, Hebrews 2:14-17, Isaiah 53:4-7, I John 4:10, I Corinthians 15:3, II Corinthians 5:21, I Peter 2:24. John 3:15-21

## **9. Grace and the New Birth.**

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be 'born again'; that the new birth is the means by which a person becomes a new creation in Jesus Christ; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and sins is adopted into the family of God and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new birth is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner outside of our comprehension, solely through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that the evidence that it has really occurred is in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and a new godly lifestyle. At the moment of the new birth every individual is baptised into the body of Christ, once and forever.

John 3:3, II Corinthians 5:17, I John 5:1, Acts 16:30-33, II Peter 1:4, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:1, Colossians 2:13, John 3:8, Titus 3:5, I Peter 1:23.

## **10. Justification.**

We believe that justification is that act of God whereby He counts the sinner as being righteous (without sin) upon the basis of Christ's righteousness; that God, in that act, in no way considers any right acts that we have done, but only the adequacy of Christ's shed blood and the sinners faith in it.

Romans 3:24, 4:5, 5:1,9, Galatians 2:16, Philippians 3:9.

## **11. Sanctification.**

We believe that sanctification is the act and process of a believer being set apart unto God. It is accomplished in a threefold manner; first an act of God, never to be revoked, based upon redemption in Christ, whereby the believer moves into a position of holiness at the moment he trusts Christ as Saviour; second a continuing process in the believer as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the believer's life making him/her progressively more like Christ; third, when the believer is made perfectly like Christ at the moment of the Lord's return.

Hebrews 10:10-14, John 17:17, II Corinthians 3:18, I Corinthians 1:30, Ephesians 5:25-27, I Thessalonians 4:3, 4, 5:23, 24, I John 3:2, Jude 24, 25, Revelation 22:11.

## **12. Assurance of Salvation.**

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for the Lord Jesus Christ; only true believers endure to the end; this is the primary evidence of the eternal life that is in them.

Philippians 1:6, John 10:28, 29, Romans 8:35-39, Jude 1.

## **13. The Church.**

We believe that a local church is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by our common commitment (church covenant) of faith and fellowship in the gospel; remembering the Lord's Supper and obedience in baptism; in fact, obedience to all His word; and exercising the gifts of the Spirit, along with all the rights and privileges given them by the Word of God. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, under the two and only two offices of pastor and deacon, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organisations or government (except in its proper sphere of influence); and that the one and only Overseer is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of cooperation; that on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of generosity and kindness, the will of the local church is final. Whilst the local church is the only place in which the commands of Scripture can properly be followed, where they speak of the church, we also believe that all New Testament believers are baptised into one body at the moment of their salvation; this is the church which is the body of Christ (every member of which will be found in heaven).

Acts 20:17-28, I Timothy 3:1-13, Acts 2:41,42, I Corinthians 12:12, 13, Ephesians 1:22,23, 4:11, 5:23, Colossians 1:18, Acts 15:13-18, Philippians 1:1, Acts 6:1-6, Titus 1:5-9, Matthew 22:17-21.

## **15. Baptism and the Lord's Supper.**

We believe that Christian Baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show symbolically our unity with the crucified, buried and risen Saviour, through whom we died to sin and rose to a new life; that Baptism is to be performed under the authority of the local church; and that it is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commanded way to remember the Lord's death until He comes, and should always be preceded by serious self-examination. We believe that the Biblical order is Baptism first then the Lord's supper. That is to say that participants in the Lord's Supper should be immersed believers who are walking with Christ.

Acts 8:36, 38, 39, John 3:23, Romans 6:3-5, Matthew 3:16, Colossians 2:12, I Corinthians 11:23-28, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:41,42.

## **16. Separation.**

We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to set ourselves apart from the world and from false teaching (apostasy), and unto God. False teaching here is denying our articles of faith.

II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, I Thessalonians 1:9, 10, I Timothy 6:3-5, Romans 16:17, II John 9-11, Titus 3:10.

## **17. Civil Government.**

We believe that all levels of government are put there by God for the interests and good of society; that all in authority are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured, and obeyed except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ; who is to be obeyed first.

Romans 13:1-7, Acts 23:5, Matthew 22:21, Acts 5:29, 4:19, 20, Daniel 3:17,18.

## **18. Israel.**

We believe that God chose Israel for His own purposes, that she is now spread around the world because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered to the Holy Land and, after the completion of the church, that is, after the rapture, will experience a national revival before the return of Christ.

Genesis 13:14-17, Romans 11:1-32, Ezekiel 37.

## **19. The Things to Come.**

We believe that Christ will return before the millennium. This return could occur at any moment, whence the bodies of those already dead will be raised as 'glorified bodies', and those of us who are alive shall also be given 'glorified bodies' without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (this is called the rapture) before the seven years of the terrible time called the 'Tribulation'.

We believe that this tribulation will end when Christ returns visibly to the whole world in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and establish His earthly reign (Millennial Kingdom). After this Kingdom reign, God will create a new heaven and a new earth that has no end.

I Thessalonians 4:13-18, I Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-54, Philippians 3:20-21, Revelation 3:10, Daniel 9:25-27, Matthew 24:29-31, Luke 1:30-33, Isaiah 9:6, Revelation 20:1-4,15.

## **20. The Godly and the Wicked.**

We believe that there is a basic difference between the godly and the wicked that puts them into two distinct groups; that only those that have been counted as godly by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and set apart by the Spirit of our God are indeed truly right in His esteem; while anyone who continues to refuse or neglects to repent and believe, or who has not believed, are yet in His sight 'wicked' and will be punished; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting joy of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the wicked in the Lake of Fire. After the rapture (see above) Christians (the godly) will be judged by Christ according to what was done in Him and for Him. Later, after the millennium, the wicked will be judged because of their sin which has not been cleansed by the blood of Christ.

Malachi 3:18, Romans 6:17,18,23 7:6, I John 5:19, Proverbs 14:32, Luke 16:25, Matthew 25:34-41, John 8:21, Revelation 20:14,15.

## **Article V-Membership.**

### **Section 1 - Reception of members.**

A. This church shall be composed of members who admit that they contributed nothing to their salvation (saved by grace), and who have been baptised by immersion in the Name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit following their confession (admission) of faith in Christ.

B. All persons desiring to unite with this church shall meet with the pastor(s), and shall be able to explain their salvation and its circumstances and subsequent Christian experience, and promise to adhere to the covenant, constitution, and articles of faith, even if their personal beliefs may differ at some points.

C. Members may be received in one of four ways:

1. Following baptism by request, pastoral approval, and vote of the church.
2. By letter from a church of like faith and order, and vote of the church.
3. By examination by the pastor(s), (when it is impossible to secure a church letter), having been saved and immersed, and vote of the church.
4. By restoration which requires a vote of the church as below.

Each prospective member would normally be required to attend a new members class, at which time the covenant, constitution, purpose, opportunities of ministry, and doctrinal position of the church would be explained.

### **Section 2 - Discipline of Members.**

A. It is vital for the reputation of this church and the glory of our Lord that the purity of the church be preserved and its peace protected. With these ends in view it shall be the duty of the pastor(s) to seek diligently to reclaim any member known to be living in disregard of his Biblical and church covenant obligations. It is specifically directed that the pastor(s) move with promptness and vigour in dealing with anyone who is obstructing the work or disturbing the peace of the church by slander, falsehood, gossip, conspiracy, or other unfair or unchristian methods. It is recognised that no-one can act in defiance or difference to the constitution, covenant, and articles of faith since they are the will of the whole church. It is recognised further that while the minority has the right of private opinion in all questions and the right of appeal in any constitutional and proper manner, it shall not have the right to engage in secret or open propaganda, or of deliberately disturbing the peace and interrupting the work of the church. It is further recognised that when the church, by regular order and proper vote, has determined upon a course of action, that course becomes the duty of every member of the church. If any member cannot conscientiously follow the decision of the church, he is to quietly and peacefully withdraw from membership.

B. If a member is walking disorderly in conflict with the above principles, or is involved in any known immorality, dishonesty or public scandal, and such member cannot be restored to fellowship through repentance, confession and correction of his sins, he shall be dealt with on the basis of Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 5. His case shall be brought before the church by recommendation of the pastor(s). (see H.) He shall be given a statement of the charges against him, and he shall have opportunity to present his case before the church. The church may vote to remove him from the membership if the charges and evidence warrant such action. In less serious matters, (i.e. where the church does not vote him out of membership) such a person may be placed under discipline and on the inactive membership list by vote of the church. He shall be restored to

active membership only by vote of the church after satisfactory evidence is given of scriptural repentance and confession.

C. Before each Annual General Meeting (AGM) the pastor(s) will review the membership roll. Any member habitually absent from the services of the church without due cause, and who is negligent in spiritual duties, and cannot be restored in the manner of Matthew 18, shall be removed from the active membership roll and placed on the inactive members list by vote of the church upon recommendation of the pastor(s). The individual shall be informed of this action. Restoration after such action will be by vote of the church, upon the pastor(s) recommendation, and only after there is satisfactory evidence of renewed spiritual walk.

D. No person on the inactive membership list shall be entitled to vote, hold office, teach, or perform any leadership role.

E. Pastors, deacons, and members shall continue to make a sincere effort to reclaim spiritually those on the inactive list. Before each Annual General Meeting the pastor(s) will review the list of inactive members. After one year of inactive status they shall be dropped from the membership. A permanent record of former members will be kept in an effort to reclaim these individuals for Christ.

F. In the event of differences between members, it is recommended that they be settled personally in accordance with Matthew 18:15,16.

G. If a member desires to prefer charges against another member, including violation of church covenant obligations or of immoral, improper or unchristian conduct, such charges must be submitted to the pastor(s) in writing, and must be duly signed by the accuser.

H. In order to prevent any unnecessary public scandal, the pastor(s) may hear the charges, pro and con, in any disciplinary case, if this is mutually satisfactory for the accused and accuser. If dismissal is recommended by the pastor(s) the church should ratify the recommendation, without being aware of the details. However, at the request of the accused or the church ( 30% of those present and eligible to vote) the entire matter must be brought before the church.

I. No non member shall be permitted in such church meeting (as witnesses, defence or otherwise) without permission of three-fourths of the members present and voting.

J. Expectations of church members are covered in the church covenant.

### **Section 3 - Dismissal of Members.**

A. Dismissal shall be by letter of transfer, letter of dismissal, exclusion (by church discipline), or where the member is deceased.

B. Any member in good standing may be granted a letter of transfer to any church of like faith and order upon its request. The letter shall be sent to the church with which the member wishes to unite.

C. A letter of dismissal without recommendation may be sent to any other church.

D. No member who has conducted himself in such a manner as to be cited for disciplinary action may be dropped from the membership at his own request since such a procedure would remove him from the authority of the church.

#### **Section 4 - Additional Regulations.**

A. Candidates for baptism may request that they be added to the church on or after their baptism. In such cases they will be examined by the Pastor(s), and by the recommendation of the pastor(s) will be voted into membership by the church.

B. Parents who wish to publicly declare their intention to bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord may do so in a church meeting by arrangement with the pastor(s). This is not the same practice as public dedication of babies. There is no promise made by the church in regard to such babies.

C. Only active members shall be entitled to vote or hold office.

D. Only active members shall lead or serve as regular teachers in the church, Sunday School or other groups.

E. The church shall conduct periodically, according to need, classes for new members. These shall be taught by the Pastor or some other competent leader (as requested by the pastor). The aim is to harmonise new members with the Central Mountains Baptist Church family. See Section 1, C.

F. If disciplinary action needs to be considered by the church it shall require a special business meeting of the church which meeting shall be announced at the regular meetings of the church two Sundays in advance.

### **Article VI-Ordinances.**

#### **Section 1 - Baptism.**

Those professing faith in Christ shall, upon recommendation of the pastor(s) be immersed in water by the pastor or someone else appointed by him. In the case of an empty pulpit the church can appoint a person to perform baptism. Immersion as a believer shall be a prerequisite of church Membership.

#### **Section 2 - The Lord's Supper.**

The Lord's supper shall normally be served to the assembled church by the pastor(s) and/or deacon (s), on the first Sunday of each month, and/or at such other time as may be decided by the pastor(s), in consultation with the church. Since it is the Lord's table none that are His shall be barred, but the pastor(s) shall frequently state the scriptural order, which is, that baptism should occur before the Lord's Supper, and shall explain the meaning of the ordinances. The elements shall be unleavened bread and grape juice. The Lord's Supper shall not be served outside of a church meeting.

### **Article VII-Officers.**

#### **Section 1 - Officers of the Church.**

A. The elected officers of this church shall be pastor (one), associate pastor(s) (if any), and deacon (s). Positions of spiritual ministry like music, youth, and Christian education may be filled by the

pastor(s) or other church members having the spiritual maturity required of a pastor as set out in I Timothy 3. Offices of service like church clerical assistant shall be filled by a deacon or the wife of a deacon.

B. No-one shall normally be elected to office who has not been a member of this church for one year; exceptions will be made in the case of pastors transferring from other churches for the purpose of taking up pastoral office, and any person after 6 months if there has been special examination and recommendation by the pastor(s).

C. All officers shall be spiritually mature, of unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God, dedicated and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the spiritual and material welfare of the church. Devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ is understood to mean that they will love the Lord with all their heart. Because of this love, and not because of obligation, they shall also be faithful in attendance and participation, both in regular services and business meetings of the church. Faithful will be understood to mean that they have a good reason to be absent. Their love for Christ will also be evidenced by a moral conduct that is beyond reproach and free of the use of any mind or mood changing substances in any form (e.g. alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, medications except on a doctor's prescription, narcotic drugs). In the light of I Timothy 3 the man's leadership in the home will be considered to be the major criteria for leadership in the church.

D. Retiring officers shall hold office until the term of newly elected officers begin. The new term will begin on the first Monday in July, following an AGM where change of officers has occurred.

E. Any officer unable or unwilling to fulfil the duties of his office shall resign. If any officer refuses to work harmoniously under the articles of faith, the constitution and the church covenant, his resignation shall be requested by the pastor, and confirmed by vote of the church. If it is not received in reasonable time the office shall be declared vacant by vote of the church.

## **Section 2 - The Pastor(s).**

A. Any candidate for pastoral office shall be carefully examined by the pastor(s) and deacon(s) (who together form the pulpit committee) as to his salvation, doctrine, Christian conduct, and call to ministry. I Timothy 3:1-7 will be used as the major criteria in examining any person for pastoral office. 'Husband of one wife' will be understood to mean that neither the Pastor or his wife have been divorced, nor is he a polygamist. If he has served in other churches his ministry there should be explored. He shall be required to state his acceptance of and adherence to the articles of faith, constitution, and church covenant, in writing at the time of his consideration, and along with all other church officers on a yearly basis after that. Further any differences which he holds concerning these documents should also be submitted in writing. He should also state in writing any differences he holds in regard to the associations of the church. Whilst the pulpit committee may be examining more than one candidate simultaneously, only one at a time will be presented to the church for their vote. No vote can be taken by the church until they have heard a pastoral candidate preach, heard a testimony of his salvation, call, and present walk with the Lord. In the case of associate pastor the Pastor is at liberty to consider and/or exclude individuals before they are examined by the pulpit committee.

B. A call to be the pastor or one of the associate pastors (if any) shall be extended at a meeting of the church called for that purpose and announced from the pulpit for two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. A three-fourths majority of those present and voting shall be necessary for a call. Voting shall be by ballot. A written call and agreement shall be presented to the prospective pastor, giving details of church-pastoral financial relationship, including salary,

housing and car allowances, insurance, vacations etc., after these have been discussed with the pastor and approved mutually.

C. The pastor or associate pastor shall continue in office until he resigns or is dismissed by a two thirds majority of those present and voting at a special meeting called for that purpose. Such a meeting shall be announced from the pulpit for two Sundays immediately preceding the date of such a meeting. (See article VIII, Section 2, F.)

D. The pastor or associate pastor shall give the church not less than thirty days nor more than sixty days notice of his intention to discontinue his ministry. The church shall give the pastor not less than sixty days notice of dismissal. If, in the judgement of the church, the conduct of the pastor justifies immediate termination of his ministry, the church shall declare the pulpit vacant and pay two months salary beyond that date.

E. The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare and oversight of the church; he shall preach the gospel, teach the Word, and have charge of all aspects of the services of the church; as He is lead of the Spirit this will include special meetings, such as mission conferences; he shall administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper and perform the usual duties of a Baptist minister. The associate pastors (if any) shall have these same responsibilities in association with the pastor. Normally associate pastors would have responsibility for a particular area of ministry (e.g. youth), which would be the focus of their ministry within the church. The relationship between the pastor and associate pastors (if any) will be one of team work and mutual cooperation, mutual respect, and deference. Nevertheless in cases of irreconcilable disagreement the pastor will have final authority (he is to remember he is under Christ and a servant of the church). A helpful analogy in this pastor-associate relationship is the husband-wife relationship. Just as the husband has ultimate responsibility in the home, the pastor does have ultimate responsibility for the oversight of the church. Nevertheless it is a very unwise husband who does not listen to, consult, and come to agreement with his wife. Similarly it is an unwise pastor who does not listen to, consult, and come to agreement with his associates. It would be an exception that he has to make a decision against their advice. Prayer and time are in favour of godly decisions, where there has been disagreement.

F. The pastor shall moderate the business meetings of the church. In his absence, he may appoint another pastor, or in the absence of an associate, a deacon. Similarly, if the pastor is to be under discussion, the pastor and his family shall withdraw from the meeting, the appointed moderator continuing the business.

G. The pastor shall be an ex officio member of any committee or board set up by the church. He, and his associates (if any) shall also be member(s) of this church.

H. The pastor and associates (if any) shall be responsible for the day to day running of the church. They shall meet at the call of the pastor, or in the instance of the pastoral office being vacant, one of the associates. The pastor shall be the moderator. The church clerical assistant may be called to keep minutes, otherwise minutes may be kept by one of the associates. It shall be their duty to prayerfully consider major matters of church business or of policy and to recommend to the church such matters as are deemed worthy. They may call certain deacons, ministry leaders, or any suitably qualified person to give them a report or answer questions that may help in their decision making process. It shall be their duty to approve literature used by any ministry of the church.

I. The pastor shall normally be president of the corporation. In the case of the pulpit being vacant one of the associates may be president by vote of the church. One of the associates shall normally

be vice-president of the corporation. A deacon may be elected to either office, by vote of the church in the event that there is no-one else to fill the office.

J. The Pastor will normally conduct marriages and funerals. It will be the Pastor's right to refuse to marry prospective partners, at his prerogative, but particularly in any of the following circumstances:

1. Where either partner is unsaved, or there is otherwise unequal yoking of partners;
2. Where either partner has been divorced without scriptural warrant;
3. Where either partner is already married;
4. Where either partner refuses to undertake any part of premarital counselling suggested by the Pastor.

The pastor has the right to determine the content and form of marriage and funeral services.

### **Section 3 - Deacons.**

A. Deacons should be spirit-filled men, honest and full of wisdom, who satisfy the requirements of I Timothy 3:8-13. Likewise, their wives should be spirit-filled and satisfy I Timothy 3:11.

B. There may be any number of deacons, as the need arises. They shall be nominated by the Pastor(s) and elected by the church on an annual basis. (The members of the church are free to suggest to a Pastor the names of individuals suitable for nomination). Likewise, the treasurer and clerical assistant, will be specifically nominated by the Pastor(s) and elected by the church on an annual basis. No wife can serve as clerical assistant if her husband fails to be elected as a deacon. At the AGM, each nomination for the deaconate will be taken in turn. To be elected to the deaconate the candidate must receive greater than 66% of eligible votes. The deacons will elect from among their own number a deacon leader whose responsibility it is to liaise with the Pastor(s) and humbly co-ordinate deacon activities. He shall act as the president of the corporation in the absence of pastor and associate pastor. He cannot be simultaneously the clerical assistant or treasurer. In the instance of insufficient deacons to fill the roles of committee members of the corporation these positions may be filled by any church member, on vote of the church.

C. It shall be the duty of the deacon(s) and his/their wife(ves) to assist the pastor(s) in the work of the church in such a way that the pastor(s) is/are released for the study of the Word and prayer. They will be involved in servant ministries including money matters (treasurer, seeking out those needing financial help, administering of mission funds, counting and collection of church offerings), visitation (of the sick, of contacts, and as otherwise requested by the Pastor), the more practical aspects of the church meetings (like seating, greeting, flowers, kitchen supplies, tape ministries and the like), to assist the pastor(s) at baptisms and the Lord's Table as required, office work (including the maintenance of a church membership roll, official church correspondence, typing of church business, and the like). The treasurer, the church clerical assistant, president, and vice-president shall form the 'Committee' of the corporation. Such committee shall have no power of authority in the church, but it exists to serve the church in satisfying the requirements of a corporation in the State of NSW.

D. Together with the Pastor(s) they shall form a pulpit committee, examining and recommending candidates for Pastoral office to the church.

E. All official greeters will normally be deacons.

F. They shall administer the deacon's fund for which they should submit a budget at the AGM as is the practice for ministry leaders.

G. The deacon's shall serve as trustees of this church, representing the corporation as its agent. Normally there shall be three trustees (church clerical assistant, treasurer, and one other deacon who is appointed by the pastor). They will have power to execute the deeds of trust, mortgage, and other financial interests in regard to the church property. They shall not have authority to sell, lease, or give away, or dispose of church property in any manner to exceed \$1000-00 in value; nor to mortgage or encumber the same with debt to exceed the above amount, except as the body of the church shall order. They shall be responsible for the care and the upkeep of the physical properties of the church, including the hiring and supervision of a caretaker, if necessary. All projects involving the expenditure of more than \$500-00 are to be submitted to the church for approval except in routine matters. A matter is considered routine if it is part of a budget approved by the church. In carrying out their responsibilities they shall act as trustees only and not as individuals.

#### **Section 4 - Church Clerical Assistant.**

A. The church clerical assistant shall be a deacon, or the wife of a deacon. The church clerical assistant shall have charge of the official correspondence and shall keep record of all business meetings of the church, entering the minutes of the meetings in a bound book kept for that purpose. The clerical assistant shall also keep in a bound book a record of the membership, of baptisms, and the reception and dismissal of members. The clerical assistant shall perform such other duties as properly belong to the office, making quarterly and annual reports to the church. The clerical assistant shall act as the 'Public Officer' of the corporation, shall be an office-bearer in the corporation, and shall hold the common seal, and all books of the church, except those held by the treasurer. Such books must be made available to any member at any reasonable hour.

B. Upon his retirement or removal from office, he shall deliver to his successor, or the Pastor, all records, files, and/or other papers belonging to the church, and shall present the same with all contents complete to the date of surrender of such documents.

C. The clerical assistant shall provide the treasurer promptly with a transcript of the minutes of each church business meeting in which authority is granted for the disbursement or transfer of funds.

D. As the church grows and the consequent responsibilities of the clerical assistant grows, it may become necessary for the clerical assistant to be a paid position. This will be determined by vote of the church.

#### **Section 5 - Treasurer.**

A. The treasurer shall be a deacon. It shall be the duty of the treasurer, together with one or more of the deacons, to count and record in a permanent record all monies received in the offerings of the church. This shall be done after each and every offering taken. This means that no money will be counted without two such persons present.

B. Each offering will require the signature of the treasurer and any other deacon present for the counting and recording of that offering.

C. The treasurer will be responsible for depositing all funds in the bank, including monies received from organisations within the church or from individuals.

D. If donors have specified a particular use of money given (e.g. for missions) the treasurer is responsible to record and distribute it as instructed. Similarly special offerings should be recorded and distributed according to instruction.

E. The treasurer (with the approval of the pastor) may appoint another deacon to act in his absence (or a church member with the qualifications of a deacon).

F. The treasurer shall be responsible for recording all financial transactions in permanent records and shall make quarterly and annual reports to the church. He will be an office-bearer in the corporation.

G. The treasurer shall pay the bills of the church, and where necessary seek the approval of the church. He will write, sign, and mail all cheques. Cheques shall be countersigned by the Pastor or some person approved by the pastor. It is the treasurer's responsibility to arrange for someone approved by the pastor to sign cheques in his absence.

H. The treasurer shall keep the books of record and report the financial transactions in accordance with any written instructions from external auditors. He shall prepare the church records and present such records to external auditors approved by the church annually for an external audit.

I. The treasurer shall co-ordinate the budget submissions from each ministry leader, so that the ministry budgets are consistent with the overall church budget. Where the budget demands of a ministry seem excessive, the treasurer, with the pastor's approval, may request a revised budget from that ministry. The church budget, and ministry budgets should be ready for approval at the Annual General Meeting of the church. The treasurer may request the help of other deacons in these preparations for the AGM. The treasurer shall also consider budget revisions throughout the year for presentation to the church.

J. The treasurer shall check annually with the bank, those who are authorised to sign cheques for the disbursement of funds.

## **Section 6 - Ministry Leaders.**

A. The ministry leader must meet the qualifications of a deacon, even if he/she does not hold that office. (In some instances he should also meet the qualifications of an elder; see Article VII, Section 1, A ). Pastors or deacons may be ministry leaders. Ministry should be burden driven. That is, ministries should be begun and maintained by those given a burden (spiritual concern) for that ministry by the Lord. This burden should be confirmed by the church. Normally an individual would approach a pastor with a burden for a ministry, the Pastor(s) would listen to the burden, examine the individual, and make recommendation to the church. At other times as the church prays the church may become convinced that the Lord has His hand on a particular individual for a particular ministry; this conviction would then be taken to the individual for their prayerful consideration.

B. The ministry leader (e.g. Leader of Christian education, visitation leader, leader of women's ministries, missions leader, kid's club leader, hospitality leader) shall have general supervision over that ministry, and its workers. He/she shall carry out the programme approved by the church. Normally any programme consistent with the character and doctrine of the church would be

approved. Only teaching material consistent with the teaching of the church will be used. Whilst church members have the right (under God) in regard to preference for particular Bible versions, it is the policy of this church, for the advantage of consistency, that a 'recommended' version be used for all ministry. At the time of constituting the recommended version is the New King James (the only exception to this is the use of the King James Version where programmes like Sunday School or AWANA are written in King James Version). The reason that these two versions are acceptable to the church is that their translations are based on the 'Masoretic Text' for the Old Testament and the 'Received Text' for the New Testament. The 'recommended' version may be changed by recommendation of the Pastor(s) and two thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote at a special business meeting of the church. The ultimate goal of every ministry will be evangelism of the lost and/or encouragement of members. The means to reach these goals may be quite varied, but must be Biblical.

C. The ministry leader may enlist help from among the membership of the church.

D. All workers or ministry leaders in a teaching role would be expected to meet the qualifications of a deacon. The assessment in regard to fulfilment of this requirement by workers, will be the responsibility of the ministry leader, but may be called into question by the pastor(s) at any time.

E. Annually he/she should submit a report which will include details of how money was used by the ministry under his/her leadership, the spiritual results of the ministry, ministry plans for the coming year, and budget for approval at the AGM. This should be prepared and submitted to the treasurer one month before the AGM.

F. Ministry leaders will review their workers annually, and if in good standing may request their help for another year. Willingness to be a worker in a ministry will normally be considered to be a commitment for one year. Anyone whose conduct or teaching is considered injurious to that ministry or the church as a whole shall be approached by the ministry leader (at the Pastor's request or on the leader's own initiative). If there is not appropriate repentance and changed behaviour they shall be interviewed by the pastor(s) and ministry leader together for appropriate action.

G. Ministries that involve music should use music which is consistent with the music philosophy of the church. Whilst recognising varying taste and preferences, in general Central Mountains Baptist Church is conservative in the area of music; "Christian Rock" and other worldly or aggressive forms of contemporary music will not be employed. Music lyrics should be scriptural and the music itself should reflect the character of God; therefore the music can be variously triumphant, joyous, peaceful, and not sensual, aggressive, or bringing attention to the performers of the music; the music should ultimately bring attention and glory to Christ. All music to be used in any service of the church must be reviewed by the Music Leader (or the Pastor if there is no music leader). Those presenting music in church services should be dressed in such a way as not to draw attention to themselves.

H. LEADER'S AND WORKER'S CODE: As a leader or worker I understand that I am in a leadership position in the church. Therefore, as well as being able to reaffirm my commitment to the church covenant and church constitution on a yearly basis, I along with the officers of the church, realise that a high standard of Christian conduct is expected of me, and willingly make the following promises;

1. I will carry out my ministry responsibility with faithfulness, making proper arrangements, if for some reason I must be absent from a ministry commitment. Proper arrangements include contacting my ministry leader, or if a ministry leader, one of the pastors.
2. I will do my best to cooperate with the overall programme of the church and with my ministry leader. This will include attending training programmes as requested. If at any time this becomes impossible, I will, like a true Christian, resign and let someone else take my place that the cause of Christ may not be harmed.
3. I will spend adequate time preparing for ministry opportunities.
4. I will keep close contact with those to whom I am ministering, by letter, telephone, personal visits, or such other means as may be necessary.
5. I will pray regularly for those under me in ministry.

### **Article VIII-Meetings.**

#### **Section 1 - Public Worship.**

A. Public worship services shall be held regularly, morning and evening on the Lord's Day. These services shall not be normally given over to anything but prayer and the teaching and preaching of the Word, with an appropriate musical ministry (see above). Any other presentation shall be subject to the approval by the pastor(s). Neither shall they be merged into union services with other denominations.

B. At least once a week there shall be a meeting for prayer.

C. It shall be the practice of this church to observe the Lord's Supper at least once a month, at which time it may be appropriate that the church covenant be read.

D. It is permissible for a woman to pray, sing, or give a word of testimony in church services if she is under the authority of her husband and the leadership of the church. We understand that Scripture teaches that women should not preach in a mixed congregation (whether that preaching is through prayer, testimony, or other means.) Of course women will be encouraged to preach and teach in women's ministries and children's ministries, such as Sunday School and AWANA.

#### **Section 2 - Business Meetings.**

A. The official church year shall begin the first Monday in July.

B. The AGM shall be held the second Wednesday in June.

C. At the AGM all written reports will be read. Budgets and ministry plans for the coming year will be approved by vote of the church.

D. The annual election of officers will be held at the AGM.

E. The day of AGM can be changed by the Pastor if adequate time has been given for writing of reports (2 weeks) and adequate time has been given for analysis of reports and adjustments to budgets if necessary (a further 2 weeks) and provided the AGM is announced from the pulpit two Sundays prior to the date.

F. Special Business Meetings may be called at any time, providing public notice be given of the same on the Sunday preceding; except as otherwise stipulated in this constitution or required by

state law. Routine business such as receiving members or granting letters may be transacted when necessary at any stated meeting of the church without regard to the above requirements. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, or any thirty percent of voting members of the church who request such of the Pastor, providing the particular object, or objects, of the meeting are clearly stated in the notice, and no other business shall be transacted in such a meeting.

G. Only members eighteen years and above shall be eligible to vote.

H. Twenty members shall normally constitute a quorum. The only exception to this is where church membership is less than fifty. Where church membership is less than 50, 40% of voting members will constitute a quorum. Except where otherwise stated in this constitution, a motion may be passed by more than 60% of those present and eligible to vote.

I. All in attendance at a business meeting will be required to act in a Christlike way. In the case of an individual or group of individuals acting in an inappropriate manner the chairman will have the right to dismiss them from the meeting for the remainder of the meeting, forfeiting their right to vote. This remains the prerogative of the chairman, and no discussion will be entered into.

### **Section 3 - Rules of Order of Business.**

The ordinary rules of deliberative assemblies shall be observed in the transaction of business.

### **Section 4 - Order of Business Meetings.**

A suggested order of business follows:

1. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting.
2. Clerical assistant's report.
3. Treasurer's report.
4. Pastoral report(s).
5. Deacon's report.
6. Trustee's report.
7. Reports of ministry leaders.
8. Other reports.
9. Election of officers.
10. Unfinished business.
11. New Business.
12. Adjournment.

### **Article IX-Missions.**

A. Missions is the responsibility and prerogative of the local church. It shall be the policy of this church to support only missionaries engaged principally in evangelization and establishment of Baptist churches of like faith and practice (schools, hospitals, and other ministries must be kept subordinate to the primary objectives). They will sign a yearly agreement with the constitution, articles of faith and church covenant of this church. They shall be Baptist in name and practice, starting churches, or helping to start churches which are Baptist in name and practice.

B. The missions leader of the church shall be responsible for encouraging correspondence with the missionaries supported by the church and making sure the needs of the missionary are being met. He will do all he can to encourage interaction of the church body and supported missionaries by prayer, special projects, and consistent faith promise giving.

C. The missions leader will work with the pastor(s) in considering missionaries who are seeking support from this church. Such missionaries should be able to sign our church constitution, articles of faith, and church covenant before he ever comes to speak at the church. The church will consider the order of priority in Acts 1:8 as it considers missionaries. Upon recommendation of the Pastor(s) and the missions leader, the church will then vote on support of missionaries, as they would vote for a pastoral position.

D. The missions leader will also work with the pastor in arranging for furlough interaction between the missionary and this church. This will include hospitality, help with expenses, and reporting of the missionary work. As a paid worker of the church the missionary will be expected to be involved in the running life of the church for part of his furlough. This is only practical where the missionary is generously supported.

E. In the case of this being the home church of a missionary supported by this church, the missions leader will do all he can in assisting the missionary depart for the field and get settled back into Australian life after arriving from the field for furlough, or change of ministry. The missions leader will continue to be responsible for being the missionary's agent whilst he is on the field, procuring any necessary supplies and acting for the missionary in any business concerns. The treasurer shall be responsible for opening an account in the name of the missionary and the church. All monies received on behalf of the missionary shall be receipted and deposited in this account. The missionary shall be paid a set monthly salary out of this account and forwarded a set amount monthly to take care of all ministry expenses (if funds in his account allow). In the instance of insufficient funds, in the missionary's account to enable him to continue the work to which God has called him, he will be required to return home to raise sufficient funds. Such drastic action should not be taken until supporters have been properly informed by the missionary or the church. Whilst the received salary belongs to the missionary to do with as he wills the money sent for ministry expenses will only be used for ministry expenses. Every ministry expense will need to be receipted and a summary of ministry expenses sent to the treasurer at 3 monthly intervals. Ministry expenses in excess of the monthly allocation will be refunded by the treasurer to the missionary if funds in his account allow. When enquiries are made by other churches as to the support level of the missionary, it will be the responsibility of the treasurer to reply stating what percentage of calculated need the missionary is actually receiving. In calculating the monthly needs of the missionary, money should be set aside for salary, ministry expenses, retirement, furlough, medical insurance if necessary, education of children, and the like. In addition to the monthly needs there will be certain set-up expenses for the missionary's ministry. The missionary should be assured by his supporters in writing of gifts towards set up and support to equal his calculated need before he leaves for his field of service.

#### **Article X-General.**

##### **Section 1 - Use of the Church Property and Name.**

A. Use of the property for other than regularly scheduled meetings shall first be approved by the trustees and coordinated with the Pastor(s).

B. All gatherings off the church property held in the name of the church shall be subject to the approval of the Pastor(s).

C. No secret society or cult or unapproved religious group will be permitted to hold services in the church. The funeral of any person so associated may be held in the church if conducted by an approved person. The society, or cult or unapproved religious group may take charge only after the body leaves the church.

D. No pastor nor any person who desires to preach will be permitted to preach in the church who fails to agree substantially with our Articles of faith. Should there be minor disagreement with the Articles of faith the pastor or preacher must agree not to preach in contradiction to the articles of Faith of this church. Any visiting speaker must have the approval of the Pastor(s).

## **Section 2 - Pastor's Vacation and Salary.**

A. The salaried Pastor(s) will have 4 weeks holiday each year.

B. The salary of salaried Pastor(s) shall be reviewed once per year at the AGM. The opportunity will be taken to also review the salary of all other salaried workers, including missionaries.

## **Section 3 - Monetary Principles.**

The regular giving of money for the support of the work of the Lord is worship as well as duty. It must be kept on the plane of voluntary giving without hope of material gain. All members are expected to give regular financial support to the church and to the projects that it will sponsor. In determining the amount to be placed in the offering bag we believe and affirm with the Scriptures that every penny we have is as a result of the Lord's enabling and that returning one tenth (tithe) is a minimum requirement to be given faithfully and cheerfully by each one. (II Corinthians 9:6-7, I Chronicles 29:14, 16, Acts 4:32-35). Many can and should give more than the tithe. No money shall be raised except by the Biblical plan of tithes, offerings, and gifts. The books are open to any member of the church. The church will not loan any money or consign any note.

## **Section 4 - Legal Provisions.**

A. This church shall have the right to own, sell or buy tangible properties, both real and personal, in its own name and through properly elected trustees, when authorised by vote of the church.

B. No profit or liability shall ever accrue to any individual member or group of members from the assets, holdings and other transactions in which this corporation may become involved.

C. In the event of dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated by corporate vote prior to dissolution to such other non-profit religious groups as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the articles of faith adopted by this church, and in conformity with the requirements of the government of New South Wales.

D. The church shall effect and maintain insurance as set out in section 44 of the Act.

E. The committee of the corporation shall consist of the president (normally the pastor), the vice-president (normally an associate pastor), treasurer, and clerical assistant (acting as public officer of the corporation).

## **Section 5 - Committees.**

A. There shall normally be only two committees;

1. The committee of the corporation as required by NSW law. See Article VII, Section 3, C.
2. The pulpit committee when considering a candidate for pastor or associate. See Article VII, Section 2, A.

## **Section 6 - Family Principles**

A. Marriage will be considered to be a permanent and public commitment, between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all other relationships. At the time of marriage a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife. The husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the church. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it (willingly, unreservedly, unselfishly, untiringly, and humbly). The wife is to respect and reverence her husband, to defer to him, and submit to him. The children are to obey the parents. The parents are to train the children in the Word, formally and informally, and to discipline them firmly, but in love.

B. Divorce was not God's plan in the beginning. Where sin exists in a marriage the Biblical course is loving confrontation, repentance, and restitution. Failing that the Scriptural ideal is to remain unmarried. Nevertheless, because of the sinfulness of man, God in His grace, has allowed divorce in certain circumstances (primarily, sexual indecency, including adultery). Where divorce is allowed by Scripture, remarriage is also allowed (only in the Lord). However, because it is not the scriptural ideal, it will be the churches policy to discourage and minimise both divorce and/or remarriage. Where divorce has occurred outside scriptural warrant remarriage is adultery and will not be condoned by the church.

## **Article XI-Amendments and Bylaws.**

This constitution may be amended, altered or revised at any AGM by a three fourths vote of members present and voting, provided such proposed changes have been available in writing to the members for a period of 3 months prior to the AGM, and provided the vote is taken by secret ballot. However, Article IV, the "Articles of Faith", may only be changed by unanimous vote of members at an AGM, after 6 (six) months notice of intent in writing sent to every member.

The church may adopt from time to time bylaws in order to amplify or clarify this constitution.

**Bylaws and Amendments to the Constitution of Central Mountains Baptist Church.**

DATE ADOPTED

CONSTITUTION REFERENCE

**#1**

**15.6.97**

**Article X, Section 2**

The salary of the salaried pastor(s) shall be reviewed every three months by the Associate pastor, a deacon, and treasurer.

**#2**

**20.6.99**

**Article 3 and Article IV, Section 16**

In the spirit of the constitution, rather than the actual letter, we understand that the constitution is stating that apostasy is a departure from the fundamental beliefs of Christianity, and these fundamental beliefs are set out in our articles of faith. Not every article of faith could be considered a fundamental belief, but the fundamentals are set out in our articles of faith. These fundamental beliefs are:

Article IV

1. The Scriptures
2. The True God
3. Jesus Christ (with the exception of part H., which is not a fundamental belief)
8. Salvation.

In the end, however this local church reserves the right to determine if any person or ministry is Apostate.

**#3**

**20.6.99**

**Article V, Section 1**

**Associate Membership.**

A person can become an associate member of this local church by recommendation of the pastors and vote of the church.

An associate member would have all the rights and responsibilities of membership except:

1. They would **not** be obliged to withdraw membership from another church of like faith and practice.
2. They could **not** have voting rights, and thus would not be involved in any business meeting of the church. Therefore they would not be counted in determining a quorum.

Since ministry leaders are required to give reports at business meetings, associate members would not be able to take leadership positions in the church. They certainly could function as workers under a ministry leader; in fact the idea of associate membership is to make this possible.

The church can accept brothers or sisters to minister to us in various capacities on a 'visiting' basis; membership or associate membership is, of course, not necessary for 'visiting' ministry."

#4

17.6.01

Regular attenders who have a godly testimony within and outside the church may serve in this local church for a trial period. Normally this period will be 6 months. During this time the pastors will keep close account of progress (in collaboration with ministry leaders, if any) and seek to encourage the attender toward membership. At the end of the trial period the situation should be reassessed by both pastors and attender. The period may be extended if progress is being made to the satisfaction of the pastors.

#5

16.6.02

Article IX, Section A.

#### Article IX Missions

A. Missions is the responsibility and prerogative of the local church. It shall be the policy of this church to support only missionaries engaged principally in evangelization and establishment of baptistic churches of like faith and practice (schools, hospitals and other ministries must be kept subordinate to the primary objectives). They will sign a yearly agreement with the constitution, articles of faith and church covenant of this church. They shall be baptistic in reputation and practice, starting churches, or helping to start churches which are also baptistic in reputation and practice. The use of the word "Baptist" in the church title is preferable but not mandatory.

#6

14.6.15

Article VII-Officers.

#### Leadership

#### Section 6. Ministry Leaders

##### I. EXPLANATION OF LEADERSHIP:

1. There are different levels of leadership in CMBC, viz,

- pastors,
- deacons,
- elected ministry leaders,
- and "other leaders".

The leaders of ministries that need to be elected, are listed in the constitution, viz,

- From Article VII Officers, Section 1 Officers of the Church, A :

Music leader,  
Youth leader,  
and Christian Education leader.

- From Article VII Officers, Section 6 Ministry Leaders, B :

Christian Education leader,  
Visitation leader,  
Women's leader

Missions leader,  
Kid's club leader (referring to AWANA),  
and Hospitality leader

- From Article IX Missions :

Missions leader

"Other leaders" (e.g. a home Bible study leader, or teacher of Sunday School) do not need to be elected, for they are under the leadership of elected leaders.

2. Where there is no elected ministry leader available, one of the pastors will take oversight.

3. There is no job description (description of ministry responsibilities) in the constitution of most of these elected leadership roles. This allows some flexibility for any ministry leader, nevertheless, the following will give some guidance to the church and to ministry leaders:

- **Music Leader.** The music leader will have oversight of music in all ministries of the church that use music. He will pay particular attention to Article VII Officers, Section 6 Ministry Leaders, Part G.
- **Youth Leader.** The Youth Leader will have oversight of any high school group (e.g. YPG) and young adult groups (e.g. YABIS) even when the teens and young adults have unelected leaders of their own.
- **Christian Education Leader.** The Christian Education leader will have oversight of Sunday School and all Bible studies that do not have an elected leader of their own (e.g. youth, women, and men will normally have elected leaders of their own ).
- **Visitation Leader.** Visitation leader will have oversight of evangelistic and congregational visitation. This may need to be coordinated with hospitality leader and pastor(s).
- **Women's Ministry Leader.** Women's leader will have oversight of Women's Bible study and other ministry to women.
- **Missions Leader.** The role of missions leader is clearly defined in Article IX Missions, with the exception that ministry to the persecuted also comes under the oversight of missions leader.
- **AWANA Leader.** The AWANA leader has oversight of AWANA. (NB. The AWANA leader is called AWANA Director in AWANA resources and those called AWANA leaders in AWANA resources are regarded as AWANA workers in this constitution)
- **Hospitality Leader.** Hospitality leader will be responsible for church cuppas, church lunches, and other church events involving hospitality. They will also oversee practical care ministry of the church to the sick and hurting. Spiritual ministry to the sick and hurting is the responsibility of the pastor(s) and those enlisted to help the pastor(s) (E.G. visitation leader)
- **Men's Leader.** Men's leader will hereafter be an elected leadership position. Men's leader has the oversight of men's ministry including men's meetings (may need to be coordinated with the pastor(s) ), and men's projects for widows, the hurting, and missions projects (He will need to coordinate with the missions leader)

4. New ministries, at the time they are recognised by vote of the church, will come under existing elected leaders or the new ministry leadership position may need to be added to the elected leaders list. The need for elected leadership of new ministries will also need to be established by vote of the church.

5. It is only elected leaders who are responsible for AGM reports. Elected leaders or pastors filling the position of a ministry leader may ask for AGM reports from those under them to assist in any reporting.

J. TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP: When an elected leader steps down from a ministry it would be normal for him/her to seek another member with burden for the ministry that can carry on the ministry to the glory of God. In the event of the leader being unable to fulfil this responsibility the pastor(s) can take on the role of seeking a new leader. The outgoing leader should pray, and then approach any candidate to seek their interest. The incoming leader should then also pray seeking the Lord's will. Once both agree that the hand over of leadership is appropriate, the steps would be:

1. Inform the pastor(s)
2. Examination by the pastor(s) as to burden and qualification (See A. above)
3. If appropriate, there then should be recommendation by the pastor(s) at a business meeting of the church
4. Vote of the membership.

**#7**

**26.6.2016**

**Article VII, Section 3**

H. An honorary deacon will meet the qualifications of deacon (See 'A' above). Regarding nomination and election see 'B' above. He will function as a deacon, but in a reduced capacity, as God allows.

**#8**

**23.6.2019**

**Article VII, Section 3, Paragraph G**

All projects involving the expenditure of more than \$1,000 as at June 2019 (adjusted for inflation using Reserve Bank of Australia data from that date) are to be submitted to the church for approval except in routine matters. A matter is considered routine if it is part of a budget approved by the church. In carrying out their responsibilities they shall act as trustees only and not as individuals.

