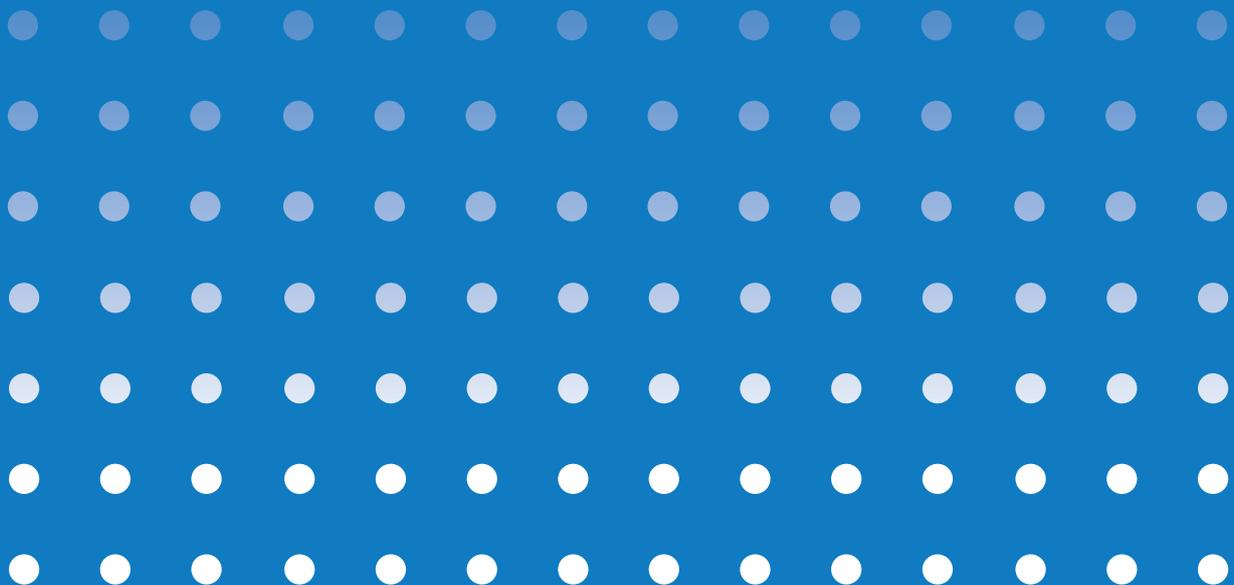




Constitution of the Association of Pentecostal Churches in Germany (BFP) [Bund Freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden KdöR]

Version: October 2019





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Registered office of the corporation: Industriestraße 6-8, 64390 Erzhausen

This is a non-legal translation of the constitution of the Association of Pentecostal Churches in Germany with headquarters in Erzhausen near Darmstadt. This translation is for orientation purposes only. The version in the original language is binding in any case.

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The constitution in its present form was adopted by the BFP Conference in autumn 2019 and notified to the Hessian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. The linguistic form of the description of persons used here does not allow any conclusion to be drawn about the gender of a person.

Preamble

The churches united in the Association of Pentecostal Churches in Germany emerged from the worldwide revivalism movement, which was known as the „Pentecostal Revival“, and belong to the World Pentecostal Movement.

They know themselves to be united by their confession of the Triune God, who reveals Himself through the inspired Word of the Holy Scripture.

They believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world, who commissioned his church to testify to the gospel to all people and to baptise those who have become believers in him.

They teach rebirth by the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit as empowerment for witnessing. They also profess the church of believers according to the Original Christian model, in which the Holy Spirit makes Himself known through gifts of grace, ministries and works.

They are waiting for the return of Jesus Christ for the Rapture of His church, resurrection of the dead, the establishment of His kingdom, an eternal life and an eternal judgement.

They represent freedom of faith, conscience and assembly, the separation of church and state, the principle of the autonomy of the local church as well as its binding union into a community of faith (Association) as the realisation of the biblical testimony of the New Testament church.

Article 1

Name, legal form and registered office

- 1 The „Association of Pentecostal Churches in Germany“ is a Christian denomination within the Federal Republic of Germany.
- 2 Under its former name, „Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Christengemeinden Deutschlands in Hessen“, with its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, it was granted the rights of a public corporation for the territory of the State of Hesse by the Minister of Education and the Arts in Wiesbaden in March 29, 1974. It is also seeking to be granted corporate rights in the other federal states.
- 3 Its seat is Erzhausen near Darmstadt. In the following it will be referred to as the „Association“ for short.

Article 2

Purposes and goals

- 1 The Association does not pursue any economic or political goals, but sees its main task in pursuing and promoting the spread of the Gospel in every possible way with the aim of establishing and building biblical churches.
- 2 The Bible is his sole basis and guideline for effectiveness, leadership and teaching.
- 3 Furthermore, it strives to help socially within the scope of its possibilities. This can also be done by donating funds of the BFP to other non-profit, charitable or church-recognized corporations, associations or public corporations for the fulfilment of their statutory tasks.

- 4 It exclusively and directly pursues ecclesiastical, non-profit and charitable purposes within the meaning of the applicable tax regulations.
- 5 Its funds may only be used for the statutory purposes. No one may be favoured by disproportionately high remuneration or by expenses that are alien to the purposes of the Association.

Article 3

Tasks

- 1 The Association sees its mission in the fulfilment of common Christian ministries and activities which go beyond the scope and strengths of the individual church and the fulfilment of which benefits each individual church.
These tasks include in particular:
 - the training of spiritual office bearers in its own theological seminary,
 - Domestic Mission,
 - World Mission,
 - Public Relations,
 - Children's and youth work,
 - Creation of community spaces and church buildings,
 - Effective social works,
 - Execution of the educational mission.
- 2 The Association also sees its task in representing the common cause to the state and other public authorities in a manner appropriate to our circumstances.
- 3 The Association is represented by delegates in both the Pentecostal World Conferences and the Pentecostal European Conference according to their rules. Furthermore, it strives to cultivate the bond of unity in the Spirit with all born-again Christians of the various denominations.

Article 4

BFP membership

- 1 Any church or group of churches of pentecostal orientation that agrees to its constitution, recognises its guidelines and supports its aims can become a member of the Association.
The churches or church groups manage their own affairs and maintain their own budgets, which they finance primarily from voluntary contributions by the members. Accordingly, they decide on membership in the local church. Only those who have been baptized into the personal creed of Jesus Christ can be members of a local church. The individual members of the local member congregation are at the same time members of the Association.
- 2 The request of a church or group of churches for admission as a member of the Association must be made in writing to the Presidium. The Presidium shall decide on the admission of a church. The BFP General Meeting decides on the admission of a church group.

- 3 The member congregations of the Association shall receive a certificate of membership. They must indicate this in their statutes and thus have the right to add the words „Member of the Association of Pentecostal Churches in Germany / Mitglied im Bund Freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden“ to their names. Membership excludes belonging of any other church or denomination.
- 4 The spiritual office bearers of the Association shall be personal members of the corporation and entitled to vote at the resolution-making BFP General Meeting. Spiritual office bearers who are members of a church that does not belong to the Association may become personal members of the Association as individuals, provided they agree to its constitution and guidelines and support its objectives. The Presidium shall decide on admission.
- 5 If a member congregation elects a spiritual office bearer who is not a member of the Association, the office bearer shall only be a personal member of the Association with the right to vote at the BFP General Meeting if he/she has been admitted by request.
- 6 The personal members of the Association shall receive an Identity Card.
- 7 The members (churches and personal members) of the different regions join together in regional meetings and elect a regional leadership board.
- 8 Churches and regions without their own legal personality as well as federally independent institutions are legally dependent. They share in the corporate rights of the Association.

Article 5

Termination of Association membership

- 1 The membership expires:
 - (a) in the case of a church or group of churches, by their self-dissolution, voluntary resignation, deletion or expulsion from the Association;
 - (b) in the case of a personal member, by deletion, resignation or expulsion from the local church or the Association. Further details are regulated by the BFP guidelines.
- 2 Resignation shall be made in writing to the Presidium. The notice of resignation shall take effect at the end of the day on which it is received by the Presidium. It shall be announced at the BFP General Meeting.

However, in the event of the withdrawal of a church or group of churches by notice of resignation, this shall only come into force if it has been decided by a majority of two thirds of the members present at the congregational meeting. The meeting must have been called by letter with at least 21 days' notice and with an agenda.
- 3 Expulsion or deletion of a member shall be decided by the Presidium and announced at the following BFP General Meeting. The Leadership Board may temporarily prohibit the exercise of membership and office rights. Further details are regulated by the guidelines and the disciplinary code.

Article 6

Bodies

The bodies of the Association are:

1. The BFP General Meeting
2. The Leadership Board
3. The Presidium

Article 7

The BFP General Meeting

- 1 The BFP General Meeting consists of the spiritual office bearers of the Association present and the delegates of the member congregations. The member congregations shall send their spiritual office bearers and other delegates to the BFP General Meeting in accordance with the guidelines of the Association. Any BFP General Meeting convened in accordance with the Constitution shall constitute a quorum, irrespective of the number of members present.
- 2 The BFP General Meeting has the following tasks:
 - (a) It elects the Leadership Board (Article 6.2).
 - (b) It shall promote the work of the members by dealing with spiritual or practical matters which it deems important.
 - (c) It receives the activity, cash, asset and audit reports and grants discharge to the Leadership Board.
 - (d) It decides on the enactment and amendments of the constitution and guidelines.
- 3 BFP General Meetings shall be held as often as the tasks of the Association make it necessary. In principle, an ordinary BFP General Meeting must be held as an annual conference. At the request of at least one third of the members, the Presidium shall convene an extraordinary BFP General Meeting if the purpose of the requested conference is within the scope of the constitutional tasks of the Association.
- 4 The BFP General Meeting shall be convened by the Praeses of the BFP in conjunction with the General Secretary on behalf of the Leadership Board. The invitation must be made in writing at least two weeks in advance.
- 5 The BFP General Meeting shall be chaired by the Praeses of the BFP unless another member of the Presidium is appointed.
- 6 The resolutions of the BFP General Meeting shall be adopted by a simple majority of votes of the members present, except in cases where the guidelines provide otherwise. Abstentions shall be considered as not having been cast for the purposes of evaluation, but shall be counted. Elections shall be held in accordance with the election regulations. Resolutions to amend the Constitution or the Guidelines may only be passed if an amendment or new version has been announced in the invitation. These resolutions require a three-quarters majority of the members present.
- 7 Minutes of the proceedings and resolutions of the BFP General Meeting shall be drawn up and signed by the Praeses of the BFP and the General Secretary.
- 8 Amendments to the text of the Constitution which become necessary for editorial or formal-legal reasons may be decided by the Presidium itself without the consent of the Conference.

Article 8

The Leadership Board

- 1 The Leadership Board shall exercise its functions in accordance with the Constitution, the Guidelines and the resolutions of the BFP General Meeting.
It consists of at least seven members elected by the BFP General Meeting and further advisory members without voting rights, who are confirmed by the Presidium on the proposal of the Leadership Board.
The election period shall be five years. Re-election is permitted.
An elected member of the Leadership Board can only be someone who has been a voting member of the BFP for at least seven years. In case of deviations, e.g. newly joined church associations, the Presidium shall decide.
- 2 From the elected Leadership Board the BFP General Meeting appoints
 1. the Praeses of the BFP,
 2. the Vice-Praeses of the BFP,
 3. the General Secretary of the BFP,
 4. the Treasurer of the BFP.They represent the Association in and out of court.
- 3 Each member of the Leadership Board elected under paragraph 2 is also authorized to represent alone. However, for legal transactions concerning real estate and other rights in rem, the signatures of the Treasurer of the BFP or his deputy in conjunction with another member of the Leadership Board elected under paragraph 2 are required. For savings books and accounts, the Treasurer of the BFP or his deputy shall also be authorised to sign alone.
- 4 The Leadership Board shall appoint the Deputy General Secretary and Deputy Treasurer of the BFP from among its members. The BFP General Meeting may decide to combine two offices in one person.
- 5 The Leadership Board meets several times a year at the invitation of the Praeses of the BFP in conjunction with the General Secretary of the BFP.
 - (a) when particularly important issues require it,
 - (b) if requested in writing by at least four members of the Leadership Board, stating the reasons. In this case, it shall be convened within one month.
- 6 The Leadership Board has a quorum if at least half of its members are present. Resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority of votes of the members present. In the event of a tie, the Praeses of the BFP shall have the casting vote.
In individual cases, if no member of the Leadership Board objects, resolutions may be passed by written poll or by telephone. Minutes of the resolutions shall be drawn up and signed by the Praeses of the BFP and the General Secretary of the BFP.

- 7 The Leadership Board has the following tasks in particular:
- (a) Together with the Presidium, he has the spiritual responsibility to seek God's will for the Association in prayer and Bible study and to find a common direction in pending doctrinal issues.
 - (b) The Leadership Board is challenged with its work to ensure unity, coordination and cooperation between the Leadership Board, regional leadership boards and the leadership of church associations and BFP ministries.
 - (c) It deliberates on topics and current issues and, together with the Presidium, prepares recommendations to the BFP General Meeting.
 - (d) It is responsible for the timely convening of the BFP General Meetings.
 - (e) It shall carry out the resolutions of the BFP General Meeting and handle the administration of the Association's assets responsibly.
 - (f) It decides on the agenda for the BFP General Meeting.
 - (g) It shall report to the BFP General Meeting on the past calendar year, submit a cash report and provide evidence of the assets. Cash audits shall be carried out at least once a year by two auditors to be appointed by the BFP General Meeting. Their report shall be submitted to the BFP General Meeting.
 - (h) The Leadership Board shall prepare an annual budget on the proposal of the Treasurer of the BFP, coordinate it with the Presidium and inform the Presidium about the financial situation of the Association.
- 8 The Praeses of the BFP shall chair the Leadership Board Meetings unless another member of the Leadership Board is designated to do so.
- 9 In urgent cases which cannot be postponed until the next BFP General Meeting, the Leadership Board may decide on a regulation in its place, which must be announced to and represented before the next BFP General Meeting. This does not apply to amendments to the Constitution.

Article 9

The presidium

- 1 The Presidium shall exercise its functions in accordance with the Constitution, the Guidelines and the resolutions of the BFP General Meeting.
- 2 The Presidium shall be composed of the Leadership Board (Article 8), the regional leaders elected by the regional meetings (Article 4.7) and the respective representatives of church associations, where agreed.
- 3 The Presidium shall meet at least once a year at the invitation of the Praeses of the BFP in conjunction with the General Secretary of the BFP, as well as
- (a) when particularly important issues require it,
 - (b) if requested in writing by at least one third of the members of the Presidium, stating the reasons. In this case, it shall be convened within one month.
- 4 The Presidium shall have a quorum if at least half of its members are present. Resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority of votes of the members present. In the event of a tie, the Praeses of the BFP shall have the casting vote.

- 5 The Presidium shall in particular have the following tasks:
- (a) It has the spiritual responsibility to seek God's will for the Association in prayer and Bible study, and to find common direction on pending doctrinal issues.
 - (b) The work of the Presidium is to ensure unity, coordination and cooperation between the Leadership Board, regional leaders and the leadership of church associations and BFP ministries.
 - (c) It deliberates on topics and current issues and, if necessary, makes recommendations to the BFP General Meeting.
 - (d) It decides on membership applications and decides on ordinations.
 - (e) It decides on admission to the status of trainee; likewise, it decides on admission to the status of vicar after completion of training.
 - (f) It issues working guidelines and regulations on the basis of the constitution and guidelines (disciplinary code, pastoral service regulations, ...).
 - (g) It decides on amendments to the Constitution and the Guidelines of the Association after preparatory work and presentation by the Leadership Board for presentation and decision at the BFP General Meeting.
 - (h) It approves the statutes and guidelines of regions and BFP ministries.
 - (i) It is responsible for representing the Association internally and externally.
 - (j) It appoints ministries and committees for specific areas of responsibility.
 - (k) The Presidium may delegate tasks to the Leadership Board.
- 6 The Praeses of the BFP shall chair the presidium meetings unless another member of the presidium is designated to do so.

Article 10

BFP ministries

The BFP ministries serve to carry out its tasks (Article 3). They are part of the body, are constituted by resolution of the BFP General Meeting and have a basic legal order approved by the presidium.

The leaders of the BFP ministries need the confirmation of the Executive Leadership for their legitimacy. They are presented at the following BFP General Meeting. The annual budget of the BFP ministries is subject to the control of the Treasurer of the BFP and their accountability report is presented to the BFP General Meeting.

Article 11

Budget

The financial resources required to fulfil the constitutional tasks (Article 3) shall be raised in particular through voluntary donations.

Article 12

Dissolution

The dissolution of the Association of Pentecostal Churches in Germany can only be decided in a BFP General Meeting specially convened for this purpose and with a majority of votes of three quarters of the members present. A prerequisite is the invitation by letter with details of the agenda, observing a notice period of at least 45 days.

In the event of the dissolution or annulment of the Association, all its assets shall go to the non-profit association „Velberter Mission e. V.“ based in Velbert/Rheinland or, if this no longer exists, to the non-profit association „Volksmission entschiedener Christen e. V.“ based in Stuttgart. If this also ceases to exist, its assets shall go to the association „Gemeinde der Christen ECCLESIA e. V.“ with its registered office in Solingen-Ohligs. These shall use it exclusively and directly for ecclesiastical and non-profit or charitable purposes in accordance with their statutes. If these no longer exist, the assets of the Association shall be allocated to the member congregations according to their number of members.