

SFBC POLITY

Amended and Accepted July 26th 2015

CONTENTS

SFBC POLITY	1
Constitution	7
ARTICLE I.....	7
Preamble	7
ARTICLE II.....	7
Name and Affiliation	7
Section 2.01 Legal Name	7
Section 2.02 Affiliations.....	7
Section 2.03 Non-profit Status	7
Section 2.04 Dissolution and Mergers.....	7
ARTICLE III.....	8
Articles of Faith	8
Section 3.01 Mission	8
Section 3.02 Statement of Basic Belief.....	8
ARTICLE IV	9
Governance	9
Section 4.01 Definition	9
Section 4.02 Public Worship.....	9
Section 4.03 Church Business Meetings.....	9
Section 4.04 Amending the Constitution	9
By Laws	10
ARTICLE I.....	10
Membership	10
Section 1.01 Requirements	10
Section 1.02 Membership Expectations.....	10
Section 1.03 Privileges.....	11
Section 1.04 Inactive Membership.....	11
Section 1.05 Removal	11
ARTICLE II.....	12

Church Pastors, Staff and Deacons	12
Section 2.01 Pastors	12
Section 2.01.a Qualifications	12
Section 2.01.b Responsibilities	12
Section 2.01.c Selection and Term of Office	12
Section 2.01.d Temporary Leave	12
Section 2.01.e Lay Pastor Removal	13
Section 2.01.f Definition of Quorum and Passing Vote	13
Section 2.01.g The Lead Pastor	13
Section 2.01.h Trustees	14
Section 2.02.a Staff and Deacons	14
Section 2.02.b Qualifications	14
Section 2.02.c Responsibilities	14
Section 2.02.d Selection	14
Section 2.02.e Termination/Removal	14
ARTICLE III	15
Ordinances	15
Section 3.01 Baptism	15
Section 3.02 The Lord's Supper	15
ARTICLE IV	15
Gatherings	15
Section 4.01 Worship Gathering	15
Section 4.02 Annual Meetings	15
Section 4.03 Special Meeting	15
Section 4.04 Quorum	15
Section 4.05 Rules of Procedure	15
ARTICLE V	16
Church Discipline	16
Section 5.01 Definition	16
Section 5.02 Purpose	16

Section 5.03 Mediation	17
ARTICLE VI	17
Church Finances and Properties.....	17
Section 6.01 Financial Year.....	17
Section 6.02 Church Budget	18
Section 6.03 Accounting.....	18
Section 6.04 Contributions.....	18
Section 6.05 Solicitation	18
Section 6.06 Indebtedness	18
Section 6.07 Church Properties.....	18
ARTICLE VII	19
Amendments.....	19
ARTICLE VIII	19
Statement of Final Authority on Matters of Faith and Conduct	19
Faith & Statement	20
I. The Scriptures.....	20
II. God	20
A. God the Father	20
B. God the Son.....	20
C. God the Holy Spirit	21
III. Man	21
IV. Salvation.....	22
V. God's Purpose of Grace.....	22
VI. The Church	23
VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper	23
VIII. The Lord's Day.....	23
IX. The Kingdom.....	24
X. Last Things.....	24
XI. Evangelism and Missions.....	24
XII. Education.....	25

XIII. Stewardship.....	25
XIV. Cooperation	25
XV. The Christian and the Social Order	26
XVI. Peace and War	26
XVII. Religious Liberty.....	26
XVIII. The Family.....	27
XIX. Marriage, Gender and Sexuality.....	27
Appendix 1.....	29
MEDIATION RULES	29
A. GENERAL RULES	29
1. Purpose.....	29
2. Use of Rules and Name of Administrator.....	29
3. Definitions and Rules of Construction.....	29
4. Application of Law.....	30
5. Commencing Conciliation.....	30
6. Involvement of Insurer.....	31
7. Withdrawal.....	31
8. Selecting an Administrator.....	31
9. Fees and Costs.....	31
10. Appointment of Conciliators	32
11. Replacement of Conciliators	32
12. Time and Place of Conciliation Meetings	32
13. Right to Legal Counsel	33
14. Evidence in Conciliation	33
15. Decisions by Majority.....	34
16. Confidentiality	34
17. Church Involvement	35
18. Waiver of Right to Object.....	35
19. Interpretation and Application of Rules.....	35
20. Exclusion from Liability.....	35

B. MEDIATION RULES	35
21. Individual Meetings and Caucuses during Mediation	35
22. Mediation Proceedings	36
23. Written Record of Agreement.....	36
24. Transition from Mediation to Arbitration	36
C. ARBITRATION RULES	37
25. Description of Issues and Remedies.....	37
26. Approval of Panel	37
27. Oaths or Vows	37
28. Pre-hearing Conferences and Preliminary Hearings	37
29. Temporary Relief.....	37
30. Discovery and Distribution of Documents.....	38
31. Notice of Arbitration Meetings	38
32. Delivery and Notice	38
33. Communication with Arbitrators	38
34. Arbitration Proceedings	38
35. Record of Proceedings.....	39
36. Evidence in Arbitration.....	39
37. Arbitration in the Absence of a Party.....	39
38. Legal or Scriptural Briefs.....	39
39. Reopening of Hearings	39
40. Decisions.....	39
41. Request for Reconsideration	40
42. Conflict of Rules.....	40

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

Preamble

For the purpose of persevering and making se-cure the principles of our faith and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the church and to set for the relationship of this body to other bodies of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE II.

Name and Affiliation

SECTION 2.01 LEGAL NAME

The name of this corporation is First Baptist Church, Sachse, Texas. This corporation will be further referred to in this constitution as the "church". The church may be referred to in publicity and other means in shortened terms such as 'Sachse's Church' or 'First Baptist'.

SECTION 2.02 AFFILIATIONS

The church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in fulfillment of its purpose, the church may voluntarily affiliate with other churches and conventions by a passing vote of the pastors. The affiliations of the church will be public knowledge in a forum approved by the pastors.

The church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention for the purpose of missions and ministry through the Cooperative Program.

SECTION 2.03 NON-PROFIT STATUS

The church is a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Texas so long as such ruling remains valid and applicable to the church. The exemption is granted under the Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3).

SECTION 2.04 DISSOLUTION AND MERGERS

In the event of a voluntary dissolution of the church, the net assets of the church shall be dis-tributed to a like-minded church or association of churches for the purpose of continued Gospel work. The distribution will be in accordance with a passing vote of the remaining active members as defined in the church's bylaws. In the event of a merger of the church with another church, then the net assets of the church shall be contributed to the surviving entity.

ARTICLE III.

Articles of Faith

SECTION 3.01 MISSION

The mission of the church is to make much of Jesus and bring glory to God by making disciples with a deep, intentional commitment to Christ Jesus, the community in which we live as well as the community of believers and to show com-*passion* to all people for the purpose of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are committed to doing this through simple and relational means.

SECTION 3.02 STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEF

The following beliefs represent the core orthodox beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective. While church members are not required to fully understand or articulate all aspects of these beliefs, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership in the First Baptist Church of Sachse Texas. Revisions of this statement to more clearly align to the Scriptures remain at the discretion of the pastors, with the conferment of the members of the church. For a more detailed treatment of our basic beliefs see the Faith and Message.

We believe...

- The Scriptures are true, authoritative and sufficient (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6; Isaiah 46:9-10; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5).
- The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. The Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit. The Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 3:13-17; Matthew 28:17-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
- I am, along with all humanity (Christ excluded), by birth and action a sinner (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:8, 12-21; 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- The deserved penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 3:19; Romans 5:12; 6:23; James 1:14-15).
- Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin and is both fully God and fully human (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3).
- Jesus Christ died as my substitute to pay the penalty for my sin (John 1:29; 10:1-18; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18).
- Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25; 1 Corinthians 15:12-34).
- Jesus Christ physically ascended into heaven and will one day physically return (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).
- There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal reward. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).

- Only by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone can I be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy (John 3:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2:5-6).

ARTICLE IV

Governance

SECTION 4.01 DEFINITION

The Church is to be recognized as a Jesus ruled, pastor (plurality of elders) led and congregation-ally accountable church in accordance with the principles laid down in the New Testament.

The overall policy, direction and management of the ministry, operations and finances of the church shall be vested in the pastors / elder body. The pastors are designated as the directors of this corporation as the term is defined and used in the Texas Nonprofit Corporation Act. Subject to the provisions and limitations of the Texas Nonprofit Corporation Act, any limitations in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and the church's bylaws, all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the direction of the pastors.

The church body made of confessing members who adhere to the member agreement (Bylaws Section 102) are to remain the final authority in matters of property ownership, the yearly budget, church discipline and changes to the bylaws, constitution and faith and message.

SECTION 4.02 PUBLIC WORSHIP

Meetings for public worship shall be held at such times and places as may be provided for under the direction of the pastors.

SECTION 4.03 CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS

The pastors shall have the authority to call church conferences (business meeting) or special meetings as needed. At least one church conference will be held annually.

SECTION 4.04 AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

This constitution may be amended by a recommendation of the pastors and a two thirds majority vote of the congregation.

BY LAWS

ARTICLE I

Membership

SECTION 1.01 REQUIREMENTS

Membership within First Baptist Church, Sachse, TX (“church”) is first precipitated on one becoming a genuine follower of Jesus Christ through having responded by faith by the drawing of the Spirit to the message of the gospel and been baptized by immersion. In addition, thereto:

Members shall have completed all of the requirements of membership as defined by the elders; and

Members have agreed with and confirm the church Constitution, Faith & Message and By Laws including the Membership Expectations.

Those seeking membership to the church after July 26th, 2015 must sign a membership agreement stating they have read and do affirm the church’s Constitution, By Laws and Faith & Statement and will seek to uphold them in speech, practice and habit.

- a) Members (immersed) of other churches of like faith and order may be received by the church upon a letter of transfer from that church.
- b) (b)Anyone who has once been a member of a Baptist church, and in consequence of peculiar circumstances has no regular letter of transfer, may be received unto our fellowship upon a statement satisfactory to the church.
- c) Letters of transfer shall be granted to any church of like faith and order for members in good standing. When letters are granted, membership in this church will be terminated.
- d) When a member of this church joins a church of different faith and order membership in this church will terminate.
- e) In considering the rights involved, members, and members only, present at any church conference may act and vote on the transactions of the church. A member for voting purposes will be an individual, 13 years or older, whose name appears on the active membership role.

SECTION 1.02 MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

- a) Members shall regularly attend and participate in corporate worship gatherings;
- b) shall participate in Small Groups for the purpose of mutual accountability and encouragement;
- c) Shall habitually contribute financially to the mission and ministry of the church. This obligation is prescribed in Scripture with the tithe (10% of increase) being taught as the minimum requirement;

- d) shall regularly serve in some manner both within and outside the ministries of the church; and
- e) Shall make every effort to relate to other members of the church in a manner consistent with scriptural teachings.

SECTION 1.03 PRIVILEGES

The active members of the church shall vote on the matters of

- a) the annual operating budget;
- b) indebtedness associated with the purchase or construction of real estate;
- c) cumulative indebtedness for all other aspects of church business that exceeds twenty percent (20%) of the annual church operating budget;
- d) acceptance of an amended or restated constitution or bylaws;
- e) disposition of substantially all of the church's assets;
- f) merger or dissolution of the Church;
- g) the removal of a person's membership resulting from church discipline after such member has been admonished by a friend and the elders yet refuses to repent;
- h) confirmation of pastors (elders); and
- i) Other actions deemed major and extraordinary by the pastors.

All items above will be communicated to the church not less than twenty-one (21) days prior to the vote and afterward as well. Comments received from the church will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

SECTION 1.04 INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

All members who have neglected Worship gatherings, small group participation and financial contribution for six months, unless good cause for such neglect be shown, shall be placed on the inactive roll.

Inactive members may be reinstated as Active Members after they have repented, reconfirmed a commitment to the Membership Expectations and one month of obvious effort.

SECTION 1.05 REMOVAL

Members of the church shall be removed from membership for reasons of

- a) Death;
- b) The member's request for removal;
- c) Evidence of membership with another church; or
- d) Failure to substantially uphold the membership expectations for one year or longer.
- e) The church's decision based upon the process of Church Discipline Guidelines for the cause of unrepentant sin as outlines in Article V of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE II

Church Pastors, Staff and Deacons

The Church is to be recognized as a Jesus ruled, elder led and congregationally accountable church in accordance with the principles laid down in the New Testament.

SECTION 2.01 PASTORS

The term Pastor is to be used as a synonym for the term Elder taught in Scripture and vice versa. Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Peter 5:1-2. The terms may be used interchangeably in this document as well as regular church life. Lay pastors are those not employed by the church while vocational pastors receive compensation.

SECTION 2.01.A QUALIFICATIONS

The pastors shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of 'overseer/elder' set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Each must also be a giving and serving member of the church. A majority of the active pastors shall be composed of church members not in regular pay of the church, and no pastor shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

SECTION 2.01.B RESPONSIBILITIES

Subject to the confirmation of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the pastors shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

The pastors shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The pastors are to further ensure all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

The Pastors shall meet at least three times annually and more if deemed reasonable or necessary by the standing pastors. Members may attend pastor meetings with prior approval or invitation.

SECTION 2.01.C SELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE

Should the standing pastors(s) recognize the need for additional lay pastors, candidates that meet the above stated qualifications (Article 2.01.b) and receive a two thirds majority vote by the congregation will begin service immediately unless another date has been specified. Pastors serve indefinitely or until they are removed OR they choose to take a temporary leave for personal reasons.

SECTION 2.01.D TEMPORARY LEAVE

A lay pastor may opt to take a temporary leave.

- a. the term shall be set and agreed upon prior to the leave;

- b. should the pastor wish to rejoin the team prior to the agreed upon term he may do so with the consent of the remaining pastors;
- c. in the case of an extended absence (at or greater than 2 months) a qualified man shall be selected by the pastors and confirmed by the church as a temporary elder to be dismissed upon the return of the absent pastor.

SECTION 2.01.E LAY PASTOR REMOVAL

Any member of the church may bring written Scriptural reasons for the removal of a lay pastor. If reasons are substantiated by two or more witnesses, Pastors may be removed from office by a unanimous decision of the other Pastors. Removal shall be based upon being scripturally unqualified or the inability to serve.

SECTION 2.01.F DEFINITION OF QUORUM AND PASSING VOTE

A proper quorum is defined as seventy-five percent (75%) of the lay elders and seventy-five (75%) of the vocational elders. A quorum is required for voting matters.

The pastors shall prayerfully seek unanimous agreement in all matters believing the Holy Spirit guides with oneness of mind (Acts 15.1-29; Phil. 2.1-2).

SECTION 2.01.G THE LEAD PASTOR

The lead pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Article 2.01.b, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full time ministry of preaching and teaching.

He is responsible to oversee the preaching ministry, administration of the ordinances (the Lord's Supper and Baptism) and performance of such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution.

Lead Pastor and Church Staff

The church staff positions shall be filled by the Lead Pastor in consultation with the other standing Pastors. The staff shall perform such duties as shall be assigned by the Lead Pastor and/or the Pastors. In the event of a staff vacancy during a lead pastor vacancy, ministerial staff positions will be filled on an interim basis until such time as a permanent Lead Pastor is called.

Lead Pastor Dismissal

The church may dissolve the Lead Pastoral relationship by a three-fourths' public vote of the active membership present at any regular or special church conference provided notice of such proposed action shall have been given to the other Pastors at least twenty-one days in advance and found warranted with moral or ethical basis. Notice will be given at a regular Sunday service. The Lead Pastor may not block such a notice. The Lead Pastor may resign from his position at any time for any reason with the blessing of the remaining pastors and an announcement to the church by the Lead Pastor at least 21 days prior to the termination of his duties. The remaining pastors may release him of his duties earlier than 21 days. A severance package if appropriate will be given to the leaving pastor as agreed upon by the remaining pastors no less than 1/12 and no more than ½ of the budgeted compensation for that position.

Lead Pastor Replacement

In the event a Lead Pastor vacancy occurs, the remaining Pastors shall be charged with the responsibility of securing a permanent lead pastor for the church. The call of the lead pastor shall take place at a meeting especially set for that purpose with at least one week's notice by whatever means deemed appropriate by the remaining pastors. The pastors shall bring only one name at a time for consideration of the church, and no nomination shall be made except that of the Pastors. The church shall have an opportunity to hear the minister at a Sunday morning worship service prior to a vote being taken unless this provision is waived by majority vote of the church in any regular or called church conference. Election shall require an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present and voting to constitute a call. Should the one recommended by the pastors fail to receive a three-fourths vote, they will be instructed to seek out another minister and the meeting shall be adjourned without debate.

SECTION 2.01.H TRUSTEES

The trustees shall constitute the body politic and corporate by the name of "First Baptist Church of Sachse, Texas" and shall hold in trust all property, effects, etc., for the benefit and subject to the direction of the church. The acts of said trustees relating to the property and effects of the church are valid only when ratified by a majority vote at a publicized regularly convened meeting of the church. They shall be legal representatives of the church. Written consent by at least two of the trustees is required to take any action on behalf of the church. The Pastors and other persons confirmed by the church shall act as Trustees for the church.

SECTION 2.02.A STAFF AND DEACONS

SECTION 2.02.B QUALIFICATIONS

Where applicable all staff and deacons must meet the qualifications of the Deacon as presented in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

SECTION 2.02.C RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) Staff responsibilities will be determined by the pastors and specified in a written job description. Each staff member is responsible to the pastors and may have another supervising staff member to which he/she answers.

(b) Staff shall submit to the specification of the Church Personnel Policy as issued by the Pastors.

(c) The primary responsibilities of lay deacons are to assist the pastors in ministry to the church as illustrated in Acts 6. This includes but is not limited to widow care and the ministering of those in the hospital.

SECTION 2.02.D SELECTION

Staff and Deacons may be called/hired and set apart for specific service upon the recommendation of the pastors. Deacons will be confirmed by the church with a majority vote. The diaconate shall consist of no fewer than 7 members. Deacons shall serve a term of one year with no limitation on the number of consecutive terms. Staff shall serve indefinitely in accordance with the wishes of the pastors and the Church Personnel Policy.

SECTION 2.02.E TERMINATION/REMOVAL

Staff and Deacons may be terminated or removed by

- a. request of the person serving in such position,
- b. dismissal by the pastors for grounds of immorality,
- c. termination as stated in the Personnel Policy Manual

ARTICLE III

Ordinances

SECTION 3.01 BAPTISM

The ordinance of Believer's Baptism shall be observed as often as necessary in accordance with the church's Faith and Message.

SECTION 3.02 THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least annually as determined by the pastors and in accordance with the church's Faith and Message.

ARTICLE IV

Gatherings

SECTION 4.01 WORSHIP GATHERING

The church shall gather when possible for the expressed purpose of worshipping Christ corporately.

Section 4.02 Annual Meetings

The regular church conference shall be held annually with prior notice of the date and time given to the church at least one week in advance.

SECTION 4.03 SPECIAL MEETING

A special church conference may be called at any time by the pastors after verbal notice has been given to the membership in a previous Worship Gathering or by other means at least 3 days before the meeting.

In unusual circumstances or matters of great urgency, this notice provision shall be waived by unopposed action of the church assembled at any regular worship gathering.

SECTION 4.04 QUORUM

A quorum for voting purposes shall consist of any active members present at a called Church Conference.

SECTION 4.05 RULES OF PROCEDURE

Section 4.05a

- a. One of the Pastors shall preside at all church conferences.
- b. The moderator shall preserve order, determine active membership, state and put all questions, take the vote and shall cast the deciding vote in case of a tie.
- c. In all cases of order, the moderator shall decide, but a majority of two-thirds may reverse the decision.

Section 4.05b

All questions shall be brought before the church by motion and seconded before they shall be discussed and voted upon.

Section 4.05c

All motions, resolutions, and reports shall be submitted in writing.

Section 4.05d

Only one member shall speak at a time and preference shall be given to the member first addressing the moderator.

Section 4.05e

Every member wishing to speak shall rise from their seat and respectfully address the moderator.

Section 4.05f

No member may speak more than once upon the same subject until every member wishing to speak shall have the liberty to do so, nor more than twice without consent of the church.

ARTICLE V

Church Discipline

SECTION 5.01 DEFINITION

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–20 20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5). The Elders may report to the congregation the names of those who are subject to loss of membership by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.

The members of this church further knowingly and voluntarily agree that a member cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership in the midst of the discipline process, and may only voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership if they are not the subject of a discipline proceeding at the time or only after a disciplinary process, of which they are the subject has been concluded as determined by the Elders.

SECTION 5.02 PURPOSE

- a. The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined
(see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3:4–5; Hebrews

- 12:1–11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26–27; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; I Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1–5; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15; I Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1:22);
- b. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them
(see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–25);
 - c. For the purity of the church as a whole
(see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);
 - d. For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians
(see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Ephesians 5:11; I Timothy 3:7; II Peter 2:2; I John 3:10); and
 - e. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character
(see Deuteronomy 5:11; I Kings 11:2; II Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5–6; II Corinthians 6:14–7: 1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; I Peter 2:12).

SECTION 5.03 MEDIATION

Members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion. (1 Cor 6: 1-7.) Mediation will be governed by the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC Rules, see Appendix 1), unless modified as stipulated by the parties. In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC Rules, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

ARTICLE VI

Church Finances and Properties

SECTION 6.01 FINANCIAL YEAR

The church's financial year runs January 1 through December 31.

SECTION 6.02 CHURCH BUDGET

A comprehensive annual budget will be formed by the vocational ministerial staff and approved by the pastors before being submitted to the congregation near the end of the Financial Year for approval.

SECTION 6.03 ACCOUNTING

Section 6.03a

All funds received for any and all purposes shall be properly recorded on the books of the church.

Section 6.03b

A system of accounting shall be implemented which shall adequately provide for the management of all funds of the church.

SECTION 6.04 CONTRIBUTIONS

It shall be the duty of the members to contribute regularly for the expenses of the church, and for the missionary benevolent agencies as the church may name.

SECTION 6.05 SOLICITATION

No person shall solicit or sell to the public in the name of the church or to the membership of the church on church properties items not directly related to the church ministries without the express consent of the pastors.

SECTION 6.06 INDEBTEDNESS

No motion to pay any money for indebtedness incurred in respect to this church shall be eligible nor will the church be responsible for any indebtedness incurred unless such indebtedness is incurred by a resolution of the church. Exception to this rule is made in respect to the pastors and the trustees in the case of emergencies for which provision cannot be made.

SECTION 6.07 CHURCH PROPERTIES

Section 6.07a Purpose

It is agreed by the present membership and all persons hereafter becoming members of this church that the securing and maintaining of real, personal, and mixed property by this church shall be for the express purpose of providing facilities for public worship, the engagement of the missionary education, and benevolent interest of this church in accordance with the character and in the spirit of these Bylaws and Faith and Message

Section 6.07b Rights

If at any time, this church shall determine to alter the quality of its beliefs, usages, and practices so as in any important respect to be at variance with the character described in the Faith and Message, if the decision is by less than a two-thirds majority vote of those present at any church conference, it is understood and agreed that the title and all rights to the property of the church shall inhere in and remain vested in the part of the congregation which shall agree to continue in accordance with these Bylaws and Faith and Message.

Section 6.07c Amendments to this Article

This article shall not be amended, altered or repealed except by three-fourths' vote of the membership present at a regular church conference and then only if such proposed amendment, alteration or repeal has been given in writing to the Pastors and has lain on the table for a period of twelve months; no consideration of such proposal shall be voted upon until the period aforementioned has elapsed and then at a regularly announced church conference.

ARTICLE VII

Amendments

These bylaws or any provision contained herein may be altered, amended or repealed, and new bylaws may be adopted by recommendation of the pastors and a majority vote of the congregation. All desired changes must be submitted to the pastors at least 21 days prior to the church conference in which the vote will be cast.

ARTICLE VIII

Statement of Final Authority on Matters of Faith and Conduct

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of the church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our elders are the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

FAITH & STATEMENT

I. THE SCRIPTURES

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. GOD

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as

the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. MAN

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore humanity is conceived transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. SALVATION

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

- A. **Regeneration**, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.
- B. **Repentance** is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.
- C. **Justification** is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.
- D. **Sanctification** is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.
- E. **Glorification** is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect

and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. THE CHURCH

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

VII. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. THE LORD'S DAY

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both

public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. THE KINGDOM

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. LAST THINGS

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans

10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. EDUCATION

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is coordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XIII. STEWARDSHIP

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. COOPERATION

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian

denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

XV. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. PEACE AND WAR

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36, 38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being

ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. THE FAMILY

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

XIX. MARRIAGE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given

responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of The First Baptist Church of Sachse Texas.

Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18-25; Matthew 15:18-20; Matthew 5:16; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18, 7:2-5; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Hebrews 13:4;

APPENDIX 1

MEDIATION RULES

A. GENERAL RULES

1. Purpose

The purpose of Christian conciliation is to glorify God by helping people to resolve disputes in a conciliatory rather than an adversarial manner. In addition to facilitating the resolution of substantive issues, Christian conciliation seeks to reconcile those who have been alienated by conflict and to help them learn how to change their attitudes and behavior to avoid similar conflicts in the future. These Rules shall be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with this purpose.

2. Use of Rules and Name of Administrator

These Rules may be used by the Institute for Christian Conciliation™, a local Christian conciliation ministry, a church, or any other organization or person who wishes to help parties resolve conflicts pursuant to these Rules. Any such organization or person to whom parties submit a dispute shall be referred to as "the Administrator" throughout these Rules.

3. Definitions and Rules of Construction

- A. Administrator refers to any individual or organization that provides or facilitates Christian conciliation services pursuant to these Rules. When referring to an organization, Administrator includes any staff, directors, volunteers, or conciliators who serve on behalf of the organization.
- B. Conciliation is the voluntary submission of a dispute for biblically-based conflict counseling/coaching, mediation, arbitration, or mediation/arbitration.
- C. Conciliator refers to a conflict coach, a mediator, or an arbitrator.
- D. A conciliation agreement is an agreement to submit an existing dispute to mediation, arbitration, or mediation/arbitration.
- E. A conciliation clause in a contract is a provision written into a contract that requires future disputes related to the contract to be resolved by mediation/arbitration or arbitration.
- F. The conciliation process includes all phases of conciliation, from the initial contact with the Administrator through the conclusion of mediation, arbitration, or other contact with the Administrator.
- G. Mediation utilizes one or more neutral intermediaries who assist the parties in arriving at their own voluntary and mutually satisfactory resolution. Mediators may provide the parties with an advisory opinion, but that opinion shall not be legally binding.
- H. Arbitration is the submission of a dispute to a single arbitrator or a panel of arbitrators for a legally binding decision that may become and have the same effect as a judgment of a civil court.

- I. Mediation/arbitration is the submission of a dispute to mediation and, if mediation is not successful, to arbitration.
- J. Church leaders are the staff and official leaders of both the church that a person usually attends or formally belongs to and the denomination, if any, to which that church belongs.
- K. A person or party includes an individual or an entity, corporate or otherwise.
- L. Any time the word “may” is used in these Rules, it indicates that a person has complete and sole discretion in deciding whether to take certain action or actions.
- M. Unless indicated otherwise, a word used in the plural form shall be understood to include the singular form (e.g., "arbitrators" includes "arbitrator").
- N. Any provision of these Rules may be modified, but only by a written agreement signed by the parties and the Administrator.

4. Application of Law

Conciliators shall take into consideration any state, federal, or local laws that the parties bring to their attention, but the Holy Scriptures (the Bible) shall be the supreme authority governing every aspect of the conciliation process.

5. Commencing Conciliation

- A. Any person may initiate conciliation by informing the Administrator of the nature of the dispute, the names of the other parties involved, and the remedy sought. The initiating party may inform the other parties of the request for conciliation and provide them with information describing Christian conciliation, or the initiating party may ask the Administrator to contact the other parties.
- B. The Administrator may decline to accept any case for any reason. The Administrator may also postpone conciliation until reasonable efforts have been made by the parties to resolve the dispute in private or with the help of their churches, pursuant to Matthew 18:15-20 and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8. At the same time, the Administrator may provide the parties with individual biblical counseling/coaching or written resources designed to facilitate a private resolution.
- C. The Administrator may require a person to sign an agreement not to use in a court of law any information acquired through conciliation; this provides limited protection for communications made during the conciliation process.
- D. If the Administrator accepts a case, conciliation shall commence only after the parties sign a conciliation agreement. If persons who have a legal interest in the dispute refuse to consent to conciliation, conciliation shall affect only the rights and responsibilities of those joined as parties.
- E. All conciliation agreements shall contain a statement of the issues to be resolved. Arbitration agreements shall also contain a statement of the amount of money involved, if any, and the remedies sought. After a mediation/arbitration or arbitration agreement is signed by all parties, no new or different claim may be submitted without the approval of either the arbitrators or the Administrator.
- F. The Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation in effect when conciliation is initiated shall apply.

- G. If legal action is pending at the time conciliation is commenced, the Administrator may require that the parties take steps to stay or postpone proceedings pending the conclusion of conciliation.
- H. If a party believes that property or rights may be irreparably harmed by delay, he or she may request temporary (injunctive) relief or action (see Rule 29).

6. Involvement of Insurer

If a dispute or claim submitted to conciliation involves an alleged injury or damage that may be covered by a party's insurance, the insurer shall be invited to participate in the conciliation process in order to facilitate a prompt and equitable resolution. A participating insurer shall have the same privileges under these Rules as a party with regard to selecting an Administrator and appointing conciliators.

7. Withdrawal

- A. The Administrator may withdraw at any time from any case if it decides that conciliation is inappropriate or ineffective. If the Administrator withdraws from a case requiring arbitration, and if the parties do not agree to terminate arbitration entirely, they shall submit their dispute to another organization that will apply these Rules.
- B. Any party may withdraw at any time from mediation, but not from mediation/arbitration or arbitration.
- C. A party may not withdraw from mediation/arbitration or arbitration without the written consent of all other parties who signed the conciliation agreement or the contract containing the conciliation clause.

8. Selecting an Administrator

The parties may mutually select the Administrator that will administer their dispute. If the parties are unable to agree on an Administrator within a reasonable period of time (as determined by the Institute for Christian Conciliation), the Institute for Christian Conciliation shall have the power to determine the Administrator, and its decision shall be final and binding. If the Institute for Christian Conciliation is a party to a dispute, the Administrator shall be the Christian Legal Society.

9. Fees and Costs

- A. A non-refundable administrative fee may be charged for conciliation services. If an administrative fee is to be charged, the Administrator shall provide the parties with a written fee schedule, which must be signed by the parties. The Administrator may reduce the fee or arrange a payment plan for parties who would not otherwise be able to afford Christian conciliation.
- B. If an hourly conciliation fee is to be charged, the Administrator and/or the conciliators shall provide the parties with a written fee agreement, which must be signed by the parties. The Administrator may require the parties to pay an advance deposit to cover the anticipated costs of conciliation, as determined by the Administrator.
- C. The parties shall reimburse the Administrator for all direct costs associated with a case, including long distance telephone calls, travel, materials provided, and other out-of-pocket expenses. Withdrawal by any

party or the Administrator does not relieve the parties of their responsibility to pay any of these fees and expenses.

- D. The expense of any witness or evidence produced at the request of the conciliators shall be shared equally by the parties, unless agreed otherwise by the parties or determined otherwise by the conciliators. The expense of any witness produced by either side shall be paid by the party producing such a witness unless determined otherwise by the arbitrators.
- E. All fees and costs incurred by the Administrator shall be shared equally by the parties unless agreed otherwise in a fee agreement or determined otherwise by the arbitrators (see Rule 40C).
- F. If the Institute for Christian Conciliation administers a dispute submitted to conciliation pursuant to a conciliation clause in a contract, the Institute for Christian Conciliation Fees and Costs schedule in effect when conciliation is initiated shall apply. If paid conciliators are appointed for the case, the Administrator shall set their rate of compensation.

10. Appointment of Conciliators

- A. The Administrator shall nominate a panel of one or more conciliators for approval by the parties. Before making its nominations, the Administrator may consult with the parties to identify individuals or types of individuals who may be well suited to serve as conciliators in their case. Upon request, the Administrator shall provide the parties with biographical information on any proposed conciliator. All conciliators shall affirm the Statement of Faith contained in the Institute for Christian Conciliation's Standard of Conduct for Christian Conciliators.
- B. If the parties are unable to agree on conciliators after a reasonable effort has been made to propose suitable conciliators (as determined by the Administrator), the Administrator shall approve conciliators and conciliation shall commence as though the conciliators were approved by the parties.

11. Replacement of Conciliators

- A. A person proposed or approved as a conciliator shall disclose to the Administrator any circumstances likely to affect impartiality or the person's ability to perform the duties of a conciliator. Upon receipt of such information from that person or from another source, the Administrator shall either change its proposal or communicate the information to the parties. After consulting with the parties, the Administrator shall determine whether a conciliator who has already been appointed should be disqualified, and its decision shall be final and binding.
- B. If any appointed conciliator withdraws, is disqualified, or is unable to perform the duties of the office, the remaining conciliators may continue with conciliation, unless the parties unanimously agree, or the Administrator decides, that the vacancy should be filled.

12. Time and Place of Conciliation Meetings

The Administrator shall determine the time, place, and other conditions of the initial conciliation meetings, after taking into consideration the preferences of the parties. The conciliators shall determine the time, place, and other conditions (including adjournments and continuances) of subsequent conciliation meetings.

13. Right to Legal Counsel

- A. Conciliation can affect substantial legal rights and responsibilities. Therefore, parties have the right to be assisted or represented by independent legal counsel throughout the conciliation process.
- B. Both the Administrator and any attorneys serving on behalf of the Administrator serve only as impartial conciliators and will not represent any party or provide the parties with legal advice such as they would receive were they to seek legal advice from an independent attorney. If a party desires legal advice, he or she should consult with his or her own independent attorney, especially concerning a question about the statute of limitations (i.e., how long one can wait to file a legal action before losing the right to do so).
- C. When the Administrator is informed that a party has retained an attorney, the Administrator may contact the attorney to discuss the case and invite his or her cooperation in the conciliation process.
- D. A party must notify the Administrator at least five (5) days in advance if he or she desires to have an attorney present at a conciliation meeting. Such notice shall include the name and address of the attorney. If other parties will not have attorneys present with them during mediation meetings, the Administrator may exclude all attorneys from mediation meetings. If necessary to fulfill the purpose of Christian conciliation (see Rule 1), the Administrator may disqualify an attorney from participating in conciliation, provided his or her client is given reasonable time to secure another attorney.
- E. During mediation, attorneys shall serve only as advisors to their clients, and the clients will be expected to speak for themselves as much as possible. During arbitration, attorneys may represent and speak for their clients. Attorneys will be expected to respect the conciliatory nature of the process and avoid unnecessary advocacy.
- F. No attorney who has served as a conciliator shall represent any party in a subsequent legal proceeding concerning the matter that was presented for conciliation, nor may such an attorney use in other proceedings any information that was obtained during conciliation.

14. Evidence in Conciliation

- A. The parties shall cooperate with the Administrator and each other in providing documents, names of witnesses, and other information that will contribute to an understanding of the dispute.
- B. The parties may offer any evidence that they consider to be fair, relevant, and pertinent to the dispute, and they shall produce any additional evidence that the conciliators deem necessary for understanding and resolving the dispute.
- C. Conciliators authorized by law to subpoena witnesses or documents may do so independently or upon the request of any party.
- D. The conciliators shall be the judge of the relevance and materiality of the evidence offered, and conformity to legal rules of evidence shall not be necessary.
- E. The conciliators may receive and consider the evidence of witnesses by deposition or affidavit, and may make a personal inspection or investigation of relevant premises or objects.

15. Decisions by Majority

If there is more than one conciliator, the decision of any matter shall be decided by majority vote of the conciliators.

16. Confidentiality

- A. Because of its biblical nature, Christian conciliation encourages parties to openly and candidly admit their offenses in a particular dispute. Thus, conciliation requires an environment where parties may speak freely, without fear that their words may be used against them in a subsequent legal proceeding. Moreover, because conciliation is expressly designed to keep parties out of court, conciliators serving on behalf of the Administrator would not do so if they believed that any party might later try to force them to testify in any legal proceeding regarding a conciliation case. Therefore, all communications that take place during the conciliation process shall be treated as settlement negotiations and shall be strictly confidential and inadmissible for any purpose in a court of law, except as provided in this Rule.
- B. This Rule extends to all oral and written communications made by the parties or by the Administrator, and includes all records, reports, letters, notes, and other documents received or produced by the Administrator as part of the conciliation process, except for those documents that existed prior to the conciliation process and were otherwise open to discovery apart from the conciliation process. The parties may not compel the Administrator to divulge any documents or to testify in regard to the conciliation process in any judicial or adversarial proceeding, whether by personal testimony, deposition, written interrogatory, or sworn affidavit.
- C. Mediated settlement agreements reached by the parties and arbitration decisions shall be confidential, except as provided in Rule 17, unless the parties agree otherwise in writing, or unless an agreement or decision must be filed with a civil court for purposes of enforcement. If an arbitration decision is contested or appealed pursuant to statute, the Administrator, upon written request from a party, shall furnish to such party, at the party's expense, copies of the conciliation agreement and the arbitration decision.
- D. The Administrator may divulge appropriate and necessary information under the following circumstances, and the parties agree to waive confidentiality and hold the Administrator harmless for doing so
 - a. when, as part of its normal office operations, the Administrator consults with its staff members or outside experts regarding particular issues or problems related to a case;
 - b. when compelled by statute or by a court of law;
 - c. when an arbitration agreement or decision has been contested or appealed;
 - d. when an action has been brought against the Administrator as a result of its participation in a conciliation case;
 - e. when the Administrator deems it appropriate to discuss a case with the church leaders of parties who profess to be Christians; and
 - f. when the Administrator deems it necessary to contact appropriate civil authorities to prevent another person from being harmed.

- E. In spite of these confidentiality protections, some of the information discussed during conciliation may not be confidential as a matter of law or may be discoverable outside the conciliation process and used in other legal proceedings, and the Administrator shall have no liability therefore.

17. Church Involvement

Unless agreed otherwise, the Administrator and the conciliators may discuss a case with the church leaders of parties who profess to be Christians. If a party who professes to be a Christian is unwilling to cooperate with the conciliation process or refuses to abide by an agreement reached during mediation, an advisory opinion, or an arbitration decision, the Administrator or the other parties may report the matter to the leaders of that person's church and request that they actively participate in resolving the dispute. If a church chooses to become actively involved, it may, at its discretion, review what has transpired during conciliation, obtain such additional information as it deems to be helpful, and take whatever steps it deems necessary to facilitate reconciliation and promote a biblical resolution of the dispute (see Matt. 18:15-20). The Administrator may disclose to the church any information that may have a bearing on its investigation or deliberations.

18. Waiver of Right to Object

Any party who proceeds with a conciliation meeting after learning that any provision of these Rules has not been complied with, or who fails to object in writing within three days of learning that any provision of these Rules has not been complied with outside of a conciliation meeting, shall be deemed to have waived the right to object.

19. Interpretation and Application of Rules

The conciliators shall interpret and apply these Rules insofar as they relate to the conciliators' powers and duties. The Administrator shall interpret and apply all other Rules and resolve all other issues and questions pertinent to the conciliation process.

20. Exclusion from Liability

The parties agree that the Institute for Christian Conciliation, the Administrator, and the conciliators shall be immune from any liability for any acts or omissions that occur during the conciliation process.

B. MEDIATION RULES

21. Individual Meetings and Caucuses during Mediation

- A. Prior to an initial mediation meeting, the Administrator or the mediators may communicate privately with any of the parties to obtain an overview of the dispute, to assess the party's attitudes and needs, to teach relevant biblical principles, and to assign homework that will facilitate the mediation process.
- B. The mediators may also meet separately (caucus) with any party during the course of mediation to discuss that party's attitudes, conduct, and responsibilities, or to discuss possible solutions to the dispute. As much as possible, the discussion during a caucus shall focus on the party who is present rather than on the absent party.
- C. The mediators may eventually discuss with the other parties any information that is obtained during an individual meeting or a caucus.

22. Mediation Proceedings

A mediation meeting will normally include

- a. an introduction and opening prayer;
- b. statements by each party clarifying the issues involved;
- c. the presentation of each party's claims, defenses, and witnesses, as well as an opportunity for the other party to respond;
- d. questioning by the mediators;
- e. a discussion, sometimes in private at first, of each party's responsibility for the dispute;
- f. counsel involving the application of relevant biblical principles;
- g. a discussion of appropriate solutions to the dispute;
- h. agreement on a solution; and
- i. closing comments and prayer. If the parties are unable to reach a voluntary agreement, the conciliators may meet in private for discussion, Bible study, and prayer, and then issue an advisory (non-binding) opinion as to what each party should do to resolve the dispute and facilitate reconciliation.

23. Written Record of Agreement

The mediators shall prepare a written record of any agreement reached by the parties during mediation. That agreement shall be legally binding if, and only if, the parties or their attorneys reduce it to a contract or stipulation that is signed by all parties.

24. Transition from Mediation to Arbitration

- A. If any issues in a dispute submitted to mediation have not been resolved through mediation or church involvement, the parties may either quit the conciliation process and pursue other remedies, or, by unanimous agreement, they may submit the unresolved issues to arbitration pursuant to this Rule.
- B. If any issues in a dispute submitted to mediation/arbitration have not been resolved through mediation or church involvement, the parties are obligated to proceed to arbitration. This transition shall take place when either a majority of the mediators or all of the parties agree that neither mediation nor church involvement is likely to resolve the outstanding issues of the dispute.
- C. If a dispute is submitted to mediation/arbitration pursuant to a conciliation clause in a contract, either party may request that the dispute move immediately into arbitration. Such a request shall be granted by the Administrator if the Administrator concludes that immediate arbitration is likely to provide a more timely and beneficial resolution to the dispute.
- D. When a transition pursuant to this Rule occurs, an entirely new panel of arbitrators shall be appointed pursuant to Rule 10, unless the parties agree otherwise. By unanimous written agreement, either before or after the mediation stage, the parties may agree to use the same conciliators in both mediation and arbitration. By such unanimous agreement, the parties agree that the arbitrators may consider any

information they received during mediation as though it were received during arbitration, in full compliance with the Arbitration Rules.

- E. Whenever mediators are authorized to act as arbitrators pursuant to this Rule, the parties, after signing the appropriate documents, may either (1) summarize the information that was received during mediation, make closing statements, and then rest their cases; or (2) proceed to offer new information pursuant to the Arbitration Rules.
- F. Whenever new arbitrators are appointed pursuant to this Rule, the arbitrators may not call the previous mediators as witnesses without the unanimous agreement of the parties and the mediators.

C. ARBITRATION RULES

25. Description of Issues and Remedies

At the outset of arbitration, the parties shall describe the issues and desired remedies that they wish the arbitrators to consider. The arbitrators shall consider only those issues that are consistent with the parties' original arbitration or mediation/arbitration agreement, or which are contemplated by an earlier contract between the parties that contains a conciliation clause.

26. Approval of Panel

At the outset of arbitration, the parties shall sign forms approving the appointment of the arbitrators. If the parties refuse or are unable to agree on arbitrators, arbitrators shall be appointed pursuant to Rule 10.

27. Oaths or Vows

Before proceeding with arbitration, each arbitrator may take an oath or vow of office. The arbitrators have discretion to require parties or witnesses to testify under oath or vow, provided that making an oath or vow does not violate the person's sincerely held religious beliefs. Oaths or vows may be administered by the arbitrators.

28. Pre-hearing Conferences and Preliminary Hearings

- A. At the request of the parties or at the discretion of the Administrator, a preliminary conference with a case administrator and the parties may be scheduled to arrange for an exchange of information and the stipulation of uncontested facts to expedite the arbitration proceedings.
- B. In large or complex cases, at the discretion of the arbitrators or the Administrator, a preliminary hearing may be scheduled with the arbitrators and the parties to arrange for the production of relevant evidence, to identify potential witnesses, to schedule further hearings, and to consider other matters that will expedite the arbitration proceedings.

29. Temporary Relief

- A. A party may request immediate temporary relief (e.g., temporary restraining order, preliminary injunction) to safeguard property or rights that are subject to a contract clause or agreement that requires arbitration or mediation/arbitration under these rules. Such extraordinary relief will not be granted unless the moving party has demonstrated, by a clear showing (1) a substantial likelihood of prevailing on the

merits; (2) a substantial threat of irreparable harm if the temporary relief is not granted; (3) that the threatened injury outweighs any harm that may result to the non-movant from an injunction or other relief; and (4) that the temporary relief will not undermine public interests.

- B. Temporary relief may be granted at any stage of the conciliation process and shall be fashioned so as not to substantially prejudice the rights of the parties or the final determination of the dispute.
- C. Matters of temporary relief shall be decided by the arbitrators, or, if they are not yet appointed, by temporary arbitrators appointed by the Administrator. If an Administrator has not yet been appointed, the Institute for Christian Conciliation shall serve as Administrator for purposes of this rule.
- D. A request for temporary relief is subject to Rule 40C.
- E. Decisions regarding temporary relief may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.

30. Discovery and Distribution of Documents

Reasonable discovery (including oral depositions, written interrogatories, and production of documents) may be allowed to identify issues, relevant evidence, and names of witnesses. If the parties cannot agree on the scope of discovery or allocation of costs, the issue shall be submitted to the arbitrators for a decision, which shall be final and binding. The Administrator or the arbitrators may require the parties, at their own expense, to deliver to the Administrator and to the other parties copies of the documents they plan to introduce and a list of the witnesses they plan to call.

31. Notice of Arbitration Meetings

The Administrator or the lead arbitrator shall give parties at least five (5) days written notice of the time, place, and conditions of any arbitration meeting, unless the parties agree to modify or waive such notice. It shall be the parties' responsibility to notify their witnesses of the time and place of all arbitration meetings.

32. Delivery and Notice

All documents shall be delivered in person, by facsimile transmission (fax), by United States mail, or by private carrier to the last known address of the parties as given to the Administrator. Notice and other documents shall be considered to have been received on the day they are personally received or transmitted by fax, or on the day after they were postmarked, whichever is earlier.

33. Communication with Arbitrators

There shall be no direct communication from the parties to an arbitrator other than at joint hearings. Any other oral or written communications from the parties to the arbitrators shall be directed to the Administrator for transmittal to the arbitrators and all other parties.

34. Arbitration Proceedings

- A. Arbitration proceedings shall be conducted according to the same format as mediation proceedings (see Rule 22), except as limited by these Arbitration Rules.
- B. The arbitrator shall have the power to rule on his or her own jurisdiction, including any objections with respect to the existence, scope, or validity of the arbitration agreement. A party may object to the

jurisdiction of the arbitrator or to the arbitrability of a claim. The arbitrator may rule on such objections as a preliminary matter or as a part of the final award.

35. Record of Proceedings

Any party wishing a stenographic record of an arbitration meeting shall make arrangements directly with a stenographer and shall notify the other parties of such arrangements in advance of the meeting. The requesting party or parties shall pay the cost of such record and shall provide the Administrator with a copy, and make copies of the record available to all other parties for the cost of reproduction. A stenographic record is subject to the limitations of Rule 16, and may be used only for appealing an arbitration decision. Video and audio recordings of meetings may be made only with the written consent of all parties and the Administrator.

36. Evidence in Arbitration

Subject to the provisions of Rules 14 and 24(D), all evidence used in arbitration shall be taken in the presence of all of the arbitrators and all of the parties, except where any of the parties has waived the right to be present or when arbitration proceeds pursuant to Rule 37.

37. Arbitration in the Absence of a Party

Unless the law provides to the contrary, arbitration may proceed in the absence of any party who, after due notice, fails to be present or fails to obtain an adjournment. A decision shall not be made solely because of the default of a party. The arbitrators shall require the party who is present to submit such evidence as the arbitrators may require for the making of a decision. The arbitrators may, but need not, allow the absent party an opportunity to appear at a subsequent hearing attended by all parties.

38. Legal or Scriptural Briefs

The arbitrators may request or consider briefs or position papers that set forth the parties' understandings of the legal, factual, or scriptural issues.

39. Reopening of Hearings

The arbitrators may reopen a case for good cause at any time before a final decision is rendered.

40. Decisions

- A. The arbitrators shall render a written decision (award). Whenever possible, it shall be issued within thirty (30) days after the closing of the final hearing.
- B. The arbitrators may grant any remedy or relief that they deem scriptural, just, and equitable, and within the scope of the agreement of the parties, including, but not limited to, specific performance of a contract. In making their decision, the arbitrators shall consider, but are not limited by, the remedies requested by the parties.
- C. The arbitrators may grant to the Administrator any fees, costs, and expenses, including attorney's fees, that are due to the Administrator under the Arbitration Agreement or the Fees and Costs Agreement, or that are reasonably incurred as a result of the conciliation process. The arbitrators may also grant to any

party any reasonable fees, costs, and expenses related to the resolution of a dispute, including attorney fees. Grounds for such a decision may include but are not limited to (1) when another party unreasonably refused to settle a dispute and unnecessarily increased the costs of resolving the matter; or (2) when a party necessarily incurred significantly higher costs than another party, such as travel expenses, in order to participate in conciliation. A grant of fees, costs, and expenses may be made only after all parties who may be affected by the decision have had a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed decision.

- D. The arbitrators may, but need not, inform the parties of the reasoning by which the decision was reached.
- E. The arbitrators' decision shall be legally binding on the parties, except as provided by law, and may be filed as a judgment and enforced by a court of law. It shall be the sole responsibility of the parties to file a decision with the court and, if necessary, to have it enforced.
- F. If the parties settle their dispute during the course of arbitration, the arbitrators may set forth the terms of the agreed settlement in a decision.
- G. The arbitration decision is final and cannot be reconsidered or appealed except as provided by Rule 41 and/or civil law.

41. Request for Reconsideration

- A. A party may submit a request to the Administrator for reconsideration of a decision within twenty (20) calendar days after the day the decision was received by the parties.
- B. A request for reconsideration will not be considered if it simply asks the arbitrators to review the evidence and change their decision.
- C. A request for reconsideration is appropriate only when the arbitrators (1) have deviated from these rules or from the arbitration agreement; (2) have patently misunderstood a party; (3) have failed to address an issue or have made a decision outside the issues presented to the arbitrators by the parties; or (4) have made a miscalculation or a mistake of identification.
- D. The request, which must be sent to the Administrator and to the other parties, shall set forth in writing the reasons for which reconsideration is sought, including a specific statement of the claimed mistake, prejudice, or harm.
- E. If the request is granted by the arbitrators, they shall define the issues that are being reconsidered and allow each party to submit whatever supplementary information is deemed appropriate. If the request is denied, the requesting party will be responsible for paying any expenses or fees incurred by the Administrator or by the arbitrators as a result of the request.

42. Conflict of Rules

Should these Rules vary from state or federal arbitration statutes, these Rules shall control except where the state or federal rules specifically indicate.