

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF MOUNTAIN SPRINGS INDEPENDENT CHURCH

FLOYD COUNTY, GEORGIA

PREAMBLE

We, the membership of this body, desiring under God's blessing to prosper and sustain spiritual growth in our church; likewise aiming to establish ourselves in Christ and Bible-centered loyalty; at the same time enjoying the maximum harmony in all church endeavors and business procedures, do hereby adopt and set in operation this constitution and by-laws.

ARTICLE I - NAME and LOCATION

The name of this assembly is Mountain Springs Independent Church. The location of Mountain Springs Independent Church is ~~Redmond~~ Gap Road (old Texas Valley Road), Floyd County, Georgia. *OBRIAN*

ARTICLE II - DEFINITION

For purposes of clarification in principle and operation, our church shall adhere to the view that "a church is a company of believers, baptized on a credible confession of faith; having New Testament officers of pastor and stewards; perpetuating the ordinances; self-governing in polity; voluntarily banded together for worship, fellowship, work and proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

ARTICLE III - MODE OF GOVERNMENT

The government of this church is vested in the body of active believers who compose it and is executed by the pastor and other elected officers as provided in this constitution. This church shall not be subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body. This church shall be in respect to all of its affairs self-governing.

ARTICLE IV - CONFESSION OF FAITH

The doctrines of this church shall be in conformity with those generally accepted by historic New Testament churches and expressed in the confession of faith as follows:

1. The Scriptures:

We believe in the verbal, plenary (full, entire, complete) inspiration of the Bible, which is the Word of God, that in its truthfulness and completeness, it is the only criterion and authority of both church and individual for faith and practice. (II Peter 1:19-21; II Timothy 3:16)

2. God:

We believe that there is one God eternally existing, manifesting Himself to us in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1; John 9:35; 10:30, 14:16-26)

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3. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ:  
We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ; His virgin birth; His sinless life; His substitutionary death on the cross for our sins; His bodily resurrection from the grave; His ascension to the right hand of God, where He ever liveth to make intercession for believers; and His personal, visible, imminent, and pre-millennial return to the earth at the end of this age. (Matthew 1:18; John 1:4; Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16,17)
  4. The Holy Spirit:  
We believe that the Holy Spirit is very God, possessed of all the distinctive Divine attributes. We believe that He is the Administrator of the things of God concerning sin, revealing truth, energizing believers for prayer and service, and restraining "until he be taken out of the way." (Psalms 139:7-10; II Thessalonians 2:7; John 16:8-13)
  5. Satan:  
We believe in the reality and personality of Satan; that he is a created being, once known as the "anointed cherub that covereth"; that through pride he fell; that he is the "god of this world" and the "prince of the power of the air"; that the judgment already passed on him will be executed at the Revelation of Jesus Christ; and that ultimately, he will be cast into the lake of fire. (Matthew 13:19; John 8:44; Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 20:10; Ezekiel 28:13-15)
  6. Man:  
We believe that man was created by God in His own image, not by evolution, but by a special act of creation, and that this creative act of God was separate and distinct from any other work of God. We believe the Scripture record of the fall of man through his own disobedience, bringing the whole human race under sin and death; that man is totally depraved and hopelessly lost apart from the grace and salvation of God. (Genesis 1:26, 2:7; Romans 3:23, 5:12; Galatians 3:22)
  7. Salvation:
    - A. We believe that salvation is by grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ; that it is instantaneous and wholly apart from human merit; that every individual is a sinner by practice and by choice and therefore must exercise personal faith in the redeeming work of Christ on Calvary and receive Him as Saviour in order to be saved. (Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23, 10:9,10)
    - B. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in full assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, but that the same Word clearly forbids the use of our liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:15; Titus 2:11-15)
    - C. We believe that salvation is eternal; that all who truly are born again are kept by God the Father for the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 6:37-40, 10:27-30; I Corinthians 1:4-8; I Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:35-39; Jude 1)

8. The Church:

- A. We believe that every born again believer, by a special act of God, is accorded a place in the body of Christ and that this body is Biblically identified as the "church." (Ephesians 3:3; Colossians 1:24-27; I Corinthians 12:12,13)
- B. We believe that a local church is a congregation of believers, associated together by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel; that it has the absolute right of self-government, directed by the Holy Spirit and answerable only to Christ; that in all matters of membership, polity, government, discipline, and benevolences, the will of the church is final. (Acts 2:41,42; I Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22,23, 5:23,24; Colossians 1:18)

9. Separation:

We believe that all "who name the name of Christ" as their Saviour should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon His name. We believe also that separation from all religious apostasy as well as worldly and sinful pleasures and associations is commanded by Him. (II Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1,2, 14:13; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11; II Corinthians 6:14 to 7:1, inclusive)

10. The Two Natures:

We believe that every saved person has two natures, with full provision made by God for victory of the new over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. (Romans 6:13, 7:17 to 8:1, inclusive, 8:12,13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10)

11. Civil Governments:

We believe that civil governments are of Divine appointment for the interests of good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed except in things opposed to the will of God as expressed in His Word and interpreted in the light of this constitution and confession of faith. (Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13,14, 17)

12. The Lord's Return:

We believe in the bodily, personal, imminent, pre-millennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ; that He will come before the great tribulation to catch away His bride, the church; that all who are His shall then be caught up to meet Him in the air; that at the end of the tribulation, He will come with His church to the earth to judge the living nations and set up His kingdom. (I Thessalonians 4:13-16; Matthew 25:31-45; Revelation 19:11-21)

13. The Righteous and the Wicked:

We believe that there is an essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as exercise saving faith in Jesus Christ are righteous in His sight, while all who continue in impenitence and unbelief are wicked in His sight and under His wrath; and that this distinction holds both in and after life, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. (Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17,18; Luke 16:25; Matthew 25:34-41; John 8:21; Luke 9:21; Matthew 7:13,14)

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

1. The membership of this church shall consist of the following:
  - A. Regular members:
 

Those persons who (a) have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and have been or wish to be baptized, by sprinkling or immersion, into the body of Christ; and (b) wish to unite into the fellowship of Mountain Springs Church, and (c) subscribe to the doctrines and practices of this church.
  - B. Honorary members:
 

Those persons who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and are members of other Bible-believing churches, and because of descendents or loved ones interred in the cemetery at Mountain Springs Independent Church, wish to participate in and support Mountain Springs Church; but, because of commitments to other churches, or because of living a great distance from Mountain Springs Church, cannot be regular, active members.
2. Anyone who has once been a member of a Bible-believing church, and in consequence of peculiar circumstances has no regular letter of dismission, may be received into the fellowship of Mountain Springs Independent Church upon a statement of faith satisfactory to the church.
3. All regular and honorary members shall be received into the church by formal vote of a majority of members present at any scheduled meeting.
4. All regular and honorary members of Mountain Springs Independent Church shall have voting privileges in all matters.
5. Letters of dismission may be granted to those desiring to transfer their membership to churches of like faith. When a member of this church joins a church of different faith the stewards shall have the power to erase that person's name from the roll.
6. Discipline - Basis:
 

Mountain Springs Independent Church shall regard as grounds for discipline such things as propagation of heresy (Titus 3:10); causing and abetting factions (Romans 16:17); personal slander of the pastor or fellow members (James 3); conduct unbecoming a Christian. The pastor and the stewards shall examine each case prayerfully with due regard for extenuating circumstances and shall recommend either (1) restoration, (2) suspension of church privileges, or (3) disfellowship or exclusion. The accused shall have the right to appear before the committee on discipline with or without witnesses from Mountain Springs Independent Church and likewise to appear before the church at the time when action is taken with or without witnesses. A period of at least one week shall be allowed prior to action to exclude from the membership.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

1. Worship Services -This church shall hold regularly scheduled worship services at such times as designated by a majority vote of the membership.

- 2. This church shall hold regular business meetings at which time the temporal and spiritual conditions of the church shall be discussed. The meeting shall include reports, proposals or plans, and all regular business.
- 3. This church shall hold an annual meeting on the third Sunday in June each year, the first one being the third Sunday in June, 1985; or such other time as may be established by the church.
- 4. Other meetings of the church as a whole, or of authorized groups within the church shall be set according to the needs of the congregation.
- 5. Emergency meetings may be called when deemed necessary by the pastor, the chairman of the board of trustees, the superintendent, the clerk, or the majority vote of the stewards.

ARTICLE VII - ORDINANCES

The ordinances of this church are baptism (either sprinkling or immersion) and the Lord's Supper. These are church ordinances and may be administered only by the church.

- 1. Baptism - We believe that baptism is a prerequisite to church membership. Those professing saving faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour may be, by the pastor or some person authorized by the church, baptised by sprinkling or by immersion, in accordance with Scriptural teaching.
- 2. The Lord's Supper - We believe that the elements of the Lord's Supper are unleavened bread or wafers and the fruit of the vine. The Lord's Supper shall be administered to the assembly at times set forth by the stewards of Mountain Springs Independent Church. The pastor and stewards shall administer the Supper. Because it is the Lord's Table, none who are His shall be denied the right to commune with Him in this matter, but the pastor or stewards shall state frequently the Scriptural order which places baptism and a separated walk as prerequisites to participation. The Lord's Supper always should be preceded by solemn self-examination.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

The officers of Mountain Springs Independent Church and their respective duties shall be as follows:

- 1. Pastor - Whenever a vacancy occurs, a pastor shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved, either at the request of the pastor or of the church. In either case, at least 60 days' notice shall be given of termination of the relationship, or as otherwise mutually agreed, with both church and pastor seeking to follow the will of God and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The call of the pastor shall take place at a meeting especially for that purpose, of which at least one week's notice has been given to the membership. Election shall be upon the recommendation of a special committee appointed to seek out and nominate as pastor a

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minister of the Gospel whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office of pastor of Mountain Springs Independent Church. Election shall be by an affirmative vote of the majority of members present and voting.

The pastor shall have charge of the pulpit ministry of the church, and shall, in cooperation with the pulpit committee or the stewards, provide for pulpit supply when he is absent and arrange for workers to assist in revival meetings and other special services. He shall have in charge the shepherding of the church. He shall be ex-officio member of all organizations, committees, etc. He may call a special meeting of the stewards, the trustees, or any committee according to procedures which may be set forth in the by-laws. He shall conduct the religious services on stated and special occasions, administer the ordinances, and minister to members of the church.

2. Stewards (Acts 6:1-7) - The number of stewards shall be no less than five and no more than twenty-five, according to the needs of the church.

It shall be the duties of the stewards to engage actively in all the spiritual work of the church; seek out such members as need assistance, and shall, along with the pastor, administer and disburse benevolent funds as the need arises; aid the pastor in all matters relating to the spiritual interests of the church.

The stewards, together with the pastor, constitute the committee on discipline. Thoughtful and prayerful consideration will be given to any charges that are brought against any member, all cases thoroughly investigated, and testimony heard of all parties involved before bringing the report to the church for action.

The stewards shall be elected from among the members of the church. They shall be elected for a period of one year, or until a successor has been chosen.

3. Trustees - There shall be five trustees elected annually in such a way as to assure continuity and experience. The trustees shall represent the church in strict accordance with directives from the church in the execution of legal papers. They shall have no power to buy, to sell, improve or transfer property or mortgage church property without church authorization. Neither shall they control the use of church property except as directed by church vote. The trustees shall serve until their successors are elected. A vacancy may be filled during the interim by electing a person to fill out the unexpired term of a trustee. This shall be done in any regular business meeting of the church.

The trustees shall not have power to close the house of worship against the church or pastor thereof under any circumstances without express orders from the church to do so.

4. Clerk - The clerk shall be elected annually. It shall be his/her duty to attend or be represented at all church business meetings to keep an accurate record of all business transactions. The clerk shall

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preserve all papers and valuable letters and records that belong to the church, and preserve a true history of the church. It shall also be the duty of the clerk to see that an accurate roll of the church membership is kept with dates and methods of admission and dismissal, change in name, correct mailing addresses, and other pertinent information. The clerk, upon termination of his/her service, shall release all records and church property in his/her possession to Mountain Springs Independent Church.

5. Treasurer - The treasurer shall be elected annually. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, keep in a bank, and disburse by check upon proper authority, all money or things of value that are given to the church, and keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements, rendering regular account to the church to be preserved by the church clerk. The treasurer's books shall be audited as arranged by the church and all books, records, and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered the property of the church. The treasurer shall, upon invitation, meet with the stewards and/or the trustees.

Superintendent -The superintendent shall be elected from the church membership at the annual election of officers. His term shall be for one year. It shall be the superintendent who guides the congregation and is responsible for conducting the opening and closing of services, including the church music, at Mountain Springs Independent Church. He may enlist the assistance of others as he sees fit. He shall work closely with the pastor in his endeavor to enlist the hearty cooperation of the whole congregation in Bible study and personal soulwinning. The superintendent shall prepare a full report to present to the church at the annual meeting.

Any officer of Mountain Springs Independent Church may succeed himself if the church so desires. A person must be either a regular or an honorary member of Mountain Springs Independent Church to serve as an elected officer.

#### ARTICLE IX - COMMITTEES

Such boards and committees as are needed from time to time shall function in Mountain Springs Independent Church to help promote the various phases of church work.

#### ARTICLE X - PROPERTY

1. Definition and Scope - The property shall be understood to include all land, buildings, portable furniture and equipment, bonds, bequests, money on deposit in the bank or church money in possession of church representatives though it is not deposited in the bank, or invested, etc. It shall likewise include all physical assets acquired by the church at a later date.
2. The Power -The power to acquire, control, retain, sell, lease or mortgage property shall rest solely in the hands of Mountain Springs Independent Church. However, none of the lands now held by the church shall ever be sold, except burial plots to be used exclusively for that purpose. Any

business transactions concerning the properties of Mountain Springs Independent Church shall be in violation of this constitution except when authorized by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a meeting of the church called for such action, the said action being after due notice to all regular and honorary members.

ARTICLE XI - SEPARATION

As a New Testament church cannot "join" anything outside of itself, but only affiliate therewith on the grounds of fellowship, this church declares itself to be in fellowship only with those of "like precious faith" who maintain a position of separation from the National Council and World Council of Churches and any other apostate organizations or with any church or individual who will not accept our confession of faith as found in this constitution.

ARTICLE XII - PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

- 1. Rules of Order - When the parliamentary procedure of a meeting is questioned, *ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER* shall be accepted as final.
- 2. Quorum - Nine (9) shall constitute a quorum.
- 3. Voting Privileges - No person under disciplinary suspension shall be permitted to vote. Otherwise, all regular and honorary members of Mountain Springs Independent Church shall be permitted to vote.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS

- 1. Amendments - Adoption and amendments - This constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds of the members present at the business meeting at which vote is taken shall vote in favor of same.

This constitution may be amended by two-thirds majority of members present and voting in a regular business meeting of the church provided, however, that such amendment or correction shall be given to the clerk in writing and this proposed change shall be presented to the members for consideration at least 30 days prior to the time the vote is taken.

It is understood that there shall be no alterations or amendments to those provisions of the constitution having to do with doctrine or the ownership, control, or disposition of the physical properties and assets of Mountain Springs Independent Church.

- 2. By-Laws:
  - A. The pastor of the church is ex-officio moderator of all general and special meetings of the church; he shall likewise be ex-officio member of all committees with the right to exercise judgement as to attendance and service. During the absence of a pastor, or a pastorless interim, the church superintendent, or the chairman of the board of stewards shall be church moderator. If necessary, the stewards may, by majority vote of their number present, elect a temporary church moderator.

- B. All auxiliary organizations using the church name, property, or influence shall not be formed without the knowledge and consent of the church. These said groups shall fully subscribe to and share the doctrinal view of this document.
- C. It shall be the duty of the acting moderator to maintain an atmosphere of courtesy, reverence, and good order in all business meetings. The usual rules of parliamentary procedure shall apply, it being fully understood that the church has the right to establish its own rules of procedure should it desire.

Provisions for amendments to the by-laws shall be the same as for the constitution, as set forth in Article XIV above.

After proper presentation of the constitution and by-laws of Mountain Springs Independent Church, there was a full discussion and a vote taken; and the constitution and by-laws were duly adopted, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 198\_\_.

SIGNED BY:

Wesley Jarneth  
Chairman, Board of Stewards

Melvin Beard  
Chairman, Board of Trustees

Maurin S. Clay  
Superintendent

ATTESTED BY:

Melvin Beard  
Clerk