

**CONSTITUTION OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT
CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Revised on 12th October 2000)**

1. NAME

The church shall be called the Western District Chinese Christian Church.

2. OBJECT

The object of the Church is to glorify God in

- 2.1 spreading the Gospel at home and overseas,
- 2.2 building up of the members to spiritual maturity, and

3. DOCTRINES

The Church believes in:

- 3.1 The unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead (Matthew 28:19, II Corinthians 13:14, I Corinthians 12:4-6, Ephesians 4:4-6).
- 3.2 The sovereignty of God in creation, revelation, redemption and final judgment (Acts 17:24, John 14:26, Romans 5:6-11, II Corinthians 5:10).
- 3.3 The divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture, as originally given, and its supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct (II Timothy 3:16-17).
- 3.4 The universal sinfulness and guilt of human nature since the fall, rendering man subject to God's wrath and condemnation (Romans 3:23, 1:18, 5:12-13).
- 3.5 Redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death (as our Representative and Substitute) of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 26:28, John 1:14, Matthew 1:18-22).
- 3.6 The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and subsequently the resurrection of all believers to eternal life (I Corinthians 15:3-4, 20-22).
- 3.7 The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit to make the death of Christ effective to the individual sinner, granting him repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ (John 16:8, Titus 3:5-7).
- 3.8 The indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit in the believer (John 14:17, I Corinthians 6:19).
- 3.9 The one holy universal Church, which is the Body of Christ, and to which all true believers belong (I Corinthians 10:16-17, 12:12-13, Ephesians 4:11-13).
- 3.10 The expectation of the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11).

4. SACRAMENTS

The Church Sacraments include:

4.1 Baptism

4.1.1 The Church believes that those who have assurance of salvation should be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Authority to accept candidates for baptism shall rest with the minister who performs the baptism. The Church recognizes both forms of baptism, and candidates for baptism shall themselves choose to be baptized, either by effusion of by immersion (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12, 2:38, 8:36-38, Romans 6:3-4).

4.1.2 Infants of Christian parents may be baptized or dedicated.

4.1.3 Those who have been baptized during infancy may receive the confirmation of Faith as a witness to their personal assurance of salvation.

4.2 Holy Communion

The Church follows the teachings of the Holy Scriptures in observing the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Qualification

Applicants for membership shall:

5.1.1 Have received believers' baptism or confirmation in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

5.1.2 Subscribe fully to the object and doctrines of this Church.

5.1.3 Have attended church services regularly for at least 6 months.

5.2 Procedure

Any person desiring to become a member of this Church shall submit the duly filled application forms to the Diaconate for approval.

5.3 Responsibility

Members are to:

5.3.1 Actively participate in the worship, fellowship, stewardship, and the witness of the Church.

5.3.2 Share in the financial responsibility of the Church.

5.3.3 Attend General Meetings and participate in matters relating to the Church regularly.

5.4 Termination

5.4.1 A member who wishes to withdraw his/her membership voluntarily may give notice to the Church Secretary.

- 5.4.2 If a member is absent for one year from all Church services and other Church activities and gives no response to letters of enquiry and to visits, his/her membership shall be terminated.
- 5.4.3 When a member leaves Sydney permanently, his/her membership shall be deemed to have ceased and his/her name shall be transferred to the list of “Friends of the Western District Chinese Christian Church” in order that he may receive news of the Church.

5.5 Discipline

Those members who should act against the teaching of the Bible, or against the object and doctrines of the Church, shall as deemed fit by the Minister and the Deacons, be exhorted, admonished, or disciplined; or if deemed necessary by a unanimous vote of the Diaconate, be removed from membership.

5.6 Restoration

Any person whose membership has been terminated can submit a written application for restoration of membership to the Diaconate. He/She must show clear signs of repentance and change in conduct, if he/she was terminated for that purpose. He/she must give satisfactory explanation if his/her membership was terminated because of prolonged absence. The approval is subjected to the careful screening of the Diaconate.

6. MINISTER / PASTOR

- 6.1 The call to a Minister/Pastor and the term and conditions of office shall be recommended by the Diaconate and accepted by a General Meeting with a two-thirds majority.
- 6.2 The Minister/Pastor shall be the Spiritual leader of the Church and shall shepherd the flock in accordance with scriptural teaching and the object and doctrines of the Church.
- 6.3 The Minister/Pastor shall perform the Sacraments as stated in the Constitution.
- 6.4 When more than one Minister/Pastor is appointed, the Ministers/Pastors shall comprise the pastoral team in which one shall be the senior Minister/Pastor.

7. ORGANISATION

7.1 The General Meeting

- 7.1.1 The ultimate authority of this Church is vested in the General Meeting.
- 7.1.2 The Annual General Meeting shall be held on a date determined by the Diaconate.
- 7.1.3 A Special General Meeting may be called by the Diaconate or by more than

5 voting members and not less than 5% of the voting members.

7.1.4 A quorum at these General Meetings shall be not less than 50% of voting members. The time and place of these meetings shall be determined by the Diaconate, and shall be announced from the pulpit at least four(4) weeks prior to an Annual General Meeting, and two(2) weeks prior to a Special General Meeting.

7.1.5 The Chairman and Secretary of the Diaconate shall be Chairman and Secretary of these General Meetings.

7.1.6 Voting

7.1.6.1 Members who have attained the age of 18 shall have the right to vote.

7.1.6.2 On any question arising at a general meeting of the member has one vote only.

7.1.6.3 All votes must be given personally or by proxy but no member may hold more than 5 proxies.

7.1.6.4 In the case of an equality of votes on a question at a general meeting, the chairperson of the meeting is entitled to exercise a second or casting vote.

7.1.6.5 This Constitution may be changed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a General Meeting. Proposed changes to the Constitution must be submitted in writing to the Diaconate at least four (4) weeks and published at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the General Meeting.

7.2 The Diaconate

7.2.1 Composition

7.2.1.1 The Diaconate shall consist of the Deacons and ex officio members, namely Ministers/Pastors, ecclesiastical staff and the Chairmen of branch churches.

7.2.1.2 The Office-bearers of the Diaconate shall consist of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and General Officer(s), and shall be elected by the Diaconate.

7.2.2 Functions

The Diaconate shall be responsible for:

7.2.2.1 Assistance to the Minister in the administration of the Sacraments, and in the advancement of the spiritual welfare of the members of the Church.

7.2.2.2 The general administration of the Church

- 7.2.2.3 The management of all properties owned by the Church.
- 7.2.2.4 The recommendation to the General Meeting for approval of the call of a new Minister and of engaging full time staff members and other ecclesiastics.
- 7.2.2.5 The approval of membership, the acceptance of transfer or resignation, and the maintenance of the Membership Roll.
- 7.2.2.6 Acceptance of resignation from Deacons owing to illness or other reasons.
- 7.2.2.7 The appointment of new Deacons from members of the Church to fill vacancies or when the need arises.
- 7.2.2.8 Formation of various committees when the need arises

7.3 Operation

- 7.3.1 The Diaconate shall meet monthly and a quorum shall consist of a majority of the Deacons.
- 7.3.2 The Chairman may call the Special Diaconate Meeting or must do so at the written request of any two members of the Diaconate.
- 7.3.3 The Chairman shall preside at the General Meetings and the meetings of the Diaconate, and is responsible for the co-ordination of church affairs. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall assume his/her duties.
- 7.3.4 The Secretary shall be responsible for the minutes of the General Meetings and all meetings of the Diaconate, and for the safekeeping of all Church records and documents. In the absence of the Secretary a member of the Diaconate shall assume his/her duties.
- 7.3.5 The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial matters of the Church and shall report to the monthly meetings of the Diaconate. He/she shall submit an audited Annual Financial Report to the Annual General Meeting. In the absence of the Treasurer, an acting Treasurer shall assume his/her duties.
- 7.3.6 The General Officer(s) shall be responsible for the general operation of the church ministry.

7.4 Deacons

7.4.1 QUALIFICATIONS

Before a person can be a deacon, he/she shall:

- 7.4.1.1 Have demonstrated his/her faithful services to God, and have made themselves examples to others in their speech, conduct, love, faith and purity as outlined in the Bible.
- 7.4.1.2 Have been a member of the Western District Chinese Christian Church for no less than one year.

7.4.1.3 Be twenty-five (25) years of age or above.

7.4.2 ELECTION

7.4.2.1 The deacons shall be elected for a term of two years and shall be eligible for re-election.

7.4.2.2 The number of deacons for each term will be determined by the Annual General Meeting of the previous year.

7.4.2.3 Deacons so elected shall be the members of the Committee of the Western District Chinese Christian Church as registered, with the Chairman of the Diaconate as the president and Vice Chairman the vice president.

7.4.2.4 At least two months prior to the election of deacons, the Diaconate shall form a Deacon Nomination Committee that invites and collects nominations from Church members. After careful screening, the Committee shall submit the names of all the candidates with recommendation to the Diaconate for approval at least one month before election.

7.4.2.5 A list of the candidates shall be announced and published at least two weeks before the election.

7.4.2.6 On the day of election at the Annual General Meeting, Deacons elected should enjoy at least half of the total votes.

7.5 Elders

7.5.1 A member, with suitable spiritual maturity, and recommended by the Minister, and by the Diaconate in a unanimous decision, may be appointed at a General Meeting of members as Elder.

7.5.2 The term of an Elder shall be two years, and extendible biennially by a General Meeting of members, provided it is recommended by the Minister and Diaconate

7.5.3 Duties of an Elder:

7.5.3.1 To assist the Minister in administering the Sacraments, i.e. the Holy Communion and Baptism.

7.5.3.2 To assist the Minister in preaching, teaching and leading Bible Studies and Fellowship meetings.

7.5.3.3 To assist the Minister in planning and implementation of spiritual development programs for the Church.

7.5.3.4 To assist the Minister in initiating evangelistic and missionary work, locally and abroad.

7.6 Church Departments / Fellowships

- 7.6.1 For the advancement of church affairs, different Departments/Fellowships may be formed by the Diaconate as the need arises.
- 7.6.2 The leaders of all Departments/Fellowships shall be members of the church and approved by the Diaconate.

7.7 Branch Churches

- 7.7.1 Branch churches may be established where and when deemed desirable by a General Meeting.
- 7.7.2 The Chairman of a branch church shall be approved by the Diaconate.
- 7.7.3 The Chairman of a branch church shall be responsible to the Diaconate for the functioning of the branch church and activities of all its
- 7.7.4 At the appropriate time, the branch church shall form itself into a separate legal entity, subjected to the approval of the Diaconate.

8. CHURCH FINANCE

- 8.1 The church primary income shall be from freewill offering and donations.
- 8.2 The assets and income of the church shall be applied in the furtherance of its above mentioned objectives and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to members of the church except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the church.
- 8.3 In the event of the church being dissolved, the amount which remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be transferred to any organization which has similar objects and which is exempted from income tax.

9. OTHERS

- 9.1 If during the General Meeting or a Diaconate Meeting, discussion is centred upon a person, such person may be asked to leave the meeting, if this action is deemed necessary by a majority of the voting members present.
- 9.2 Interpretation of this Constitution and matters not covered by the Constitution shall be resolved by the Diaconate according to the Scriptural teaching and normal Church practices
- 9.3 Translation of this Constitution into the Chinese language is published for information only. The English text shall be the proper Constitution.
- 9.4 If there is inconsistency between the provision of the Model Rules for Incorporated Associations and the provision of the Constitution of the Western District Chinese Christian Church, the provision of the Constitution of the Western District Chinese Christian Church should prevail subject to the Act.