

**THE HANDBOOK FOR ORGANIZING
BIBLICAL CHURCHES**

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INTRODUCTION

When I began my present ministry in 1977 I was commissioned by our church to rewrite our church constitution. This also coincided with my ministries of training young men who would be assuming the responsibilities of pastor and helping other willing young pastors to reevaluate their church foundations and re-establish their churches on a solid biblical foundation.

During research for this task, I read many church constitutions. I was impressed with the scarcity of church constitutions that refer to the Scriptures and appalled at how many of these constitutions openly contradict the commands of the Scripture.

My task, therefore, was to research the Scriptures to rediscover the God-given instructions for the body of Christ and to rewrite a workable constitution that would clearly set forth the responsibilities of each member of the local church as defined by the Scriptures. Along with these "job descriptions" I also included certain church oriented problem-solving processes. Some examples are the formula for the biblical church discipline of rebellious church members and the section suggesting a church training program that would promote biblical maturity and service. The result of this study was the construction of this Handbook for Organizing Biblical Churches.

In this work I sought to include specific passages of Scripture with each mentioned responsibility so the spiritually sensitive members of each church could study these commands for themselves. In some sections, as in the scriptural qualifications of the elders and deacons, I included the Greek phrase in parentheses, so the believers who are able to look up the Greek words will be able to authenticate the truth of each statement for any who would question the Biblical principle stated in the constitution (I Cor. 14:37-38). Since Biblical commands are obligatory for all Christians and are not negotiable, the inclusion of specific command passages serves to remove all doubt and debate concerning the responsibilities for each church and for each church member.

This constitution was also designed so that it could be indexed for easy reference. I desired a constitution that would be nearly complete and yet have specific Biblical instructions that could be quickly found concerning a specific responsibility of the church or in answer to a particular problem that requires a Biblical solution.

This handbook has been designed in a way that is nearly in constitutional form. The doctrinal portion is brief and is not designed to be an exhaustive statement of all that the Scripture teaches on theological issues. As with the doctrinal portion of this notebook, the other portions can easily be changed to include your own notes of Biblical responsibilities that have been overlooked in this work. Because of this, I wish to encourage you to improve this work by adding Biblical material to it but discourage you from removing any Biblical material from it. The non-biblical portions of any church constitution are optional, but we believe that true Christians do not have an option or choice when God commands (I John 2:3-4, 3:6-10, and III John 11).

I also realize that much is written or said (Eccl. 12:12), but less is done about fulfilling

responsibilities. On the other hand, if you are going to do God's work, you must do it according to His commands (I Peter 4:8-11, James 1:22-25). Truth not applied is truth denied. I wish to encourage each pastor, deacon, church leader, or Christian who reads this work to prayerfully evaluate his or her life's work in relation to the Scriptures. This evaluation should begin with a personal evaluation (I Cor. 11:31-32, II Tim. 2:19, I Peter 1:13-25) and should extend into a corporate evaluation of the whole church as it functions with relation to each specific Biblical command included in this notebook or added by you (Titus 1:5, II Tim. 4:1-5).

This evaluation should not be used to grade you or your church as good, fair, or poor in relation to your Biblical obedience without correction of your weaknesses. It should be used to seek out any inconsistencies in your practice and any Biblical commands that you are not strongly obeying and to concentrate on your weaknesses until your own character or the ministry of your church is in complete obedience to every command of the Scriptures concerning your service for Christ (II Cor. 10:5-6). Then you will be ready to help others.

May the Lord richly bless you as you evaluate your work and to equip you for all good works according to the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus (II Tim. 3:16-17).

I wish to thank the many servants of Christ who encouraged me in my work and supported and prayed for our service for our Lord. I especially thank Harold Johns, Roland Rabon, H.R. Twitty, Lucian Miller, and Phillip Hise who have spent many hours helping me critique, edit, and revise this work. I have not served alone, and any effective work will be a function of the whole body of Christ. Whatever is accomplished by your use of this instrument, let it be deposited to their credit and bring honor and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ.

The material contained in this work has been designed to honor our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and to promote His church and for your use in establishing your local church on solid Biblical foundations (I Cor. 3:9-11, Eph. 2:19-21). Permission is granted for you to copy any part or all of this work for incorporation into your church constitution. You may also reproduce sections of this work for free distribution in promoting the health and welfare of the body of Christ. No part of this work may be copied for sale without the permission of the author, and all rights are reserved other than the limited free usage within the intended purposes of this work.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE HANDBOOK FOR ORGANIZING BIBLICAL CHURCHES

1. Form your church by uniting believers in Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who are bonded together to worship and serve Him.

2. Commit yourselves to becoming completely obedient to the commands of Christ as found in the Scriptures. Any references to the Scriptures or the Word of God in this work should be understood as references to the Bible.

3. Study the Handbook for Organizing Biblical Churches. Read each passage of the Scripture listed in the handbook. Be sure that you understand each responsibility demanded of believers and Biblical churches by the Scriptures.

4. Evaluate your own church constitution to discover areas where you as an individual or your own church as a body is disobedient to the Scriptures, or use the Biblical constitutional material contained in this handbook if you do not have a church constitution that binds you as a church to obey the Scriptures and to operate according to the instructions and demands of the Bible.

5. If needed, correct your church constitution to bring it into harmony with the Scripture. I suggest including Biblical references throughout your church constitution, because a believer's obligation is not to a constitution, but to the Lord Jesus Christ through the Word of God.

6. Teach the Biblical doctrine for each change of church practice from your pulpit so all your people can understand Biblically why you are making these changes or establishing Biblical constitutional principles.

7. Bring your church practices into habitual conformity to the commands of Scripture. Remember that your purpose is not to construct a better church constitution, but it is to bring your church into complete harmony with Scripture and into a position honoring to Christ. Having a good Biblical constitution without obedience to the Biblical commands only disgraces Christ and drives people away from Him (Heb. 10:26-29, Romans 2:24).

8. Constantly and prayerfully evaluate your church conduct to be sure that it is completely obedient to all divine commands. Stop developing non-biblical ministries (skating parties, pastoral calling campaigns, promotion schemes, speaking trips, etc.) until all the Biblical commands are constantly and completely fulfilled within your church as a normal, habitual practice.

9. Be cautious that you do not substitute the teaching of obedience to Biblical principles (Christian behavior) for the careful doctrinal declaration of the Scriptures. Each command of the Scriptures is usually accompanied by a doctrinal portion that explains why the demanded behavior is important. The tendency of many is to concentrate on the outward appearance by preaching "behavior" or "the practical" rather than declaring character-changing doctrine from the Scripture itself. Preach the Word (II Tim. 4:2-3). Carefully explain each passage as your foundation for

establishing your church practices and purposes.

10. Constantly evaluate your own life considering the teaching and commands of Scripture to be sure that you personally are completely obedient in all matters before you teach them to your church (Ezra 7:10, II Cor. 10:5-6).

11. Constantly preach the personal responsibility of each of your church members to apply the total message of Scripture to their own lives rather than only regulating the conduct of the population of your church as a whole, ignoring the destructive behavior of individuals (Titus 2:1-15).

With love in Christ,

Robert S. Westcott, PhD

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CHRISTIAN WORKER'S PERSONAL EVALUATION

The following are suggestions for using the Handbook for Organizing Biblical Churches for personal evaluation and spiritual growth.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection" (II Cor. 13:5-10, KJV).

You have received Christ as personal Savior and have dedicated yourself to serve Him with your whole life. Yet you recognize that you have spiritually blind areas. Because of this, it is important for you as a Christian worker to constantly evaluate what you are doing to be sure that your work is effective in serving Him. It will help you to enlist the council of a godly, spiritually mature person to help you in your evaluation so you will be more objective and realistic while still striving for Biblically sound growth. Determine by making a decision in your own will that you will completely obey the Scriptures before you evaluate your life. Place Scriptural responsibilities and commands first, and be sure that you are completely obeying them before you do any other traditional or man-appointed tasks. Any non-biblical task in your service should be set aside until all Biblical tasks are completed. The following process should help you to bring your service up to Biblical standards.

1. While reviewing the Biblical criterion for your position build a Biblical job description for yourself (see syllabus positions listing criteria for qualifications and responsibilities of members, elders or deacons).
2. List your greatest strengths in #1 above. Be sure to evaluate yourself in all areas of Biblical qualifications listed including your preparation spiritually, in your decision to serve and honor Christ, in your emotional stability, in your mental and intellectual preparation, in the development and polishing of your abilities, and in the development of your social skills in helping others (Mark 12:30-31).
3. List your greatest weaknesses in #1 above.
4. List what you must do to completely comply with the Biblical criteria for your position of service in the body of Christ. Build a Biblical test that will indicate that you have developed all the specific Biblical qualities and skills that God requires to make you effective in your ministry.
5. For each area of weakness above, establish a set of training goals that will develop the Biblical character demanded of your position in as short a time as possible.

6. Analyze each goal to determine specifically what you must do to be totally obedient to the Scriptures concerning your spiritual position in the church. Each step should be built on previous learning and on your spiritual maturity level.

7. Place each goal and segment of instruction in a logical, sequential order.

8. Put your training program into action and systematically work through the sequence of tasks, evaluating your mastery of each task as you progress. Remember that you will take time to develop and mature spiritually. Also remember that you should continue to grow spiritually for the rest of your life.

9. Make your Biblical learning habitual by going over it daily, constantly practicing what you have learned, until you automatically perform each Biblical action or skill without having to think about it. Biblical learning should be placed into your conscious character so you begin to habitually feel, think, make decisions and act as Christ would in your present situation. Make it a habit to search your memory for any direction the Scriptures give you concerning what God wishes you to do in any circumstance in which you are involved.

10. Evaluate each major goal achieved to be sure you are performing each major skill or consistently living each Biblical criterion as God directs you to do in His Word.

11. When you find that you have missed a vital area of learning that God requires for those who lead His church or a specially needed spiritual skill that you need to develop before you can go on in your spiritual development, go back and learn what you missed until you have mastered the needed sequential Biblical skills and attributes.

12. As you master one set of spiritual goals progress on to learning and practicing the next sequential goals needed for effective service. Many people in the ministry get distracted by the details and tasks of life (II Tim. 2:1-4) and forget that they should be constantly striving to evaluate themselves by the Scriptures. Remember that you will never be perfect until glory (I Cor. 8:2).

13). Christian life and service is a constant growth. When you are growing spiritually you will be pleasing to Christ. When you are not growing you are sinning by open disobedience to the Word of God (I Peter 2:2, II Peter 3:18, James 4:17, 2:10).

NAME AND PURPOSE

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF _____CHURCH.

City: _____

Date: _____

Article I. Name: _____ Church.

As declared in our Articles of Incorporation dated _____ and filed in Note Book Number _____, page number _____, and recorded in Book number _____, page number _____ of the _____ County Recorders Articles of Incorporation, the name of this organization shall be _____ Church and shall be located at

(location).

Article II.

Section A. Purpose.

_____ Church is a local fellowship of professing Christians joined together for the main purpose of glorifying God and living lives pleasing and honoring to Jesus Christ, our Savior (I Cor 10:31; Eph. 1:3, I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:16, 23, 24). To accomplish this purpose we will (1) present Christ to the lost, worldwide (Matt. 28:19-20), (2) seek dedicated membership which will submit to the teaching of the Scriptures in knowledge, attitude, and behavior (Eph. 4:11-16; II Tim. 2:1-2), (3) share in spiritual and social responsibilities (Acts 2:41-47; James 1:27), (4) train our membership and submit for training for a lifetime of effective Biblical service to Christ (Eph. 4:11-16), and (5) serve Christ personally and on a church-wide and worldwide basis (Deut. 11:13, Acts 1:8, 20:28).

Section B. Limitations.

We understand that the following Articles do not exhaust the contents of our creed, which is the whole Word of God, and that they are not intended to set a limit beyond which faith cannot go within the Word of God. However, we do believe that, insofar as these Articles extend, they are a true presentation of the doctrines taught in the Bible, and are therefore binding upon us as Christian believers. If these Articles are found to conflict at any time with the teaching of the Scriptures, these Articles must be amended immediately to bring them into complete agreement with the Bible, God's standards for church government.

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Article III. Doctrinal statement.

Section A. We believe in the **HOLY SCRIPTURES**: We accept fully the writings of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, verbally inspired in each and every part, and therefore wholly without error as given by God in the original manuscripts, and altogether sufficient in themselves spiritually to guide us in our lives. The Holy Scriptures are binding on us as our only infallible and authoritative rule of faith, character and conduct (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35; 17:17; II Tim. 3:16, 17; II Pet. 2:21) and we commit ourselves to learn them, obey them, and conform to them in our feelings, character and behavior.

Section B. We believe in the **ONE TRIUNE GOD**: the one and only true God Who is manifest in three Persons, to Whom we commit ourselves to worship and serve (Matt. 28:19, 20): God is personal (Mark 12:29), spirit (John 4:24), and sovereign (Psalm 135:6); perfect (Psalm 18:30), infinite and eternal in His being (Deut. 33:27), holy (Is. 6:3), loving (I John 4:8), all wise (Psalm 104:24), all knowing (Psalm 147:5, I John 3:20), and all powerful (Psalm 65:6, Job 42:2, Gen. 18:14). God is absolutely separate and above the material universe as its creator (Psalm 104), yet everywhere present in the world (Psalm 139:7, 8) as the sustainer of all things (Col. 1:16, 17). God is self-existent (Psalm 90:2, Ex. 3:14), and self-revealing as three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22), each having a distinct ministry in God's relation to His creation and people (II Cor. 13:14; Is. 48:16).

Section C. We believe in **GOD THE FATHER**: the first personal manifestation of the Triune God (Matt. 28:19), Who is the creator of the human incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father (John 1:14; 3:16). God also becomes our Father through faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:19; 3:15; 5:1) whereby He imparts to each of those who believe His divine nature and keeps them secure in His power (Titus 3:4-6; I Pet. 1:3-5; Rom. 8:16, 17).

Section D. We believe in **GOD THE SON, the LORD JESUS CHRIST**: He is the second personal manifestation of the Triune God (John 8:19-28), the eternal Word (John 1:1-3, 14), and is the only begotten Son (John 3:16). Without any change in His divine Person (Phil. 2:5-8), He was born as man (Phil 2:7; John 1:14) by the miracle of the Virgin Birth (Luke 1:26-2:20), thus to continue forever as both true God and true man (John 1:1-3; Heb. 2:16; 13:8), one Person with two natures bonded inseparably in one unique person, Jesus Christ. As man He was tempted in all points as we are (Heb. 2:18; 4:15), yet without sin (II Cor. 5:21). As the perfect Lamb of God He gave Himself in death upon the cross (John 3:16, Heb. 10:4-14), taking upon Himself the sin of the world (I Pet. 2:24), and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our place (Is. 53:3-6). He arose bodily from the grave and was glorified (I Cor. 15:20). As our great High Priest (Heb. 2:17) He ascended into heaven (Heb. 4:14), there to defend us as our Advocate and Intercessor (I John 2:1, 2; Heb. 7:25).

Section E. We believe in **GOD the HOLY SPIRIT**: the third personal manifestation of the one Triune God (Matt. 28:19): The Holy Spirit is the divine agent in nature (Ps. 104:30), revelation (II

Pet. 1:21), and inspiration (II Tim. 1:7). The Holy Spirit secures us as believers in Christ through His ministries of baptizing each true believer into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13), regenerating the spirit of each believer (Titus 3:5), sealing us as a guarantee of our inheritance in Christ (Eph. 1:14, 15; 4:30) and indwelling us from the moment of saving faith in Christ for all eternity, guaranteeing our security in Christ (John 14:16, 17). If a person does not have the indwelling Holy Spirit that person is not one of His (Rom. 8:9). The Holy Spirit guides (Rom. 8:14), sanctifies (I Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:10, 14), teaches (John 14:26), and fills or controls (Eph. 5:18) believers who daily are surrendered to Him.

Section F. We believe in the **SINFULNESS OF MANKIND**: All humans are, by nature and choice sinful and lost (Rom. 3:10-23; Is. 53:6). Man was a direct creation of God, made in His image and likeness (Gen 1:26-28; 2:7), but by personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, the first man became a sinful creature (Gen. 3) and the father of a fallen race (Rom. 5:14-19) which is universally sinful in both nature and practice (Eph. 2:1-3, Rom. 3:10-23). In his natural state, therefore, man is alienated from the life and family of God (Eph. 4:18, 19), and is under the righteous judgment and anger of God (John 3:18, 36). Man has no possible means of salvation within himself through good works (Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5; Gal. 2:16).

Section G. We believe that **SALVATION COMES ONLY BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH**: Salvation is the free gift of God, neither deserved, earned, nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or work of man (Rom. 3:28). Salvation is received only by personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16), through His death on the cross for our sins (I Pet. 2:24) and made effective through His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 4:24, 25; 10:9, 10). All true believers have the gift of eternal life through faith in Christ as a present, permanent possession (John 3:36; Eph. 1:4-14; Psalm 37:28, John 10:27-29, Rom. 8:35-39), a perfect righteousness (Rom. 4:21-5:1), sonship in the family of God (Eph. 1:5; Gal. 3:26), a deliverance and security from all condemnation (Rom. 8:1), every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3), and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish (John 3:36; 10:27-29; Psalm 37:28, Rom. 8:37-39). We also believe that this salvation effects the whole individual (II Pet. 1:4-8). There is no possibility for salvation apart from Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). We dedicate ourselves to the responsibility to carry the good news concerning Christ to a lost world in accordance with the great commission (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Section H. We believe in **RIGHTEOUS LIVING** (Eph. 4:1-6) and **GODLY WORKS** (Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14): A righteous life does not purchase salvation in any sense (Eph 2:8, 9), but is the proper evidence of the believer's relationship with Christ as personal Savior (I John 2:3, 4; 3:9). Therefore, as Christians, we commit ourselves to immediately and completely obey the Word of God (James 1:22), seek the things which are above (Col. 3:1), walk as He walked (I John 2:6), and we accept the duty and privileges of bearing the Gospel to a lost world as our solemn responsibility (Matt. 28:19, 20). Realizing that a victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who, in gratitude for the infinite and undeserved mercies of God, have committed themselves wholly to Christ for His service (Rom. 12:1, 2), we, therefore, dedicate ourselves to His purpose.

Section I. We believe in the existence of **SATAN**: Satan was originally created as a holy and perfect being (Eze. 28:13-17), but through pride and wicked ambition rebelled against God (Is. 14:13, 14), thus becoming utterly depraved in character (Eze. 28:15, 16). Satan is the great

adversary of God and His people (Rev. 12:9, 10), leader of all other evil angels and spirits (Rev. 12:3-9), the deceiver and god of this present world (II Cor. 4:4). His powers are vast, but strictly limited by the permissive will of God Who overrules all Satan's wicked devices for good (Job 1:1-22; I John 3:8). Satan was defeated and judged at the cross (Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:14, 15), and, therefore, his final doom is certain (Is. 14:15; Rev. 20:10). We commit ourselves to resist (James 4:7) and overcome Satan and his evil only in the armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18), by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11), and through the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 6:10-18; Gal. 5:16-23; I John 4:4).

Section J. We believe in **the SECOND COMING OF CHRIST** (Titus 2:13): His return from heaven will be personal, visible, and glorious (Acts 1:11; I Thes. 4:16; Rev. 1:7), the blessed hope (assurance) for which we will constantly watch and pray (Titus 2:11-13), the time of which remains unrevealed but always imminent (Mark 13:33-37). When Christ comes He will first, by the resurrection of the dead believers and by the translation of the living saints, remove His waiting Church from the earth (I Thes. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-58; Rev. 7:9-8:1); then He will pour out the righteous judgments of God upon the unbelieving world (Rev. 8 through 18). Afterwards Christ will descend with His saints (Jude 14, 15) and establish His earthly kingdom on the earth (Rev. 20:1-6). The unsaved will be retained in hell until the Great White Throne of Judgment, where they will be condemned to eternal punishment according to their works (Rev. 20:7-15). Those who have trusted Christ as Savior, on the other hand, will be rewarded according to their works (II Cor. 5:10; 3:1-15), Christ having born the penalty for their sins on the cross (I Pet. 2:24). This doctrine is not to divide the church, the body of Christ through argument, but should unite the church through the study of the Bible and the expectation of the return of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Section K. We believe in **the PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS** (I Pet. 2:9): that Christ is our Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14) and through Him every born-again believer has direct access into God's presence (Heb. 10:21, 22) without the need of a human priest to mediate between God and man (I Tim. 2:5); that each believer in Christ has the right and the responsibility to personally study and correctly interpret the Scripture guided by the Holy Spirit (II Tim. 2:15-17). We commit ourselves to be faithful in the study of and obedience to the Word of God and to be constantly before God's presence through prayer for ourselves and each other (I Thes. 5:17).

Section L. We believe in **the LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST** (Rom. 10:9, 10): that He is God manifest in the flesh (Rom. 9:5; I Tim. 3:16, Titus 2:13). He alone is the head of the church, the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18), into which all true believers are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit upon their placing faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior (I Cor. 12:12, 13); that all members of this one spiritual body should assemble and identify themselves in local churches (Heb. 10:25) and govern their lives in accordance to the Scriptures (James 1:22). Any member of this Church who is not living in obedience to the Scriptures will be lovingly yet firmly disciplined in accordance to the teachings of Scripture (Gal.6:1; Rom. 16:17; see the Article on Biblical Church Discipline). We as members of this Church assume this obligation as a Biblical responsibility (Heb. 10:25), and submit to Biblical discipline should Biblical correction become necessary in our lives.

Section M. We believe in **the UNIVERSAL CHURCH**: The church, the Body of Christ

consists of all those who have trusted Christ as Savior and have called on His name in faith throughout all time and in all the world (I Cor. 1:2). The universal church is not an "invisible church" but is manifested physically in each generation wherever and whenever true believers in Christ meet together for worship and service (Heb. 10:25).

Section N. We believe in **the IMPORTANCE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH**: that this Church, as a New Testament church, is a local assembly of individuals who have trusted Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who are placed into the true church, the Body of Christ, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:12, 13, 27, 28), who are united in this local organization to represent Christ to a lost world (II Cor. 5:19-21), and to practice New Testament ordinances (I Cor. 11:23-34). We commit ourselves to meet together for teaching, for fellowship, for breaking of bread, for prayer, for meeting each other's needs (Acts 2:41-47), for praising God, for a united testimony (I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27-2:16), and for actively engaging in carrying out the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19, 20). We, as members of this Church, pledge ourselves to be faithful in assembling together (Heb. 10:25) and to serve Christ in all that we say and do (Col. 3:17, 23, 24).

Section O. PARA-CHURCH MINISTRIES : We believe that Biblical responsibility rests with the local church (Acts 20:17-35) and that all "para-church" ministry should be the outreach of faithful members of local churches cooperating for the accomplishing of a ministry unachievable by individual churches or individual believers. Each New Testament church is responsible to govern itself without ecclesiastical interference from organized denominations, should maintain separation in practice, fellowship, and cooperation with apostate groups (II Cor. 6:14-18; II John 9-11), but should cooperate with other Biblically sound, local churches and ministries (Acts 20:28) and Biblically sound individuals as the Holy Spirit leads (III John). This church is responsible to follow the pattern of the New Testament church and is directly accountable to God and its membership for its conduct and service (I Tim. 3:1-15).

Section P. THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE: We also believe in the separation of church and state, with each having definite and distinct spheres of responsibility (Matt. 22:17-22), working together in harmony (Rom. 13:1-7), with the commands of God taking precedent over areas of conflict with the laws of men (Acts 5:25-29). The government of man cannot impose unbiblical requirements on the followers of Christ nor can government regulate and restrict the obedience of believers in expressing their faith (Acts 4:19, 20; The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States).

Section Q. We believe that **the ORDINANCES** given to the local church are two: **BAPTISM**, and **the LORD'S SUPPER**. **NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM**, as practiced by our church is by immersion of believers (Acts 8:37-39; 10:47, 48; Matt. 28:19, 20; see also Mark 7:4 in the Greek texts of the New Testament), thus portraying the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through partaking of Biblical baptism, the believer is identified by the world with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, being raised to newness of life (Rom. 6:3-12). **THE LORD'S SUPPER** is the partaking of the bread and cup by those who have trusted Christ as Savior as a continuing memorial and reminder of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 11:17-34). These ordinances do not bring salvation to those who participate in them but are taken by those who

believe as a testimony of the saving grace of God that they have already experienced through faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior (Titus 3:5; Gal. 2:16; I Cor. 11:26).

Section R. We believe that every believer is given **SPIRITUAL GIFTS** for the ministry to the church, the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:2-28): These gifts are for the growth and ministry to the body and are not to be a source of friction and separation among believers in Christ (I Cor. 12:7-14). These spiritual gifts are not personal possessions but are given as needed and as circumstances demand for the building of the body of Christ and the reaching of the lost to communicate the gospel of Christ (Acts 2:4-12). Spiritually gifted people are then God's gift to the church, the body of Christ.

1. The spiritual gifts listed in Scripture (Rom. 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:11-12) are apostleship (specially gifted people sent for a mission), prophecy (the preaching of the Word of God), evangelism, teaching, knowledge, governments, words of wisdom, discerning of spirits, faith, exhortation, giving, mercy, helps, healing, miracles, discerning of spirits, tongues (spoken dialects), and interpretation of tongues (hearing the tongues in your own mother tongue as in Acts 2:8). The Biblical ranking of these gifts according to importance is apostleship, prophets (including evangelism and the preaching of the Word of God), pastor-teachers (including administration and training), and then the rest of the spiritual gifts.

2. Tongues and the interpretation of tongues were for the witnessing to unbelievers, not to be used in the church (I Cor. 14:22) and were never to be used when interrupting the clear preaching of the Word of God or evangelism in the proclaiming the good news concerning salvation through trusting Christ as Savior because of His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead (I Cor. 14:23-33). Although God can still use the gift of tongues today if He wills, the gift of tongues have ceased or become extremely rare (pausontai in I Cor. 13:8). The speaking in tongues is not an evidence for salvation manifested in all believers (I Cor. 12:30) as some teach, nor is the speaking in tongues to those of other nationalities to be forbidden if they understand the gospel preached in their own language (Acts 2:4-12; I Cor. 14:39) as others teach. This church will preach the gospel and the Word of God uninterrupted by the practice of "speaking in tongues".

3. The spiritual gifts of healing and working of miracles were manifested in the healing of diseases, deformities, weaknesses, and the intervention in problems of nature (Acts 3:2-8; 28:1-10) and was a sign that the gospel of Christ is authentic and could be believed. Although God can still use healings and the working of miracles today if He wills to do so, the manifestation of these gifts have become rare and the authority of God now rests with the completed written Scriptures, the Word of God. These gifts are never to be used as a substitute for the preaching of the Gospel of Christ and the clear declaration and teaching of the Word of God. This church will clearly preach the gospel and the Word of God and we, as a congregation and as individuals, commit ourselves to obey the Word of God, the Bible, without argument or contention.

COVENANT OF FELLOWSHIP

Article IV. The covenant of Fellowship of _____ Church.

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized Biblically in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19, 20), we do now in the presence of God, angels and before men (I Cor. 4:9) most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant agreement with one another, as a unified body of obedient believers in Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:27-2:11).

We commit ourselves as members of this Church, therefore, in obedience to the Holy Spirit, to be faithful in the following duties:

--to walk together in Christian love (Eph. 5:2).

--to submit to one another for Biblical direction (Eph. 5:21).

--to submit to and fully cooperate with those who exercise the spiritual leadership of our church in Biblical training, discipline, and service (Heb. 13:7, 17) as long as they lead through Biblical teaching and direction (Acts 4:19, 20).

--to conduct our lives and build our characters in complete obedience to the teachings of Scripture (James 1:22-25).

--to work for the advancement of this assembly of His church in Biblical knowledge, holiness, and service to Christ and each other, and to be actively engaged in its worship, ordinances, teaching, discipline and service (Phil. 2:12-16).

--to exercise Christian care and watchfulness over one another (I Cor. 10:24; 12:7; Gal. 6:1, 2; Heb. 3:12, 13; 10:24).

--to be faithful in attending the regular functions of our church (Heb. 10:25) and to submit to Biblical training for improving our personal service to Christ (Heb. 5:11-6:9).

--to pray with and for one another, sharing our burdens, sorrows, and joys (Eph. 6:18).

--to be thoughtful and courteous to one another, refusing to take offense, quick to forgive or to seek forgiveness (Col. 3:12-16).

--To actively seek personal means of serving Christ in the organized work of our church in exercising our own personal spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12:1-31).

--to hold any church office to which elected or appointed, and to decline such office if not

personally qualified to hold that office according to the Scriptures (Titus 1:5-11; I Tim. 3:11-13; I Pet. 5:1-4; III John 9-12).

--to prepare for and to teach the Scriptures as appointed by the leadership of our church (II Tim. 2:15; 4:1-2).

--to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the financial support and work of His worldwide church as the Lord directs (II Cor. 9:1-15; I Cor. 16:2-4).

--to personally assume responsibility for the welfare of those who have needs (Eph. 4:28; James 2:14-18; Matt. 25:35-40; Rom. 12:13).

--to personally assume responsibility for the spread of the good news of Christ to our acquaintances as well as throughout the whole world (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 20:28).

--to commit ourselves to engage regularly in personal Bible reading and study (II Tim. 2:15), in prayer (I Thes. 5:17), and to teach and live in obedience to the Scriptures in our daily personal attitudes and conduct (Col. 3:1-4:6).

--to maintain proper Biblical family relationships (Eph. 5:22-6:4; I Cor. 11:3; I Pet. 3:1-8).

--to Biblically educate and discipline our children, not frustrating them or causing them to give up because of our unreasonableness or by holding a double standard, but to rear them in the training and warning of the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4, Col. 3:21).

--to maintain a consistent Christian testimony with those who do not know Christ as Savior, attempting to win them to Christ (Rom. 12:17).

--to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and Biblically obedient in our deportment (I Pet. 2:12-17).

--to put off all emotional feelings forbidden by the Scriptures (Eph. 4:30-32) and to be loving in all our relationships with others (I Cor. 13:4-8; Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 5:1-2).

--to walk honestly as a testimony to the unsaved (Rom. 12:17; 13:13, 14; II Cor. 8:21).

--to maintain a personal ministry in the community where we live (Titus 2:1-14).

--to personally work toward making our church a Biblically sound and spiritually effective local assembly of the body of Christ (Eph. 5:21).

We also commit ourselves that, when we move from this area, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other Biblically sound local church, where we can continue to serve according to the principles of God's Word and the spirit of this covenant (Heb. 10:25).

MEMBERSHIP

Article V. Church Membership.

Section A. General statement.

Membership in this church is open to all who have made a profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and have obeyed the Lord's command concerning believer's baptism by immersion.

Section B. Procedure for becoming a member.

Each individual who wishes to become an active member of this assembly must meet with the elders and give testimony (1) of his/her faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior (I Cor. 1:2), and of having been Scripturally baptized (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38), (2) of having read and being in complete agreement with the doctrinal statement of this Church (Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10, 11), (3) of his/her willingness to completely and immediately obey the Scriptures when he/she finds his/her life in conflict with the Word of God (II Tim. 3:1-5; II Thes. 3:13, 14), and (4) to affirm that he/she does not have any known continual disobedience to the Scriptures in his/her daily life (II Thes. 3:6, 7). All who wish to join with this Church, after meeting the above criteria, will sign a document for the protection of the church body stating agreement and submission under the constitution of this church and give a public confirmation of their beliefs and their intentions to submit to the tenants of this constitution so the church body will not be held responsibility for the misconduct of any member or leader if it occurs.

When the elders have determined that an individual meets the criteria for membership listed above, the individual will be presented to the church as a member in a simple welcoming ceremony at any regular worship service, stressing the individual's qualifications for membership in meeting the above Scriptural criteria.

Section C. Membership Roles.

Membership roles will be maintained under the supervision of the elders of the church. The active membership role will list members who comply with the major purposes of the church: to honor Christ, to win the lost to Christ as Savior, and to effectively prepare the saints to serve Christ (II Tim. 3:15-17; Eph. 4:11-16). The inactive membership role will list members who have not attended regular church services for a period of eight months, or, if absent, have not served through the church for the previous eight months without satisfactory explanation, and members who are undergoing the process of Biblical church discipline for doctrinal discord or for improper behavior contrary to clear Biblical teaching. Members will be notified if their membership status has been changed and the proper Biblical counseling will be employed if accepted and as needed to reinstate the individual as a productive, functioning member of the church (Gal. 6:1).

Section D. Termination of Membership.

Termination of membership shall be for the following reasons.

1. Death. The names of deceased members will be removed from the role of membership, but will be remembered for their place that they held in serving Christ while members at this church.
2. Voluntary termination of membership at the request of the member or when the member joins another church other than as an associate member. Letters of recommendation will be sent to other churches upon request to the elders.
3. Involuntary termination of membership as the result of the member resisting Biblical church discipline (Rom. 16:17, 18; II Thes. 3:6, 7; II Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 3:10, 11), or as a result of the member remaining on the inactive membership list for a period of eight months without response to Biblical counseling and other efforts to restore the inactive member to the full fellowship of the church (Gal. 6:1).

In the case of involuntary removal from the membership of this Church, if at all possible, the person in question must be notified by certified mail of any Biblical charges and of the date that the elders will be considering his/her removal from church membership at least one month in advance of that date, and the member must be given an opportunity to answer any accusations before the elders if he/she desires to do so or to repent of his/her Biblical disobedience. Contact with the member through certified mail will demonstrate that contact with the erring member has been made or attempted and the receipt or returned letter will be kept for the church records. Dismissal by discipline shall require a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the elders voting after careful and prayerful consideration.

Members who have been so disciplined, who show a genuine change of mind and heart concerning their sin, who have abandoned the practice of their sin, and who wish to be reinstated to church membership and the full fellowship of this church may be restored by the recommendation of the council of elders (II Cor. 2:6-9).

CORRECTIVE BIBLICAL DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

Section E. Discipline of Members.

Any member or leader of this church who violates either the law of God, the laws of the government, or in any way defrauds anyone commits these acts as an individual and not as a member of this church. This church will not take part in these violations and will not accept responsibility as a corporate body for any infractions of the laws of government or decency by any member. We do, however, recognize that our responsibility to carry on a ministry of reconciliation and restoration according to the Holy Scriptures (Col. 1:20; II Cor. 5:18). The purposes of corrective Biblical church discipline are the reconciliation and restoration of the offending parties (Gal. 6:1), to encourage the offender to make proper restitution to those who have been wronged (Matt. 5:24), to reunite the body of Christ in the cases where division has been caused (Phil. 1:27, 28), to protect the immature believers from the confusion of false teaching contrary to the Scriptures (Titus 1:9-11, Jude 3), and to bring offenders to a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ (James 5:9, 10).

Biblical church discipline, therefore, is not to cause separation between believers, but to promote a healthy restoration of fellowship and reunification in harmony with the Holy Scriptures and the cause of Christ. Separation of any individual by the church should only be for the purpose of the winning of the lost to Christ or for the reconciliation of the body of Christ, and should only be done in obedience to Biblical commands and in a Biblical attitude. Therefore, the corrective discipline of straying members of this church will be by the council of elders and will be according to the following formula:

1. The Biblical and factual evidence will be privately reviewed with the individual being disciplined, giving the member a chance to refute the accusations or to express willingness to comply with the Biblical commands before going further with the disciplinary process (Matt. 18:15-17). This step in corrective church discipline should be first done by the individual who first becomes aware that there is a problem or that a member is disobeying the Word of God.

2. If no satisfactory explanations have been given and it has been determined that there is a violation of Scripture, and if the individual being disciplined refuses to obey the Scripture, one or two other spiritually mature individuals who know of the situation will be included in the delegation, and the evidence and Biblical issues will be reviewed again with the offending member, giving another opportunity to Biblically correct the violation (Matt. 18:15-17). The elders will be informed of the problem at this time and be involved in the disciplinary process. The erring member will be placed on the inactive membership role of this church at this time.

3. The offender will be admonished and warned concerning the consequences of his/her disobedience to Scripture (I Thes. 5:14; Titus 3:10).

- a. The offending believer's salvation experience will be evaluated with reference to I John

1:8-10; 2:4; and 3:6-10, and an attempt will be made to bring the offending church member to a true faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

b. The erring believer will be warned about God's discipline for those who belong to God's family through faith in Christ (Heb. 12:6-8; I Cor. 11:30; James 5:14-16; I John 5:16-18).

c. If the member continues to refuse to correct his/her sin, he/she will be noted and watched carefully by the leaders of the church to prevent friction within the body (Rom. 16:17; Col. 2:8).

d. The reasons and traditions that contradict Scripture given by the erring believer to justify his/her offenses will not be considered as valid reasons to continue in practicing sin (Titus 1:14).

4. The elders of the church will again forcefully and sharply present the Biblical evidences to the offender in a way that will cause the offender to admit his/her guilt (Titus 1:13; I Tim. 1:20; II Tim. 4:2, 3) again attempting to reconcile the believer to Christ and the church.

5. If the Biblical disobedience is not corrected, the individual under discipline will be stopped from teaching in the church or removed from any other positions of leadership, and told not to speak of any controversial issues with any other church members (Titus 1:9).

6. A public Biblical stand will be taken against the position of the offender (Gal. 2:11-14; Matt. 18:17), and the church will be informed concerning the offense, appealing to the members of the church to pray for and urge the offender to obey the Scripture.

7. If the offending member continues in following the Biblical offense after the above Scriptural attempts to restore him/her to harmony he/she will be removed from membership in this church and his/her name will be removed from the church membership rolls, the offense will be publicly explained ("entreated against"), and the offender will not be received back into fellowship until his/her life has been brought into obedience to the Scriptures (Titus 3:10; I Cor. 5:1-13).

8. The former member will have the Biblical doctrines of salvation explained to him/her as to a lost person and a genuine attempt will be made to win him/her to trust Christ as Savior (I John 2:4; 3:6-10; Matt. 18:17).

9. If the offender resists bringing his/her life and attitudes into compliance with the Scriptures he/she will be ostracized from the social activities of the church (Rom. 16:17; II Thes. 3:14; Titus 3:10).

a. Fellowship will be withdrawn from the offender (I Tim. 6:3-5; II Thes. 3:6-15).

b. The offender will not be encouraged other than to urge the offender to obey the Scriptures by the members of our church (II John 7-11).

10. When the offender expresses willingness, demonstrates a change of heart through submitting

his or her life to the prescribed Biblical discipline, and brings his/her life into conformity to the Scriptures, he/she will be accepted back into fellowship, although not necessarily for leadership positions until qualified according to the Scriptures (II Cor. 2:6-11, with reference to I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9, I Pet. 5:1-4).

GENERAL CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Article VI. Church Government.

_____ Church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is a Christ-governed local fellowship of believers (Eph. 5:23) voluntarily submitting ourselves to a form of government that we believe is in accordance to the Scriptures. If any practices stipulated in this constitution are ever misused or applied in a way that is not consistent with the Word of God then the violation of the Scripture must be immediately corrected in compliance to the Headship of Christ over this church. The following section of this constitution attempts to define the offices, officers, responsibilities and process of selection of the individuals entrusted with these spiritual responsibilities.

Section A. Determining individual calling.

The calling of an individual to serve in an official capacity in or from this Church will be based on the following criteria (Acts 13:1-4).

1. The individual being considered for any church position must first be qualified according to the Scriptural definition for the particular office or responsibility (I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

2. The Scriptures and circumstances show the need or responsibility of the church to have a qualified individual serving in the office needing to be filled (Acts 6:1-5; 13:1, 2; Eph. 4:11-16).

3. The church manifests a church-wide conviction of the Holy Spirit that the recruited individual is God's selection for the ministry (Acts 13:2-4), as indicated through a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the voting members of the congregation, a quorum being present.

4. The individual selected is willing to serve Christ in the needed capacity (Acts 13:4, 5).

5. The assurance that, if the proposed individual serves in the appointed capacity, this will not violate any Biblical dictate or principle (III John 9-12; I Tim. 3:15-4:5).

Section B. The Appointment of Spiritual Leaders.

1. Elders:

The pastoral staff, the superintendent of Sunday School, male Christian training teachers, male Bible institute instructors, and male church counselors must have the qualifications as elders prescribed by Scripture in I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 (See Section F on the qualifications of elders).

2. Outside speakers:

All outside speakers or teachers invited to participate in the ministry of this Church must also meet the qualifications of elders prescribed in the Scriptures (See section on the qualifications of elders).

3. Women teachers:

Spiritually mature women speakers or teachers who are in tranquility under the leadership of their own husbands or godly single women will be able to be used under the supervision of the elders in compliance to I Tim. 2:9-15 (See the Greek text for exact meaning).

4. Deacons:

Deacons must be qualified according to the characteristics indicated in I Tim 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-4 (See section on the qualifications of deacons).

5. Deaconesses:

Godly women can also be chosen as deaconesses to serve the church in whatever way their ministry best serves according to the teaching of Scriptures and at the discretion of the council of elders (Rom. 16:1). Many services to women, children and to the church as a whole is best performed with godly, Holy Spirit gifted women.

6. Other church workers:

Other members will be appointed for other Biblically undefined ministries in our church as the need demands and will be chosen as their character conforms to the Scriptures, each Christian to minister according to his/her own specific spiritual gift (I Cor. 12:1-28).

Section C. The Council of Elders.

This church will be under the direction of the council of elders consisting of the pastor, the pastoral staff, and other men who are Scripturally qualified and appointed to eldership position according to the needs of the church (I Tim. 3:5; Acts 15:13-27) and these elders will be held responsible for the spiritual direction, progress and growth of the church (Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 15:13-27). The deacon board will serve under the supervision of the elders and assist in the ministry of the church as directed by the elders (Acts 6:1-4).

Section D. The Limitations of the Power of the Council of Elders.

Our elders will not assume the position of spiritual dictators . The limitations of elder authority will be contained in their responsibilities of evangelism, informing the church of the teachings and mandates of the Scriptures, demanding that the church do as the Scriptures clearly teach, enforcing the Biblical mandates for the church, and setting the example in Biblical obedience for all Christians (I Pet. 5:1-4). We as a congregation, and as individual members of this congregation, recognize our responsibility to obey the Lord, and we pledge ourselves to immediately follow the Biblical leadership of our elders without contention (Heb. 13:7, 17). Concerning matters not clearly defined in the Bible, our elders, with their spiritual wisdom, may suggest specific ways our congregation may fulfill its full Biblical commission as a part of the body of Christ. In decisions of service and conduct not specifically mandated by the Bible, we as a congregation and as individual members of this congregation pledge to prayerfully consider the suggestions of our elders, and will decide the specific question in the way the Holy Spirit appears to be leading after discussion, prayer and by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote, a quorum of the membership being present. This decision will be binding on the council of elders unless clearly contradicting any teaching of the Bible.

If ever Biblical disharmony occurs within the council of elders or between the council of elders and what the Bible clearly teaches, and this disharmony will not or cannot be reconciled by the elders through Biblical means or proper Scriptural discipline, we as a congregation, in exercising our responsibilities as a royal priesthood (I Pet. 2:9), will pray, seek the leading of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, and will resolve this disharmony by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the membership, a quorum of the membership being present, and make a decision that seems most clearly taught in the Bible (Acts 15:22, 28). Unless this corporate decision can be demonstrated to be in violation to the Scriptures this decision will be binding on the council of elders.

Section E. The Leadership of the Council of Elders.

The council of elders will elect a chairman and co-chairman to lead them with the decision making as illustrated in the leadership of James as indicated in Acts 15:13-19.

THE PULPIT COMMITTEE, THE PROCESS OF SELECTING A PASTOR OR DISSOLVING PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

Section F. Selecting a Pastor or Elder.

When the office of a pastor or elder is vacated, the council of elders shall make provision for filling the pulpit or the responsibilities left unfulfilled by this vacancy. If there are no elders to function, the church in a called meeting, after prayerful consideration, shall draw up a slate of ten names of men who are spiritual leaders in our church to be voted on in a business meeting two weeks later. The five men receiving the majority of votes shall constitute the pulpit committee. This committee shall then elect its own chairman. It shall be the responsibility to make provision for the filling of the pulpit by Scripturally qualified men (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9) until a full-time pastor is called. Only one candidate for pastor shall be presented to the church for consideration at a time. The ratification of the recommendation of the pulpit committee shall be by an eighty percent (80%) majority of the active resident members present and voting at the meeting at which at least twenty percent (20%) of the active resident membership is present.

1. Present pastors' and elders' positions are recognized as valid unless there are Biblical or legal grounds for disqualification according to I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:1-9, and I Peter 5:1-4.

2. If there is no present functioning council of elders, the following process will be followed in selecting new pastors or elders.

a. A clear announcement concerning the need to fill a position in the spiritual leadership will be announced in consecutive regular meetings of the church for two weeks. The members and friends will be asked to pray for the leading of the Lord to give Biblical wisdom to the pastoral committee as they seek the man God would appoint to the vacant position.

b. After a meeting of the church to pray together for God's will in the selection of the new pastor or elder where I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:6-9, and I Peter 5:1-4 are read and discussed regarding the Biblical qualifications required for the new spiritual leader the council of elders, or if the church is presently without elders to function in the leadership capacity, the pulpit committee will ask the members to consider God's requirements for the church leadership position and to submit suggested names of faithful men who have manifested the Biblical characteristics in their daily lives and ministry. The recommendations may be given publicly during the prayer meeting and/or privately at the discretion of the council of elders, the pastoral committee, or the members.

c. All reasonable recommendations will be investigated and screened by the pastoral committee or the council of elders to make sure that any man considered for leadership will have the minimal Biblical qualifications as mentioned in I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:6-9, and I Peter 5:1-4.

d. After a time of prayer, the pastoral committee or the council of elders will select the most qualified man according to the Biblical qualifications, the special needs of the church, and the special spiritual gifts of the individuals being considered for the leadership position.

e. The candidate selected will be asked to pray concerning the needs of the church and to indicate if he is willing to serve in the capacity for which he is needed.

f. The council of elders or pastoral committee will meet and formally give unanimous approval of the acceptance of the man selected for pastor or elder. If there is any question concerning total harmony within the selecting group related to Biblical qualifications the committee will reconsider their choice and either reach unanimity or look further for the conviction of the leading of God.

g. At a called business meeting after all the active members of the church have been notified two weeks in advance, the body of the congregation will hear the recommendation of the council of elders or the pastoral committee and will formally accept the candidate for pastor by eighty percent (80%) approval, with at least 20 percent (20%) of the active resident membership present. See Section 7 of the Bylaws for the required voting age in this matter.

h. The man selected will be formally presented to the congregation at a regular Sunday morning meeting of the church and will be formally appointed to the position of spiritual leadership to which he is selected by the elders and the church body, where the church pledges to follow the Biblical leadership of the new pastor or elder and to support and encourage him in his work.

In selecting individuals to serve as pastor, or to serve on the council of elders, priority consideration should be given to individuals who are Scripturally qualified as elders and who have already been serving in or through our church before looking at personnel from another church.

Section G. Pastoral Compensation.

Those who minister in the capacity of ministering elder or pastor in this church, through the teaching of the Scriptures and the development of the saints for a lifetime of ministry will be compensated and their needs be met in accordance to the Scriptures (Gal. 6:6; I Thes. 5:12, 13; I Tim. 5:17, 18; II Tim. 2:6) and in a way that is determined by the church and agreeable to the elder.

Section H. Enforcement of the Scriptures.

In all issues, this church will be subject to the Holy Scriptures and the elders will be responsible to enforce obedience to the Biblical commands both in attitude and action (Heb. 13:7, 17). The elders shall clearly teach the contents and the message of the Scriptures and shall demand that we as members of this church practice what God commands. In questions of Biblical teaching where the statements of Scripture are not completely clear, we as members will carefully consider the wisdom of our leading elders, but we will retain the right to exercise our own Biblical judgment in our

obedience to the Scriptures.

Section I. Dissolving Pastoral Relationships.

The question of dissolving the pastoral relationship shall be considered at any time upon presentation of a pastor's resignation. Thirty (30) days notice should be given in order to effect a resignation and give our church time to graciously go through the change.

Where an accusation exists against a pastor or elder, either due to preaching or teaching contrary to the clear statements of the Bible, or due to alleged gross legal or moral misconduct on his part in disobedience to Scripture or to the laws of the government, he will be temporarily suspended with pay from his leadership position in the church. At this time the problem will be explained to the congregation and the church will be asked to pray for and encourage the pastor, elder, or spiritual leader and his family. The charges against him will be carefully investigated by the council of elders, and a presentation of the evidences by two or three spiritually sound witnesses will be brought before the council of elders (I Tim. 5:19, 20). If the council of elders, after a thorough investigation and careful consideration, believes that the charges set forth in such a petition to be true, and if after rejection by the pastor of all efforts to restore him to a Biblical position (Gal. 6:1), upon the recommendation of the council of elders to the church, the pastoral relationship will be recognized as officially ended and ratified by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the resident active members of the church present and voting at a called church business meeting, notice of which shall be announced to the church two weeks preceding the meeting. The object of this meeting shall be clearly stated in this notice (Rom. 16:17, 18; I Tim. 6:3-5). In cases of admitted or proven gross moral or legal misconduct by any paid or recognized leader in this church it is agreed that his/her resignation will be active before the commission of the violations regardless of the time before the church discovers this breach of faith. In any case where a leader of this church is proven guilty of moral or legal misconduct his/her automatic resignation will be recognized by the council of elders without need for ratification by the congregation. This process will also be followed in the case of any accusations against any individual who exercises any official unpaid position of leadership or responsibility in this church. This provision does not apply to civil disobedience where the laws of men contradict clear teachings of the Scriptures (Acts 4:19, 20), and where a public stand against the practices of society or where the teaching of the truth is demanded by God.

Any accusations against spiritual leaders in this church will be treated as serious. Any accusations concerning an elder, pastor, teacher, leader, or member of this church shall be brought to the attention of an elder discreetly in private, (Matt. 18:15) allowing the elder to quietly investigate to see if the accusations can be substantiated. If any accusations concern actions that Biblically disqualify from the ministry or endanger the corporate body of the church, this matter will be brought before the council of elders immediately on disclosure. The elders will investigate and deal with the problem in the church. Any leader in this church concealing from the council of elders any accusations or suspicions of gross moral or legal misconduct on the part of anyone holding a position of responsibility in this church will immediately be suspended from his or her position of responsibility. This provision is not meant to disrupt the ministry or to allow foolish and unsubstantiated accusations to threaten those who serve the Lord through our church. It does

however let the council of elders Biblically investigate any potential serious breaches of faith, to deal with any problems that arise, and to protect the ministry of our church.

When the accusations against any leader of our church have been proven to have been given without foundation or without solid evidence that leader will be presented to the congregation in a regular meeting and will be given a statement of approval by the congregation and the council of elders, along with an apology for the inconvenience caused. If false accusers were involved and irresponsibility or Biblical disobedience is demonstrated in their handling of their accusations, they will be placed under Biblical church discipline and not reinstated to full fellowship in this church until they have given a public apology to the person they accused and to the congregation for their actions at a regular meeting of the church and they have demonstrated that they are spiritually ready for full membership in our church as determined by the council of elders.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

Section J. The Qualifications of elders.

See Article VI, Section B, Paragraphs 1 and 2.

God places great emphasis on the character and qualifications of the men who will assume the responsibility for the spiritual leadership of His church and on the character of their families. Therefore, before being considered for a position on the council of elders of this church, a man must have at least the following Biblical characteristics as demanded in I Tim. 3:1-11, Titus 1:6-11, and I Pet. 5:1-4.

1. Legal qualifications. To be an elder a man must be

A. Innocent of any indictable felony and free from legal reproach or censure (I Tim. 3:2 {Greek: anepilempton}; and Titus 1:6; {Greek :anegkleton}).

B. Saved, faithful in obeying God, and dealing fairly and justly with others for the purpose of building them spiritually, restoring them to or maintaining their spiritual good health (Titus 1:8; Gal. 6:1, {Greek: dikaion}).

C. Devoutly committed to God as shown by his past habitual, faithful obedience to the Scriptures, by his past willingness to fulfill Biblical obligations, and by his righteous and good works in exercising mercy on God's children (Titus 1:8, {Greek: hosios}).

D. Habitually demonstrating his self-control over his personal affairs and desires so that the character of the Holy Spirit is seen in his strength, composure, conduct, and character, and so that outside supervision is not necessary for him to continue to live as a Biblical leader (Titus 1:8 {Greek: egkrate}; cf. Gal. 5:22, 23).

2. **Moral Qualifications.** He must have been always sexually faithful to his wife (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6 {Greek: mias guniakas andra}; Heb. 13:4).

3. Character Qualifications. He must have habitually demonstrated that he is:

A. Not prone to religious intoxication emotionally but is consciously and consistently alert to avoid all offenses to Christ and to render careful, serious judgment in all personal matters (I Tim. 3:2 {Greek: naphalion}).

B. Emotionally and intellectually sound, using wise discretion (I Tim. 3:2 {Greek: sophrona}).

C. Honorable in his manners so that he exemplifies genuine morality and respectability in his daily deportment with self disciplined dignity (I Tim. 3:2 {Greek: kosmion}; cf. I Pet:5:3).

D. Not an individual who is self satisfied, prone to arrogance, egocentric, arbitrary in judgment, using his own desires and opinions contrary to clear statements of the Scriptures rather than the teachings of Scripture themselves as criteria for decisions. He must not be unafraid of disobeying God in areas of life where he desires to act otherwise, not being prone to be morose, gruff, and harshly self-righteous in dealing with others when his own arrogance is resisted (Titus 1:7 {Greek: me authade}).

E. Not a person who is easily irritated or prone to become angry with a burning anger that maintains a grudge over a period of time and is prone to get revenge through the decisions he will make concerning church matters (Titus 1:7 {Greek: me orgilon}).

4. Social Qualifications. He must have demonstrated the control of the Holy Spirit in his relationships with other people in the following ways:

A. He must not be bigoted against those who are different, but must show a kind, respectful, hospitable attitude toward strangers and have demonstrated his ability to deal respectfully, kindly, and Scripturally towards those who show hostility to him (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8 {Greek: philoxenos}; cf. III John 9-12).

B. He must demonstrate a respect for people who are of good character and work toward the spiritual and physical well-being of people rather than be a person who will change his means in order to accomplish his desired ends (Titus 1:8 {Greek: philagathon}).

C. He must demonstrate that he has been habitually teachable over a long period of time so that he has not only become Biblically knowledgeable and is still teachable, but that he also has the ability to develop the Biblical knowledge and skills of others (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9 {Greek: didaktikon}; cf. I Pet. 5:2).

D. He must have demonstrated that he is not going to lose control of his self discipline so that he becomes prone to intemperance with alcoholic beverages, insolence, quarrelsome, or to becoming overbearing (I Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:7 {Greek: me paroinon}).

E. He must have demonstrated that he is not apt to strike others or resort to violence in pressing situations (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7 {Greek: me plekten}).

F. He must have demonstrated that he cannot be influenced to make his decisions for shameful or dishonorable gains (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7 {Greek: me aischrokerde}; cf. I Pet. 5:3).

G. He must have demonstrated that he is one who is orderly, fair, and reasonable in the way he deals with other people so that he is kind and gentle toward others, not harshly legalistic (I Tim. 3:3 {Greek: epieike}; cf. I Pet. 5:3).

H. He must not be one who is embroiled in quarrels, contentions or unbiblical controversies (I Tim. 3:3 {Greek: amachon}).

I. He must have demonstrated that he does not serve Christ out of desire for money, that he is not going to make his spiritual decision based on his respect for the wishes of the rich, but instead, will use his position to faithfully use the funds entrusted to his in a generous manner wherever there is a need (I Tim. 3:3 {Greek: aphilaguron}; cf. I Pet. 5:2).

J. He must have a good or appealing report from those who are unsaved or not members of his church (I Tim. 3:7 {Greek: mustarion kalan ekein apo ton exother}).

5. Family Qualifications. He must have also demonstrated his effective spiritual leadership over his own family in the following ways before he can be considered for a position as elder in this church.

A. He must assume leadership responsibility for his family, directing, guiding, and controlling the behavior and influencing the development of Biblical attitudes of each member of his family, providing and caring for them, while he himself first sets the example for them concerning how a devout servant of Christ should live (I Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; 5:8, 17 {Greek: kalow proistamenon}).

B. His wife must

1) have a serious and worthy purpose in life, so that her disciplined conduct earns her admiring respect rather than embroiling her in offensive acts and attitudes that would be harmful to her husband's and her ministry (I Tim. 3:11 {Greek: semnas}).

2) have a positive disposition so that she does not have a complaining attitude, does not present herself to others as hostile or unfriendly, does not place herself in a position of accusing others, is not prone to gossip, to deceive, to misrepresent information to others, or in any way to cause others to falter in their spiritual growth (I Tim. 3:11 {Greek: me diabolos}).

3) be like her husband, in that she is not prone to religious emotional intoxication, but is alert to consciously avoid all offenses to Christ and to habitually render serious, careful judgment in personal matters (I Tim. 3:11 {Greek: nephalion}).

4) believe what she knows of the Scriptures and be of a trusting disposition and attitude, as well as faithful in regard to her own personal life and the support of her husband in each and every thing (I Tim. 3:11; I Cor. 11:3 {Greek: pistas en pasin}).

C. Their children living in their home must be

1) like their mother, believing in the Scriptures, of a trusting disposition and attitude, and faithful in regard to their own personal life (Titus 1:6 {Greek: pista}).

2) In cooperation with their parents, honoring and acknowledging their parents as leaders of their family, and voluntarily surrendering their desires and rights when they clash with their parents' orders and desires (I Tim. 3:4 {Greek: en hupotage}).

3) At an appropriate age like their mother, having a serious and worthy purpose in life in all things so that their disciplined conduct earns admiring respect for them rather than constantly embroiling them in offensive acts that would be harmful in their father and mother's ministry (I Tim. 3:4 {Greek: meta pases semnotetos}).

4) not in the category of people who are living primarily for sensual satisfaction, leading a wild and undisciplined life of vice, homosexuality, or self-destructive dissipation and showing no signs of being brought under control, being incorrigible (Titus 1:6 {Greek: me en categoria asotias}) while being supported by their parents and living in their parents' home.

5) not in the category of people who are not in subjection or not showing any signs of coming into subjection to sound teaching, rules, or parental regulation, being rebellious and insubordinate to their parents (Titus 1:6 {Greek: me en categoria anupotakta}) while living with their parents.

6. Mental-Spiritual Qualifications. He must have demonstrated the following characteristics.

A. He must be a believer in Christ as his personal Savior, and have been growing spiritually for several years, not a recently converted believer, a youth, or a newcomer who has not established his reputation and character according to the previously discussed qualifications (I Tim. 3:6 {Greek: me neophuton}).

B. He must have been and still be habitually teachable over a long period of time so that he has not only become Biblically knowledgeable, but also has the ability to develop the Biblical knowledge and skills of others (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9 {Greek: didaktikon}).

C. He must know, understand, and practice the broad concepts of the totality of the Scriptures, being able to communicate Biblical insight from the whole Bible, not merely from parts of the Scriptures (Titus 1:9 {Greek: kata ten didachen}; cf. I Pet. 5:2).

D. He must have habitually involved his life with the careful study of the faithful Word of God followed by immediate, faithful, and permanent obedience of what he learned, adopting the Scripture as his unswerving authority for governing his own behavior, attitudes, decisions, and knowledge (Titus 1:9 {Greek: kantechomenon pistou legou}).

E. He must have demonstrated that he is capable to invite, exhort, and encourage those who sit under his teaching ministry (Titus 1:9, parakalein), and to force those who speak against, contradict, or oppose sound doctrine (tous antilegontas) to face the Scriptural facts by presenting the Biblical evidence and proof so that they are either spiritually restored to a correct position or exposed to the rest of the church as false teachers (Titus 1:9 {Greek: eklegkein}).

ELDER'S AND MINISTER'S QUALIFICATIONS CHECKLIST

I Timothy 3, Titus 1 and I Peter 5 state the minimal qualifications for anyone who is being considered for the position of elder or pastor. If you are preparing for the ministry make sure that you develop these characteristics consistently in your character. If you are considering someone for the position of pastoral spiritual leadership in your church be sure that they have these Biblical qualities before you accept that person.

Yes No

Legal Qualifications:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| — | — | 1. Innocent of an indictable crime. |
| — | — | 2. Free from legal reproach or censure. |
| — | — | 3. Saved, has accepted Christ as personal Savior. |
| — | — | 4. Faithful in obeying God (applies Scripture to his own life). |
| — | — | 5. Deals fairly and justly with others to build them spiritually. |
| — | — | 6. Devoutly committed to God as demonstrated in daily life. |
| — | — | 7. Deals mercifully with others to restore them spiritually. |
| — | — | 8. Habitually exercises self control in his own personal affairs and desires. |
| — | — | 9. Is not in need of outside supervision in order for him to faithfully pursue his ministry. |
| — | — | 10. Demonstrated strength and composure in his conduct and character when under stress. |

Yes No

Moral Qualifications:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| — | — | He has always been morally (sexually) faithful to his own wife regardless of her conduct. |
|---|---|---|

Character Qualifications:

- 1. Is not prone to religious or emotional intoxication.
- 2. Is alert to avoid all offenses to Christ.
- 3. Habitually renders careful, serious judgment in personal matters.
- 4. Is emotionally stable, not continually vacillating between emotional highs and lows.
- 5. Is intellectually sound, relying on Biblical facts rather than emotional whim for decisions.
- 6. Has a modest yet purposeful discipline and direction in his life.
- 7. Demonstrates honor in all his affairs and behavior.
- 8. Uses self disciplined dignity.
- 9. Exemplifies genuine morality and respectability in his daily deportment.
- 10. Is not self satisfied but constantly improving his character and skills.
- 11. Is not arrogant.
- 12. Is not egocentric, drawing attention to himself or demanding that others fulfill his desires.
- 13. Is not arbitrary in judgment, compromising Scripture for his desired goals.
- 14. Is fearful of disobeying God when he desires to do otherwise.
- 15. Is not prone to be morose, gruff and harshly self-righteous in dealing with others if and when his own will is resisted.
- 16. Is not easily irritated.

Yes **No**

- 17. Does not hold a grudge.

Social Qualifications:

- 1. Is not bigoted against people who are different.
- 2. Is kind and hospitable toward strangers.
- 3. Deals kindly and respectfully with those who show hostility.
- 4. Shows respect for people who are good.
- 5. Works toward the spiritual and physical well-being of others.
- 6. Does not think that ends justify the means.
- 7. Has been habitually teachable and is still teachable.
- 8. Demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of the Bible.
- 9. Has the ability to develop the Biblical knowledge and skills of others.
- 10. Is not intemperate, controlled by alcoholic drink.
- 11. Is not quarrelsome.
- 12. Is not insolent.
- 13. Is not overbearing.
- 14. Does not resort to violence in pressing situations.
- 15. Cannot be influenced by shameful or dishonorable gain.
- 16. Is orderly, fair, and reasonable in dealing with other people.
- 17. Is gentle and kind toward others.
- 18. Is not harshly legalistic.

Yes No

- 19. Is not embroiled in quarrels, contentions, and unbiblical controversies.
- 20. Is not serving Christ out of his desire for pay.

- 21. Is not swayed in his decisions because of the wealth of others.
- 22. Is faithful, yet generous in using entrusted funds for the needs of others.
- 23. Has a good and appealing report from others who do not believe in Christ or who are members of another church.

Family Qualifications:

- 1. Assumes leadership responsibility for his family.
- 2. Directs, guides and controls the behavior and attitudes of each member of his own family.
- 3. Provides for the needs of his family.
- 4. Sets the example for his family in faith, conduct, and service.
- 5. His wife:
 - a. Has a serious and worthy purpose in life.
 - b. Has a disciplined conduct that earns her admiring respect.
 - c. Does not get embroiled in offensive acts which would be harmful to her husband's ministry.
 - d. Does not complain when things seem to go wrong.
 - e. Is not hostile or unfriendly toward others who resist their ministry or efforts.
 - f. Does not falsely accuse others.
 - g. Does not gossip, but maintains confidence.
 - h. Does not misrepresent information about others.
 - i. Is not a source of discouragement or used as an excuse by others for not growing spiritually.
 - j. Is not prone to emotional intoxication.

Yes No

— —

k. Is alert to avoid all offenses to Christ.

— —

l. Habitually renders careful, serious judgment in personal matters.

— —

m. Believes what she knows of the Scriptures.

— —

n. Trusts her husband and his leadership.

— —

o. Is faithful to fulfill all her obligations.

— —

p. Is subject to and faithfully supports her husband in all things.

6. At an appropriate age their children:

— —

a. Believe what the Scriptures promise and teach.

— —

b. Trust their father in his leadership.

— —

c. Are faithful to fulfill all their obligations.

— —

d. Honor their parents as their God-ordained spiritual leaders.

— —

e. Are submitted to and immediately obedient to their parents.

— —

f. Voluntarily surrender their rights when they clash with the desires or orders of their parents.

— —

g. Have a serious and worthy purpose in life.

— —

h. Have disciplined conduct that earns them admiring respect from others.

— —

i. Do not continually get embroiled in offensive acts that would drive others away from their father's spiritual leadership.

— —

j. Are not living primarily for sensual satisfaction.

Yes No

— —

k. Do not lead a wild and undisciplined life of vice, homosexuality, or dissipation.

— —

l. Are not incorrigible or refuse to be brought into subjection.

- ___ ___ m. Are not rebellious or refuse to obey their parents.
- ___ ___ n. Listen to sound teaching and practice what they learn.

Mental and Spiritual Qualifications:

- ___ ___ 1. He has been saved and spiritually growing for several years.
- ___ ___ 2. He has been thoroughly investigated by the church and he fulfills all the Biblical qualifications mentioned in I Tim. 3_1-11; Titus 1:6-11; and I Pet. 5:1-4.
- ___ ___ 3. He is teachable.
- ___ ___ 4. He knows, understands and lives what the Bible teaches.
- ___ ___ 5. He has the ability to develop the Biblical knowledge and skills of others.
- ___ ___ 6. He has basic, insightful understanding of the teachings of the Scriptures.
- ___ ___ 7. He habitually, carefully studies the Word of God so that his teaching is accurate.
- ___ ___ 8. He immediately and consistently obeys the Scripture himself.
- ___ ___ 9. He searches the Scriptures constantly to improve his own obedience and to grow spiritually.
- ___ ___ 10. He invites and encourages those who sit under his teaching to become strong in the faith.
- ___ ___ 11. He presents Biblical fact and proof when he teaches so that false doctrine is exposed.
- ___ ___ 12. People who believe or teach false, unbiblical doctrine are quick to accept his Biblical teaching and to correct their false concepts.

Yes No

- ___ ___ 13. He kindly yet firmly exposes those who resist sound doctrine and does not allow them to teach.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS

Section K. The responsibilities of elders.

1. To pray, study, and administer the Word of God (Acts 6:4).
2. To be an example to the congregation to visibly demonstrate victorious Christian living and service (I Pet. 5:3; Ezra 7:10).
3. To promote the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and vocational welfare of his own family first (I Tim. 5:8; 3:4, 5, 11, 12; Titus 1:6).
4. To proclaim the good news (gospel) concerning the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior (II Tim. 2:10-14).
5. To declare the whole counsel of God to the congregation especially where the lives, beliefs, and character of the people conflict with the Scriptures (II Tim. 4:2).
6. To guard the church against the teaching of false doctrine (Titus 1:10, 11, 14; Heb. 13:9).
7. To govern and administrate over the activities and services of the church (I Cor. 12:28; II Cor. 11:28; Heb. 13:7, 17).
8. To supervise the training and service activities of the church (Acts 28:28-31).
9. To be involved in training and preparing others for a lifetime of Christian service (II Tim. 2:2; Eph. 4:11).
10. To exercise the spiritual gifts of all believers in the church and give all Biblically qualified believers an opportunity to serve Christ by exercising their spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12:4-31).
11. To sponsor and appoint spiritually qualified individuals in positions of service, and to do everything possible to see that the appointees' needs are met, and that they succeed in serving Christ (Titus 1:5; Eph. 4:11-16).
12. To promote the spiritual welfare of the church, the body of Christ world wide, through Bible conferences, Biblical seminars, counseling, training sessions, and mission projects outside the local area (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19, 20).
13. To counsel individuals concerning personal Biblical issues to aid them in avoiding future problems or in remedying problems already encountered (I Thes. 5:14).
14. To exercise Biblical discipline to church members who are disobedient to the Scriptures (I Thes. 5:14, Titus 3:10).

ORDINATION

Section L. Ordination.

When, in the judgment of the council of elders, a man in this membership is called by God into the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the pastor or council of elders to call and conduct a council of ordination to recognize this calling. This ordination council shall consist of Biblically sound ordained elders from this and other sound Biblical churches invited by our council of elders and the candidate for ordination (Titus 1:5). The ordaining council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior, their call into the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service as required in I Timothy 3, Titus 1, and I Peter 5. No one shall be ordained to the Christian ministry through this church who does not meet the Scriptural qualifications as elders.

It shall be within the province and responsibility of the ordaining church to discipline, even to revoking the ordination credentials, of any minister ordained under this constitution if this minister is found guilty of any disqualifying disobedience or loss of these Scriptural qualities and a reconciliation with the Biblical position cannot be effected. Revocation of ordination credentials shall be only after the rejection of all attempts to restore that man to a proper Biblical position and an open, impartial council conducted in the manner and attitude of I Cor. 13 and Gal. 6:1.

EVALUATING YOUR CALL INTO THE MINISTRY: IS IT OF GOD OR OF MAN?

Many people feel a call into "full time Christian work" either as a full time pastor or to give their lives for missionary work both at home or in other countries. They become committed to this call as a vocation, spend considerable time in preparation, and after spending some time in their chosen field of ministry, experience grave doubts that they were ever called by God in the first place. Such ministries are usually doomed to failure.

Even more insidious, however, is the call to a ministry which has been based on principles which are contradictory to the Scriptures. The ministers, missionaries, or Christian workers "called" by unbiblical means will spend their lives contradicting the work of faithful Christians (III John 9-11), turning others away from faith in Christ (Rom. 2:24), and producing others who will be equally disobedient as they are (Matt. 23:13-15). At the very least, the disobedient laborers will labor in vain (I Cor. 3:11-17).

The following questions were designed to help you evaluate your call into your particular ministry. These questions were not designed to make you give up in your attempts to serve Christ. If you find that your original "call" was not Scriptural and that your "call" was not really of God, remember that every Christian has a genuine call into a personal ministry especially tailored to the spiritual gifts of that individual believer (I Cor. 12:4-31).

If your present position of serving Christ is not Biblical, the first major step should be to see if you can become completely Biblical by strengthening your spiritual weaknesses and fully obeying the Scriptures in your present position. Do not excuse your failures. The Holy Spirit never calls one to disobey the Scriptures, nor does He empower a believer with spiritual gifts to serve out of harmony with the commands of Christ. It is inexcusable, especially for a person who has dedicated his or her life to the teaching of the Word of God and to proclaiming Christ, to knowingly continue to commit sin and willfully crucify Christ (Heb. 6:6). Bring your ministry and your call into complete compliance with God's Word.

If you cannot bring yourself or your ministry into complete obedience to the Biblical criteria for your position, then you should prepare to give your position over to another Christian who is Biblically qualified to fill that position. The temptation in this situation is to excuse your short-comings by saying that there is no one as qualified as you are to fulfill that specific position, and therefore, do nothing about your problem. As soon as you see that you can never be Biblically qualified for your position, you should give notice of your intention to give your position to a spiritually qualified person as defined in the Scriptures. Then immediately yield your position to a person who is Biblically qualified, or begin a search for a spiritually qualified person to fill that position. If your church is Scriptural, and it is fulfilling all the responsibilities of a church as defined in the Bible, you should be able to locate several faithful individuals trained and prepared within the church who would be able to fill any Biblical need within the body of Christ.

In order to determine if your call into the Christian ministry is of God, you should be able to answer all the following questions affirmatively with a "Yes".

Yes No

- 1. Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior (Titus 1:8)?
- 2. Are you completely and permanently dedicated to Christ (Rom. 6:11-13; 12:1, 2; Titus 1:8)?
- 3. Are you personally Biblically trained and prepared with all the Scriptural knowledge and skills demanded for the position to be filled (I Tim. 3:2, 6; Titus 1:8)? This does not mean that you have learned everything you need to know, merely that you have the Biblical knowledge and skills you need for your present position of ministry while you continue to learn and improve.
- 4. Is your character development spiritually strong and Christlike (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7, 8)?
- 5. Do you personally, consistently live the principles of God's Word, and are you firm in dealing with your own disobedience to the Scriptures in your attitude as well as conduct (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9, Ezra 7:10; II Cor. 10:5, 6; Acts 20:28)?
- 6. Are you personally strong spiritually so that the responsibilities that you will assume over God's heritage, the church, will not make you feel self-important, arrogant, or domineering (Titus 1:7-9; Gal. 5:22, 23; I Tim. 3:2, 3; III John 5-12, Acts 20:28)?
- 7. Is all your immediate family (wife and children) in a proper, exemplary Scriptural position of growth and service, and will your new position of spiritual responsibility not sacrifice the physical or spiritual welfare of your family (I Tim. 3:4, 5, 11, 12; 5:8, 17; Titus 1:6)?
- 8. Is your call to the ministry to remedy a specific Biblical crisis or to fill a need that you are Scripturally qualified to fulfill (Titus 1:5; Acts 13:1-5)?
- 9. Have you been recognized by your church leaders and the congregation in general as God's person who should be appointed to fill the needed responsibility through the conviction of the Holy Spirit and your personal service to Christ (Acts 13:1-5; Titus 1:5)?

Yes No

10. Are you seriously convinced that God wishes you to serve in the special capacity for which you are being appointed (I Cor. 7:20-24; II Tim. 1:9-12)?
11. Are you sure, if you accept or use the position in which you are being placed, that you would not be violating any Scriptural principle or mandate (I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9)?
12. Are you willing to fill the need and to Biblically fulfill the responsibility for which you are being called (I Chron. 28:9, 10; 29:5; II Cor. 8:10-12)?
13. Will you be physically and materially able to fulfill the responsibility if you accept the position (Phil. 2:24-30; cf. 1:7, 13, 14)?

THE SELECTION AND REGULATION OF THE OFFICE OF DEACON

Section M. The Election of Deacons. See Article VI, Section B, Paragraph 4.

1. The board of deacons will be nominated and elected by the voting members of the congregation and serve under the appointment and supervision of the council of elders (Acts 6:3; Heb. 13:7, 17).

2. The process of selection of deacons shall be in the following manner.

a. The congregation will meet in a called meeting where the purpose of selecting deacons will be announced two weeks in advance.

b. The Scriptural qualifications for deacons shall be read and explained from Acts 6:1-4 and I Timothy 3:8-12.

c. There will be a time of congregational prayer where several members of the congregation shall lead in public prayer and all shall pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit in selecting the men from the congregation who have the Biblical characteristics required and can perform the Scriptural office of deacon.

d. Paper and pens will be handed to each voting member, and without discussion, each member will write the number of names needed for deacons of the men from the membership who are best qualified to serve as deacon.

e. The names submitted will be counted by an appointed committee.

f. The Biblical character of the men mentioned most times in the ballots will be privately reviewed by the council of elders to insure that the Scripture will not be violated if any of the selected men serve as deacon.

g. These men who pass the Biblical test of qualifications will be contacted to ask if they would be willing to serve as deacon.

h. The names of those who are qualified and selected will be presented to the congregation for a vote of acceptance and their position of deacon ratified by the congregational body by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of voting members present.

i. The new deacons will be officially appointed to the position before the congregation.

3. The office of deacon will be for the period of three years. When the church is first

established the first selection of deacons will be one third to serve for three years, one third to serve for two years, and the remaining third to serve for one year.

4. Section N. The Removal of Deacons.

If a man exercising the position of deacon is disqualified Biblically from being a deacon or if any are accused or suspected of committing a felony, defrauding or violating the civil rights of anyone, or if his ministry becomes disruptive to the Biblical harmony of the church, he will be temporarily suspended from his position until all charges are investigated. If the accusations are proven false he will be reinstated to his position and asked to continue his service. If the accusations concerned his Biblical qualifications, and are demonstrated to be true, the council of elders will attempt through Biblical discipline to restore that men to full Biblical qualifications for his ministry if possible and to full fellowship in the church. The council of elders will only reinstate him to the position of deacon if he is qualified according to Acts 6:1-4 and I Tim. 3:8-13. If the accusations were concerning a felony or the defrauding of anyone, the man acted as an individual and not as a leader of this corporate church and must assume responsibility for his own actions. This church as a corporate body does not condone sin, the violation of the laws of our government (Rom. 13:1-7), or the violation of the civil rights of anyone (Rom. 13:1-7). He may not be reinstated to any position of leadership in this church until all legal questions have been rectified. Any deacon or spiritual leader or teacher in this church shall be considered to have resigned from the official position of leadership and service immediately before any unrectifiable Biblical violation, the commission of a felony, or the violation of the civil rights of anyone. This resignation will be considered effective at the time of the commission of the disqualifying act, regardless of the time lapsed before the church discovers this violation and takes action.

QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

Section O. Scriptural Qualifications of Deacons.

In order for a man to be considered for the position of deacon in this Church he must have these Biblical characteristics demonstrated in his daily life (I Tim.3:10, Diakonous hosautos ... dokimazesthosan proton):

1. He must have demonstrated through personal faithfulness and service in the church that he is filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit which produces wisdom in his decisions and an honest report from others (Acts 6:1-4).

2. He and his wife must have a serious and worthy purpose in life so that their disciplined conduct earns admiring respect for them rather than embroiling them in offensive acts which would be harmful to the ministry of the church (I Tim. 3:8, 11, semnous).

3. He must mean what he says, not saying one thing and meaning another, not being a deceiver (I Tim. 3:8, me dilogous).

4. He must not be addicted to or occupy his mind with much wine, but must be temperate and self controlled (I Tim. 3:8, me oino pollo prosechontas).

5. He must be of such a character that he cannot be influenced to make his decisions for the sake of dishonorable gain (I Tim. 3:8, me aischrokerdes).

6. He must demonstrate that he not only possesses but also understands the salvation produced through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ and maintains a life that indicates that his conscience has been cleansed for service (I Tim. 3:9, echontas to musterion tes pisteos en kardia suneidesei).

7. He must be a man who is free from acts which would be grounds for legal reproach or censure (I Tim. 3:10, anegkletos ontes).

8. He must have been always sexually faithful to his wife (I Tim. 3:12).

9. His wife must be:

a. Serious, with a worthy purpose in life so that she receives admiring respect rather than becoming embroiled in offensive acts and attitudes which would be harmful to her husband's ministry (I Tim. 3:11, semnas).

b. Positively dispositioned so she does not have a complaining attitude, does not present herself

to others as hostile or unfriendly, does not place herself in a position of accusing others or is not prone to gossip, deceit, misrepresenting information about others, or cause others to falter in their spiritual growth by anything she does (I Tim. 3:11, *me diabolous*).

c. Not prone to religious, emotional intoxication but is alert to consciously avoid all offenses to Christ and to habitually render serious, careful judgment in her personal matters (I Tim. 3:11, *nephaleous*).

d. Believing what she knows of the Scripture, of a trusting disposition and attitude, and faithful in regard to her own personal life and her support of her husband in each and every thing (I Tim. 3:11, I Cor. 11:3, *pistis en pasi*).

10. His children and all who live within his own home must be appropriately submitted to his leadership, direction and control, and he must not only lead them according to Biblical principles but must also set the example for them concerning how a devout servant of Christ should live (I Tim. 3:12, *teknon kalos proistameno kai ton idion ioikon*).

DEACON QUALIFICATIONS CHECKLIST

This checklist has been designed from the Greek terms in I Timothy 3:8-13, and Acts 6:1-4. Evaluate yourself and/or the individuals being considered for the office of deacon to be sure that all the Biblical criteria are met. Especially note any Biblical qualifications that are not fulfilled consistently. Attempt to build yourself for the position of serving Christ effectively by correcting any Biblical deficiencies and developing spiritual strength. Never accept anyone for nomination for the position of deacon who does not fulfill all of the Biblical requirements.

Yes No

- 1. He demonstrates that he is controlled by the Holy Spirit (see Gal. 5:22-23).
- 2. He has demonstrated wisdom in his decisions.
- 3. He has an honest report from his whole community.
- 4. He has a serious and worthy purpose in life.
- 5. He has a disciplined conduct that earns him admiring respect.
- 6. He does not get embroiled in offensive acts which would be harmful to his ministry.
- 7. He means what he says, not meaning one thing and saying another, deceiving the hearers.
- 8. He does not have his mind and spiritual life controlled by alcoholic beverages.
- 9. He is temperate and self controlled.
- 10. His decisions are made based on obedience to the Scriptures, and not for dishonorable, personal gain.
- 11. He demonstrates that he possesses and understands the salvation produced through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.
- 12. His life demonstrates that his conscience has been cleansed and remains clean so he can serve Christ.
- 13. His life has been free from felonious acts that would be grounds for legal censure.

Yes No

- — 14. He has always been sexually faithful to his wife.
15. His wife:
- — A. Has a serious and worthy purpose in life.
- — B. Has a disciplined conduct that earns admiring respect for her.
- — C. Does not get embroiled in offensive acts which would be harmful to her husband's ministry.
- — D. Is positively dispositioned without a complaining attitude.
- — E. Does not present herself to others as hostile or unfriendly.
- — F. Does not gossip or accuse others.
- — G. Does not misrepresent information about others or deceive.
- — H. Does not cause others to falter in their spiritual growth by her attitudes or conduct.
- — I. Is not susceptible to religious or emotional intoxication.
- — J. Is alert to avoid all offenses to Christ.
- — K. Habitually renders serious, careful judgment in personal matters.
- — L. Believes what she knows the Scriptures teach.
- — M. Obeys the Scriptures in regard to her personal life and attitudes.
- — N. Is in full submission to her husband in all things and fully supports his ministry.
16. His children and all who live in his home:
- — A. Are submitted to his leadership, direction and control.
- — B. Are led by him according to Scriptural principles.
- — C. See in his life an example of how they should live as Scripturally sound, devout servants of Christ.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEACONS

(Acts 6:1-4)

Section P. Responsibilities of the Deacons (Acts 6:1-4).

1. To administer to the poor and needy of the church.
2. To administer to the temporary needs of the church or the needy of the community.
3. To take care of the widows, orphans, and the sick.
4. To help administer the provisions of the Lord's supper.
5. To administer to the needs of the pastor or elders.
6. To oversee the physical maintenance of the church buildings, equipment, and the stewardship of the church funds as directed by the elders and the church body.
7. To perform the duties appointed them by the elders which release the elders for prayer, and the study and teaching of the Word of God.
8. Evangelism and outreach ministries (Acts 8:5, 6).

BYLAWS

Article VII. Other personnel and issues not mentioned specifically in the Scriptures.

Section A. Personnel, organizations, and committees.

The council of elders and the deacons shall meet once each month at a time that is best suited to themselves and to the pastor, and may organize themselves in whatever way the pastor considers best to fulfill their duties. They may consider and discuss the needs and problems of the church not mandated by the Scriptures and make recommendations to the church concerning their considered solutions, but shall have no power to act officially unless the action is within their clearly defined Biblical responsibilities commanded in the Scriptures, or unless they are authorized to act by the church expressed through a regular or called business meeting. Unless discussing Biblical discipline of a member as Biblically confidential material (Matt. 18:15), all official meetings of the council of elders will be open for the membership to attend, and will be announced in advance.

The Church Clerk.

The deacon appointed as church clerk shall attend all business sessions and shall record the proceedings, and after their adoption as correct, shall enter them into a suitable permanent record book provided for that purpose, which, when recorded in full, shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and attested by the clerk. The clerk shall file and preserve all valuable papers and documents related to the business of the church and belonging to it, and shall make this record available to church members on request. He shall keep a complete register of all members of this church and their addresses, and shall also issue letters of dismissal or recommendation as called for by the church.

The Financial Secretary.

The deacon appointed as financial secretary shall keep a correct account of the financial transactions between the church and its members or donors to the church ministries (II Cor. 9:1-8).

The Treasurer.

1. The deacon appointed as treasurer shall safely keep all the funds placed in his hands by the church, shall arrange that these funds are deposited in a bank designated by the church, and shall render a duplicate deposit slip to the financial secretary of the church. He shall give an itemized report of all receipts and disbursements, giving the balance on hand at the monthly elder-deacon board meetings, at quarterly and annual business meetings, or at any time it may be considered advisable. He shall keep a seven-year itemized record of all receipts and disbursements for each

month. The books of the treasurer shall be audited at the end of each fiscal year. He shall keep a separate account of each fund provided by the church. He shall deliver to his successor at the expiration of his term of office or to the council of elders in case of resignation or removal all money, vouchers, record books, and property in his possession belonging to the church. He shall not disburse any money outside of the church budget, except by provision of the church or in keeping with special designated gifts recognized as Scripturally valid by the church body.

2. The deacons shall arrange for all funds received at all meetings of the church and all monetary gifts to the church to be counted by at least two responsible persons present and the amount to be recorded on weekly count sheets delivered to the treasurer for the permanent records of the church (Acts 6:1-4).

3. Except for special offerings involving small gifts, all payments must be made by check and signed by the treasurer, assistant treasurer, or an officer designated by the official council of elders.

The Superintendent of Sunday School.

The superintendent of Sunday school shall conduct the affairs of the Sunday school under the direction of the pastor and the council of elders. Unless otherwise directed by the council of elders, he shall attend each session of the council of elders, preside over Sunday school organizational meetings, direct the activities of the Sunday school, exercise the general oversight of the work of the Sunday school. In all major decisions he shall consult with the elders charged with matters pertaining to administration. The assistant superintendent of Sunday school shall assist the superintendent in accomplishing this work, and shall be under the authority of the superintendent of Sunday school. The overall programming of the Sunday school shall be under the jurisdiction of the Christian Education Committee.

Ushers.

The head usher and/or his assistants shall perform the duties as required at any of the church services. These duties shall consist of seating the worshipers, the gathering of the offerings, helping to administer the Lord's supper as directed by the elders, the maintaining of a proper physical environment for the church auditorium, and whatever other duties are requested by the elders and deacons responsible for the meeting in progress.

Organizations.

1. No organization shall be formed or considered a part of the activities of this church before the sponsors have submitted their plans to the council of elders for their inspection and have received their approval.

2. All organizations serving in, through, or from this church are required to confer with the

appropriate elders from time to time as requested regarding their plans and activities.

3. The president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer of any organization fully sponsored by this church other than foreign or domestic mission works must be an active member in good and regular standing.

Committees.

1. Definitions.

Committees shall be designated under two headings; permanent committees and special committees. Permanent committees shall consist of the following: Christian education committee, music committee, audit committee, youth ministry committee, mission committee, visitation committee, and any other committees considered necessary to fulfill the ministry of the church. Unless otherwise designated, all other committees which shall be formed by the church for any particular duty shall be regarded as special committees to be dissolved upon the completion of their responsibilities. Special committees are committees such as the budget committee, the nominating committee, the pastoral search committee, and the constitutional revision committee.

2. The Music Committee.

The music committee shall be appointed by the pastor in consultation with the council of elders and serve under the supervision of the pastor. The music committee shall consist of at least three members, at least one of which shall be a member of the council of elders or its designee and drawn from the best and most spiritually qualified musicians in our church. The music committee shall have charge of all the music for the public services of the church, and shall cooperate with the requests of the pastoral staff to insure that the music in the church services correspond with the preaching or teaching of the Word of God in each service. This committee shall serve for a period of one year at a time. The director of music, as an elder, shall be in control of this committee and supervise the selection of spiritually qualified musicians to serve in this church.

3. The Christian Education Committee.

The Christian education committee shall consist of the following members: Sunday school superintendent, one extra elder or deacon selected by the council of elders, the director of Christian education, and one representative from each of the other organizations of the church as appointed by their respective organizations. The elder designated as director of Christian education shall be the chairman of this committee. The purpose for this committee shall be for the assistance of the director of Christian education and the enhancement of the education and training ministry of the church. The responsibilities of the Christian education committee shall be to formulate an integrated spiritual training program for the church. This committee shall help each group to organize its own program as part of a larger integrated Scriptural program which will systematically fulfill all the Biblical mandates for the ministry of the church. Each program shall be reviewed by this committee

considering its emphasis and objectives as related to the over-all program of this church. Each group shall be required to pursue these emphases and objectives as approved by this committee and will be accountable to accomplish their allotted share of the ministry of the church.

The Christian education committee shall meet at least quarterly for the fulfilling of its responsibilities, and shall give a brief but concise report to the council of elders each quarter, setting forth the activities of this committee.

4. The Audit Committee.

The audit committee shall consist of three members appointed by the council of elders. In making these appointments the elders shall designate the chairman of this committee. The audit committee shall audit the books of the treasurer and shall report their findings to the church at the annual business meeting. The treasurer will cooperate with the audit committee but not be an official member of that committee. At the request of the elders, deacons, or by the written request of 10 % of the active members of the church, there will be a special audit made by this committee at the time of the request and the findings must be reported to the church body. The audit committee shall serve for the period of one year at a time, with no limitation placed on the number of times the members of this committee can serve. If there are no members in the church with the training or ability to audit the financial records of this church then the audit committee will employ a professional auditor to fulfill this requirement.

5. The Youth Committee.

The youth committee shall be appointed by the council of elders. The chairman of the youth committee shall be the elder designated as youth pastor. The youth committee shall encourage Christian fellowship, training, service and evangelistic outreach of the young people of the church. Its function shall include giving Biblical direction and counseling. In consultation with the council of elders and the executive committees of the youth organizations, this committee shall plan an over-all program for the spiritual training and leadership of our youth which shall be reviewed by and in cooperation with the Christian education committee. The youth committee shall serve for the period of one year, with no limitation placed on the number of times the members of this committee can serve.

6. The Building and Grounds Committee.

Five men shall be appointed from the deacon board by the council of elders to serve as trustees. These men must have their own personal finances in order before attempting to handle the money matters of the church. These deacons shall serve as the legal custodians of the property and finances of the church. These men shall be alert to all matters pertaining to the temporal affairs of the church, such as the care and maintenance of church property, the duties of the janitor, assessments, insurance, repair and improvement, under the supervision of the pastor and the council of elders. In cases of emergency the trustees may, under order from the council of elders, spend church funds as budgeted without consulting the church body if the church finances permit. The chairman and

secretary for the board of trustees (the B & G Committee) shall have the authority to sign all legal documents for the church. Buying, mortgaging, or selling any property of the church shall be done only after the church has formally approved the specific proposition at a regular or specially called business meeting as expressed by an affirmative 2/3 majority vote of the active church members, such meeting having been announced publicly and through letters to each active member at least two weeks in advance of the transaction (See Bylaw, Section 5).

7. The Planning and Finance Committee.

The planning and finance committee shall consist of five deacons appointed by the council of elders. In making these appointments the pastor and elders shall designate the chairman. This committee shall collect information concerning the plans and needs for the ministry of the church and prepare a proposed budget for presentation to the church at its annual business meeting. This committee shall constantly monitor the budgetary spending of the church. The planning and finance committee in cooperation with the council of elders and others who are serving in the church shall also plan and propose church expansions and directions for the future church needs within limitations of Scriptural church responsibilities and do whatever is necessary to facilitate the filling of these needs and responsibilities.

Section B. Meetings.

1. The church shall meet regularly morning and evening as designated by the pastor and congregation every Lord's day for the public worship of God, prayer, Scriptural training, and the proclamation of the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

2. The mid-week meeting of the church shall be held regularly each week on a day and at a time the body of the church shall designate.

3. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed quarterly or more often at such other times as the pastor or the body of the church shall designate, constantly bringing to remembrance the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

4. There shall be a quarterly church business meeting regularly on the second Sunday of December, March, and June where the council of elders and other church committees shall report to the church body what has been accomplished by the Lord and the directions for the future of the church for the past quarter. The Annual business meeting shall be held normally on the second and third Sundays of September, with the fiscal year ending August 31. Annual reports shall be submitted to the church by the clerk, treasurer, deacons, and whatever committees as considered necessary by the council of elders or requested by the members of the church. There will be a time designated in all business meetings when the members of the church can ask for any clarification both of church practice and for Biblical clarification from the members of the council of elders, deacons and committee representatives, and allow for reasonable Biblical interchange between the church body and the leaders of the assembly. The pastor, chairman, or co-chairman of the council of elders will act as moderator for all business meetings of the church.

5. Special business meetings may be called by the council of elders, the board of deacons, or at the written request of 10% of the active members of the church to address any immediate special needs of the church. In the case of the death, resignation, continued absence, or refusal to act concerning Biblical commands for the church or urgent church business by the elders or the pastor, the chairman of the board of deacons may call such meetings. The notice of specially called business meetings shall first be publicly given out and all the active members of the church notified at least two weeks before the called business meeting is held. If the deacon board is also non-existent through unforeseen difficulties the congregation may elect a Biblically qualified leader from the active members to call the special business meeting and supervise the process of fulfilling the church needs.

6. Any stated assembly of the church (See Sections 1 and 2 of the Bylaws) shall constitute a meeting capable of dealing with the ordinary current items of business relative to the operation of the church.

7. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of not less than twenty-five percent (25%) of the active resident membership of the church present and voting, except that on matters pertaining to the appropriation of money, the transfer of property, or amendments of the constitution and by-laws, when a quorum shall consist of not less than forty percent (40%) of the active regular membership of the church eighteen years old or over who are present and voting, when the meeting shall have been announced for two previous Sundays and the absentee active members informed of the time and purpose of the meeting. Quorums are further modified elsewhere in this constitution and by-laws and are in order and are not voiced in this section. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting shall be necessary to carry any proposal or business unless otherwise designated in this constitution.

8. An agenda for the annual business meeting and reports from all areas of ministry of the church shall be prepared for distribution the Sunday preceding the meeting. This data shall be finally compiled by the co-chairman of the council of elders or their designee and the clerk of the church.

9. For the sake of tranquility and unity in the church any member desiring to bring a major matter before the church should first submit the proposal to the council of elders or the deacon board, and after consideration these spiritual leaders will determine if the proposal should be brought before the church, implemented, or declined.

Section C. Elections.

1. All elections of this church will proceed as follows.

a. The reading of all Scriptures related to the decisions to be made and a time of prayer for Biblical wisdom in deciding the church issues on which the vote is to be taken.

b. The appointment of tellers by the chairman of the meeting.

c. Issuance of election ballots with a list of nominees, a place to write in Biblically qualified nominees, or a place to register a choice for each individual decision to be made by the body of members.

d. Voting by the active members.

e. The collection of ballots.

f. The counting and tallying of the ballots.

g. The reporting to the members of the results of their collective voting.

2. All decisions of a vote shall take effect immediately following the vote or otherwise whenever specifically designated by the voting membership.

3. In case of death, resignation, or removal of any officer, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the council of elders. The pastor, with the approval of the other elders of the council of elders, shall be empowered to make the necessary appointments to fill any un-expired term of office. In the appointment of an elder or deacon, the appointment shall be accepted by the church through an announcement and by show of approval by raised hands of the active voting membership in the next full meeting of the church, after the voting active membership has been notified of the decision at every meeting for two weeks.

4. The Scripture, first, and Robert's Rules of Order, second, shall be the order of procedure of any business meetings transacted by the church.

Section D. Amendments to this constitution.

This constitution and by-laws may be amended or revised at any regular quarterly, annual, or specially called business meeting of the church, by a vote of two thirds (2/3) majority of the active resident voting membership present and voting, provided that the proposed amendment is submitted to the church on the two Sundays at all regular meetings of the church preceding the meeting. This constitution must be immediately amended if and when it is found to conflict with the Scriptures and the Scriptural instructions, commands, and teachings will be followed by this church over any contradictions of Scripture by this constitution or any other governing legal document or mandate (Acts 5:28-29).

MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT

I have read the constitution of _____ Church and agree with its doctrine. I further agree to obey the teachings of the Bible in my life and practice, and if I deviate from the standards of faith and practice commanded in the Bible I will submit to the correction, restoration and Biblical discipline of this church. If I violate the Law of God or the laws of man or in any way defraud or injure another individual I recognize that I do this as an individual and not as a corporate member of this church. I will personally accept the responsibility and liability for my actions. Furthermore, if I hold a position of leadership in this church and commit an act that could bring reproach on Christ or liability on the body of this church my resignation from leadership will be considered as effective before the act is done and the church will not be responsible for my breach of faith.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX A:

A SUGGESTED CHURCH CURRICULUM FOR TRAINING THE SAINTS (Eph. 4:11-16, II Tim. 2:2)

Ephesians 4:11-16 indicates that if the people of a church are not ministers of God, then neither is the pastor. Too many of our good churches have become a bandage and sympathy station for the self injured saints rather than the training camps for the soldiers of the cross. Many ministries are necessary in the church, but we must not neglect the great commission to reach the world for Christ. In order to fulfill the commands of Christ it is imperative that the saints be trained and prepared in the knowledge and use of the Bible.

The following list was designed to help the faithful pastor and the concerned Christian to evaluate the training program in the church and to make it possible to institute a training program that will carry believers from new birth to Biblical spiritual maturity. This list of doctrines and spiritual skills was placed in a suggested sequence to promote spiritual growth as indicated by II Timothy 3:15-17 and many other passages.

First, use this list to evaluate yourself concerning your own personal growth. How many of the following knowledge areas and spiritual skills have you mastered and use regularly at present? Which areas listed are your greatest weaknesses? Set goals to master any area where you find spiritual weakness in your Biblical knowledge, character and skills.

Second, you can use this list to evaluate the effectiveness of your church training program. Which areas of training are strongly presented in your church? Which are your greatest areas of weakness? Establish church goals related to the commands of the Scriptures and work toward complete church training effectiveness for yourself and for your people. Every church member should be led by the spiritual leadership of your church to progress toward mastery of each Biblical doctrine and spiritual skill listed and should be encouraged to become as great as they are able for the sake of Christ and the glory of God (Eph. 1:15-23; 3:13-21; Col. 1:9-14; Eph. 4:11-16, II Tim. 2:2).

TEACHING THE SPIRITUALLY NEWBORN.

1. Doctrine:

Basic doctrines of salvation.

Assurance of salvation.

Eternal security.

The Deity of Christ.

The authority and inspiration of the Scriptures.

2. Bible Study Methods: (See *The Techniques of Bible Study* syllabus).

Systematic Bible reading; John, Acts, Genesis through Esther.

Systematic Bible memorization of passages dealing with the doctrine of salvation.

Basic Bible doctrines in outline form.

Outlining Bible books with summary of their argument.

How we got the Bible.

Why we should study the Bible.

3. Biblical skills:

Learning skills; Concentrate on learning facts and memorization.

First level counseling skills;

How to share your faith.

How to encourage others.

4. Biblical behavior: Concentrate on personal obedience of the Scriptures.

5: Social development. Concentrate on

Sharing your faith and fellowship.

Showing the love of Christ to others.

TEACHING SPIRITUAL TODDLERS: (The Carnal Level).

1. Doctrine:

The doctrine of God (Theology Proper).

The doctrine of Christ and our involvement in His death (Christology).

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology).

2. Bible Study Methods:

Continued systematic Bible reading; the Gospels, I Cor., James, and I-III John.

Continued Scripture memorization of passages dealing with life purposes and the yielding of one's self to serve God.

The distinction between revelation, inspiration and interpretation.

Methods of observation in Bible study.

Methods of interpretation in Bible study.

Methods of application in Bible study.

Seeking behavioral objectives in Bible study.

The Historical and Biographical methods of Bible study.

3. Biblical Skills:

Personal dedication to Christ (Aorist-once for all time).

Emotional control.

Learning skills; concentrate on

Understanding and classifying Scriptural facts and relationships between
Biblical facts.

Seeking Biblical principles from which to guide your life.

Making Biblical decisions and choices related to these Biblical facts.

Second level counseling skills;

Permanent dedication to serve Christ.

The objective application of Scripture in Biblical obedience.

Personally applying and giving Biblical advice concerning emotional control.

4. Biblical Behavior:

Demonstrate consistent personal commitment to Christ.

Practice Biblical emotional control and stability.

Demonstrate control of sensuality (carnality).

5. Social development:

Demonstrate stability of Biblical obedience under social pressure (worldliness).

Interpersonal relationships and helping others.

Submission to the supervision and teaching of Biblically mature leaders.

TEACHING CONSISTENTLY GROWING CHRISTIANS (The Student Phase).

1. Doctrine.

Apologetics; Evidences for our belief in Christ.

Advanced Christology and Theology Proper (in depth).

The doctrine of the church, the body of Christ (Ecclesiology).

The doctrine of angels (Angelology).

Advanced (cooperative) Pneumatology; The life of yieldedness to and the working through the Holy Spirit.

2. Bible Study Methods.

Continued systematic Bible reading; II Cor., the Pauline epistles, Hebrews, I & II Peter, the Old Testament poetic books.

Scripture memorization of passages dealing with spiritual growth and doctrine.

The survey method.

The analytical method.

Simple Biblical linguistics (Using beginner's tools: Vine's Expository Dictionary of N. T. Words, Strong's Concordance, Young's Concordance, etc.).

The synthetic method.

The comparative

The topical method.

The Theological-doctrinal method.

The devotional method.

3. Biblical Skills.

Habitual advanced Bible study.

Learning skills; concentrate on Biblical relationships, theological systems, and the process of evaluating everything Biblically.

Basic teaching methods to develop; Sunday school teaching.

Continued exercises in Biblical emotional stability.

Third level Biblical counseling skills; discipleship skills as a counseling ministry.

Personal service: involvement with the local church ministry; ie.: teaching Sunday school, visiting shut-ins, leading youth meetings, supply preaching, prison ministries, counseling, mission projects, etc.

Church music.

4. Biblical Behavior.

Develop autonomous, self directed learning skills.

Concentrate on personal preparation for service.

Biblical qualifications for the ministry.

Evaluate for consistency of Biblical behavior and attitudes.

Develop the assumption of responsibility by the growing Christians under spiritually mature supervision.

5. Social Development.

An understanding of the impact of Biblical commands and teachings on self, and others.

The Christian home.

Biblical rules for Christian vocations.

The Christian and the law.

The personal purpose and calling of the Spiritual Christian.

Spiritual principles for leading and supervising the lives and ministries of others.

TEACHING THE SPIRITUALLY MATURE

1. Doctrine.

The Cults and answering heresy (the recognition and defense against false doctrine).

Eschatology in depth.

The work of Christ (Priesthood, etc.).

Evolution, science and the Bible.

Missions and missionary training.

Church administration and leadership.

Holy Spirit gifts and their management in the church.

Biblical qualifications for the ministry (developing the Biblical qualifications and skills, and submitting to supervised practice.

2. Bible Study Methods.

Continued systematic Bible reading; the major and minor prophets, and Revelation.

Scripture memorization of exegeted passages to solve special church problems worldwide.

Biblical linguistics; Greek and Hebrew for exegesis.

Hermeneutics; analysis and strengthening of weaknesses in learning, preparing and presenting the message of specific Scripture passages.

Homiletics and exegetical preaching (all approaches).

Biblical problem solving.

3. Biblical skills.

Christian education and Biblical educational psychology.

Biblical psychological counseling skills and practice.

The organizing and teaching of Biblical truth.

The development of preaching and communication skills.

Biblical church leadership and administration.

The development of mission skills.

Learning skills: Concentrate on Biblical implications, evaluations, and transformations.

4th. level Biblical counseling skills (Theory and supervised practice). Biblical preparation, problem recognition, and problem solving.

5th. level Biblical counseling skills; special counseling problems (depression, neuroses, etc.).

The final polishing of Biblical qualifications for the ministry.

How to train Christian workers

The recognition, placement, and sponsorship of Biblically qualified believers.

General church ministries: camp ministry, visitation, marrying, burying, baptizing, etc.

4. Biblical Behavior.

Biblical consistency in study and life (Self-disciplined, Holy Spirit controlled).

Scripturally Christ honoring in life.

Active involvement in service and Biblical leadership.

Consistency as a Biblical example to others.

5. Social Development.

Active involvement and effectiveness in serving others.

Good communication of Biblical truth, attitudes, decisions, actions and responsibility.

A global understanding of the implications of Biblical teaching, commands, and principles as they impact Christ and others.

An autonomy of a Holy Spirit guided life that is not swayed by culture, peers, worldly pressure or philosophy.

APPENDIX B

A SUGGESTED BIBLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

1st. Semester.

Doctrine 1 (Bibliology and Christology)	3
Old Testament Survey	3
Life of Christ (Matt., Mark, Luke , and John)	3
Genesis through Esther, Acts	6
1st. Level Biblical Counseling: Personal Evangelism (Doctrine and methods for salvation, assurance of salvation, and eternal security)	3
Bible Memorization (passages dealing with salvation, the deity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible)	0
TOTAL HOURS	<hr/> 18

2nd. Semester.

Doctrine II (Theology Proper, Anthropology, Soteriology, Pneumatology)	3
New Testament Survey	3
Characteristics of Spiritual Maturity and the yielded life	1
Problems of faith and Unyielded Christians (I Cor., James, I-III John)	3
Techniques of Bible Study (Introduction, Observation, Interpretation, Application, Seeking behavioral objectives, Historical, and Biographical methods)	4
2nd. Level Biblical Counseling (Personal dedication to Christ, seeking Biblical answers to problems of people, Biblical emotional control, obedience to Scripture, giving Biblical advice, encouraging people with problems)	3
Bible Memorization (Passages dealing with God, Holy Spirit, yielding to God)	0
TOTAL HOURS	<hr/> 17

3rd. Semester.

Doctrine III (Ecclesiology and Angelology)	3
Romans and Hebrews	3
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes	3
Techniques of Bible Study (Survey, Analytical, Simple Bible Linguistics, Using Beginner's Tools, Synthetic-Comparative, Topical and Doctrinal Methods)	4
3rd. Level Biblical Counseling (Discipleship skills)	3
Bible Memorization (Passages dealing with the Church, Righteousness, Helping others)	0
TOTAL HOURS	<hr/> 17

4th. Semester.

Doctrine VI (Eschatology, Apologetics, Answering the Cults)	3
The General Epistles of Paul	3
The Major Prophets	3
Daniel and Revelation	3
Greek I	3
4th. Level Biblical Counseling (Qualifications of Biblical Counselors, Biblical Problem Analysis and Problem Solving Skills).	3
Bible Memorization (Passages dealing with the end time, answering cults, Biblical counseling)	0
TOTAL HOURS	<hr/> 18

5th. Semester.

History of the Church and Christian Doctrine	3
I & II Peter, and Jude	2
The Minor Prophets	3
Greek II	3
Hebrew I	3
The Biblical Qualifications of Church Leaders and How To Develop These Characteristics	2
Exegetical Preaching I (Different types of exegetical techniques)	3
Bible Memorization (Passages stressing doctrine, Christian character and practice)	0
TOTAL HOURS	<hr/> 19

6th. Semester.

The Biblical Church and Its Ministry (The Biblical Church Handbook)	2
Biblical Psychology and Christian Ministries	3
Spiritual Maturation and Church Training Programs	2
Greek III	3
Hebrew II	3
Exegetical Preaching II (Biblical sermon preparation and challenge)	3
Bible Memorization (Passages dealing with spiritual maturation and purpose)	0
TOTAL HOURS	<hr/> 16

7th. Semester.

Greek Exegesis I	2
Hebrew Exegesis I	2
The Mature Christian and the Effective Christian Life (Vocation, social interaction, life-style evangelism, personal purpose)	3
Pastoral Ministry (Church administration and Biblical leadership)	3
Exegetical Preaching III (Sermon and teaching preparation and practice laboratory)	3
5th. Level Biblical Counseling (Biblical answers to controversial issues).	3
Music in the Church (Its purpose, planning, usage, development and leading)	1
Personal Service Projects	2
Bible Memorization (Passages dealing with doctrine, character and practice)	0
TOTAL HOURS	<hr/> 19

8th. Semester.

Greek Exegesis II	2
Hebrew Exegesis II	2
Preparing the Saints (Spiritual gifts, How to get the saints involved in other ministries, Bible schools counseling, planning and running church camps, visitation, caring for the sick and needy, Child Evangelism, Childrens' clubs, how to plan and run an effective Junior Church, etc.).	4
6th. Level Biblical Counseling (Special social, medical and psychological problems)	3
Personal Service Apprenticeship	2
Thesis	4
TOTAL HOURS	<hr/> 17