

LOCAL CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

This edition of the *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws* contains amendments as approved by the 2008 General Conference. In order for an affiliated local church to enact any of the amendments herein approved by the General Conference, a congregational meeting must duly adopt either this edition in its entirety or such individual amendments of the General Conference as are approved by the local membership. The adoption of such amendments shall be in accordance with the amending article (or by-law as the case may be) of the *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws*.

AND

STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL AND ESSENTIAL TRUTHS

THE PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF CANADA
INTERNATIONAL OFFICE
2450 MILLTOWER COURT
MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO L5N 5Z6

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of establishing and maintaining a place for the worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father; to provide for Christian fellowship for those of like precious faith where the Holy Spirit may be honoured according to our distinctive testimony; to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands, we, whose names appear on the local church roster under the above date, do hereby recognize ourselves as a local church in fellowship with The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, and shall adopt the following articles of church order and submit ourselves to be governed by them.

All local churches are recognized as self-governing with the inherent right to sovereignty in the conduct of their own affairs. This local church shall voluntarily enter into full cooperative fellowship with churches of like precious faith associated in the Western Ontario district conference and the General Conference of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, with headquarters at Mississauga, Ontario; and shall share in the privileges and assume the responsibilities enjoined by that affiliation.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 NAME: This local church shall be known as:

Bethel Pentecostal Assembly

ARTICLE 2 DEFINITION - LOCAL CHURCH: A local church desiring to affiliate with The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada shall:

- 2.1 Assume all financial obligations in providing a place of worship and its operation, and adequate salary for its pastor, together with car allowance and suitable housing. Suitable housing shall be understood to mean an adequate dwelling, together with utilities such as heat, water, hydro and telephone or financial provision for such services, and car allowance.
- 2.2 Assume responsibility in contributing to the support of the district office or branch conference with which it is affiliated, and to The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada international missions, Bible colleges, and other responsibilities as may be determined by the General Conference of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.
- 2.3 Have properly qualified leadership of sufficient maturity available for selection, and be able to maintain standards of discipline and doctrine over its members.
- 2.4 Petition the respective district executive for status as a local church. In order to obtain this status, it is required that a duly called congregational meeting, presided over by the district superintendent or an appointee(s), be held, in which there shall be:
 - 2.4.1 an adoption of the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*; and
 - 2.4.2 acceptance of the *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws*, as approved by the General Conference, together with a decision about the required available options; namely, the size of the church board and the decision concerning who shall be the trustees.
- 2.5 Ensure that a credential holder of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada is established as pastor of the local church or one whom the district executive officers of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada approve.
- 2.6 Be duly registered as a charity under the *Income Tax Act*.

ARTICLE 3 PREROGATIVES

- 3.1 This local church shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament Scriptures, "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ... till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:3, 13).
- 3.2 This local church shall have the right to govern itself according to the *General Constitution and By-Laws* and district constitutions and by-laws in force by order of General Conference and district conferences.
- 3.3 This local church shall have the right to develop policies and procedures which guide its operation as determined by the church board or the congregation.
- 3.4 This local church shall have the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purpose; all in accordance with its constitution and by-laws or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended.
- 3.5 The activities of this local church shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members, and any

profits or other accretions to the organization shall be used solely to promote its objectives, in accordance with its constitution and by-laws or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended.

- 3.6** In the event of dissolution or winding up of the organization, all its remaining assets after payment of liabilities shall be distributed to The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada for its continuing ministries.

ARTICLE 4 TENETS OF FAITH: We believe most assuredly that the Holy Scriptures are God's final revelation and constitute our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This local church, by virtue of its affiliation with The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, shall accept the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*, as approved by The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, and which is appended to this constitution.

ARTICLE 5 ORDINANCES AND PRACTICES

5.1 ORDINANCES

5.1.1 The ordinance of baptism by immersion in water (Matthew 28:19) shall be administered to all those who have repented of their sins, and have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, and who give clear evidence of their salvation (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12).

5.1.2 The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be regularly observed as enjoined in the Scriptures (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

5.2 PRACTICES

5.2.1 Dedication of children

5.2.2 Prayer for the baptism with the Holy Spirit

5.2.3 Prayer for the sick

5.2.4 Christian marriage (as defined by the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada)

5.2.5 Christian burial of the dead

ARTICLE 6 MEMBERSHIP

- 6.1** Persons desiring to become members of this local church shall give credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. They shall give evidence of compliance with the biblical standard of Christian practice and manifest spiritual growth by giving evidence of the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22,23 NIV).

They shall refrain from "acts of the sinful nature: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like" (Galatians 5:19-21 NIV). Sexual immorality shall be interpreted to mean common-law marital relationships, pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships (1 Corinthians 6:15-18; 7:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4), and all forms of homosexual activity, along with other practices deemed inexcusable for Christian conduct, and which place a person under God's judgment (Romans 1:26-2:11).

They shall indicate a desire to live in harmony with this body of believers, shall accept the doctrinal standards as set forth in the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*, and shall be regular financial supporters of this local church.

- 6.2** Membership shall consist of the following:

- 6.2.1 *Regular Members.* Persons 18 years of age and over who fulfil the requirements of Article 6.1 shall be known as regular members.
- 6.2.2 *Junior Members.* Persons between the ages of 12 and 18 who fulfil the requirements of Article 6.1 may be eligible for junior membership. Such membership does not qualify for voting privileges at congregational business meetings.

ARTICLE 7 PASTOR AND CHURCH BOARD

7.1 PASTOR

- 7.1.1 Nominations for pastor shall be submitted to the local church congregation by the church board, after consultation with the district superintendent and the retiring pastor.
- 7.1.2 The pastor must be one who holds credentials with The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada or one whom the district executive officers of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada approve.

7.2 OFFICERS: The officers of this local church shall be the pastor, secretary, treasurer, and such other officers as may be determined by this local church from time to time.

7.3 CHURCH BOARD: The church board shall consist of the pastor and not fewer than three (3) board members (if more, the exact number and the resolution authorizing the same must be duly recorded in the church minutes). After the setting in order of the church and the creation of the church board, the lay members of the church board shall be selected in accordance with the resolution of this church. The pastor shall act as chair of the church board. When a pastorate becomes vacant, the district superintendent or the district superintendent's authorized representative shall be empowered to act in the full legal capacity of the pastor in consultation with the church board. The district superintendent shall arrange to supply the pulpit with suitable ministry until such time as a new pastor has been duly installed.

ARTICLE 8 BUSINESS MEETINGS

8.1 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETING: The annual congregational business meeting shall be held in the month of February each year on a suitable date unless otherwise decided by the church board.

8.2 SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS: Special business meetings may be called by:

- 8.2.1 The pastor;
- 8.2.2 The secretary of the church board upon written order of a majority of the church board;
- 8.2.3 By petition by no less than one-half (1/2) of the regular members of the congregation. Such petition shall be handed to the church board, whose duty it shall be to give notice of such meeting.

8.3 NOTICE OF BUSINESS MEETINGS: Two weeks (14 days) notice shall be given of the annual congregational business and special business meetings from the pulpit and posted and publicized in the local church. It shall include date, time and purpose of the meeting

8.4 AGENDA: The agenda shall be prepared by the pastor and church board. An agenda item may be submitted for consideration to the church board by a member of the congregation in good standing. It must be in writing, signed, and in the possession of the church board at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE 9 PROPERTY: All real estate owned by this local church shall be held in the name of the respective district of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada where incorporated, as trustee for the local church according to the terms of the *Declaration of Trust*, or by The Pentecostal

Assemblies of Canada where the respective district is not incorporated as trustee for the local church according to the terms of the *Declaration of Trust*, or by the trustees of the local church as a local church of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and, in the case of an incorporated local church, may be held by the local church in its corporate name as a local church of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

The acquiring and disposal of real property shall be decided by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members present at a duly called congregational business meeting. Where property is placed in trust with The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, either district or international, a 75 percent majority of those voting at a duly called congregational business meeting shall be required.

In the matter of disposing of any real property of this local church, this congregation shall be subject to the property regulations in force from time to time in the by-laws of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and the district constitution and by-laws, the applicable provincial laws, and the *Declaration of Trust*, where applicable.

ARTICLE 10 DEPARTMENTS: The departments of this local church may be Christian Education, Youth Ministries, Men's Ministries, Women's Ministries, and Children's Ministries. The church board shall have authority to institute such other departments of this local church as deemed necessary from time to time.

ARTICLE 11 AMENDMENTS: This constitution may be amended at any annual congregational business meeting of this local church or at any special congregational business meeting duly called for that specific purpose, provided that a copy of the proposed amendment has been presented in writing to the church board and to the district superintendent at least 30 days before the date of the congregational business meeting, and providing that notice of said proposed amendment shall have been given in the announcements of the said congregational business meeting.

A copy of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be available to any voting member between the time of the announcement and the time of the congregational business meeting on application to the secretary of the church board.

An amendment to be adopted shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present and voting at the meeting. Such amendment shall not be contrary to the regulations of the General Conference or the *General Constitution and By-Laws* or district constitution and by-laws or *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws* of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, the applicable provincial laws, and the *Declaration of Trust*, where applicable.

BY-LAWS

BY-LAW 1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: A membership committee composed of the pastor and the church board shall receive applications for membership, shall make investigation relating thereto as it deems proper, and shall approve for admission into the local church those applicants who meet membership requirements.

1.2 PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

1.2.1 Application for membership shall be received on a signed application form whereby the applicant agrees to abide by the provisions of the *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws* including the terms of membership as stated in Article 6.1.

1.2.2 Applicants who have been approved by the membership committee for membership in this local church shall be publicly received into the local church (Galatians 2:9) and may receive a membership card. Membership may be reviewed annually by the membership committee.

1.2.3 Membership shall be renewed annually by each member signing a "Covenant Renewal" which shall be provided to the member before the last day of the last calendar year. Signed membership covenants shall be returned to the office by the second Sunday of January in the New Year. This will renew an individual's church membership for the current calendar year, subject to the member's continued agreement with membership guidelines.

1.3 TRANSFER: Members who move from another local church and desire to have their membership transferred should request a certificate or letter of transfer from the membership committee of the former local church for presentation to the membership committee of this local church. Members who move to another local church shall be given, upon written request, a certificate or letter of transfer by the membership committee of this local church.

1.4 DISMISSAL OF MEMBERSHIP: Grounds for dismissal of membership in this local church shall include the following:

1.4.1 VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

1.4.1.1 Voluntary withdrawal from membership in this local church or reception into the membership of another congregation;

1.4.1.2 Issuance of a transfer letter;

1.4.1.3 Absence from the regular services of the local church for three (3) consecutive months, upon issuance of a letter from the membership committee noting this voluntary withdrawal.

1.4.2 DISCIPLINARY DISMISSAL OF MEMBERSHIP: Upon the conclusion of disciplinary procedures according to By-Law 6 of the *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws* which finds a member responsible for a failure under the causes of disciplinary action.

BY-LAW 2 PASTOR AND CHURCH BOARD

2.1 PASTOR

2.1.1 APPOINTMENT AND CALL: A call shall be extended to a pastor when the pastor receives a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the ballots cast at a meeting duly convened for that purpose.

2.1.2 DUTIES: The pastor shall be considered the primary spiritual overseer of the local church and shall, with the church board, direct all of its activities. (The pastor shall consult with the church board regarding the ongoing health and wholeness of the congregation and to ensure the

appropriate ministries and programs are in place to accomplish the same.) The pastor shall arrange for all special meetings, missionary conventions or revival campaigns. The pastor shall act as chair of all the business meetings of the local church, and of the church board. The pastor shall be, ex officio, a member of all committees and departments. The pastor shall provide for all the services of the local church, and no person shall be invited to speak or preach in the local church without the approval of the pastor (and as provided in *General Constitution and By-Laws* 10.5.6). No congregational or church board meeting shall be held in the absence of the pastor without the written authorization of the pastor.

2.1.3 RESIGNATION: The pastor may resign by giving a minimum of one (1) month written notice to the congregation or to the church board by a letter addressed to the secretary of the board of the local church. The pastor must also immediately notify the district superintendent of this resignation.

2.1.4 VACANCY: When the pastorate becomes vacant, the district superintendent or the authorized representatives of the district superintendent shall be empowered to act in the full legal capacity of the pastor, who shall arrange to supply the pulpit with suitable pulpit ministry until such time as a new pastor has been duly installed.

2.1.5 PASTOR/CONGREGATION RELATIONSHIP: When difficulties have arisen between the pastor and the church board or congregation which do not involve the credentials of the pastor, but only the position as pastor, and which apparently cannot be resolved at the local level, the pastor, the church board or a quorum consisting of not fewer than one-third (1/3) of the regular members of the local church shall have the right to appeal to the district executive for help in resolving the impasse.

The refusal of a pastor to call a meeting of the church board shall constitute the board's right to appeal to the district executive.

If a satisfactory settlement cannot be reached, the district superintendent may call a congregational meeting, to be presided over by the district superintendent or the authorized representative of the district superintendent.

If the district superintendent, or their representative, calls for a vote of confidence in the pastor, the roster for the vote shall include only those members who held membership 60 days prior to the vote of confidence and shall exclude the pastor and members of the pastoral staff, as identified in the minutes of the leadership, and their spouses, who shall not be included in the quorum necessary to have a congregational meeting. The vote shall require a simple majority in support of the pastor, for the pastor to retain the position as pastor. If such is not achieved, the pastor's duties shall be terminated immediately, and the pastor shall be given a minimum of one (1) month salary but not more than three (3) months salary with benefits and the use of the parsonage during that period, or the regular housing allowance if the pastor is not living in the church parsonage. If the pastor has served for a period of a minimum of two (2) years and has failed to receive the required majority in the confidence vote, or has complied with a request from the church board to resign, the pastor shall be given a maximum of three (3) months salary with benefits and the use of the parsonage during that period, or the equivalent housing allowance if the pastor is not living in the church parsonage.

2.1.6 CHARGES INVOLVING CREDENTIALS: Charges in matters involving the pastor's right to hold credentials with The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, their morality, integrity or doctrinal soundness must be made to the district executive in writing, and properly signed by one who is willing to appear in person and give testimony concerning the charges. Charges thus preferred against a credential holder shall be dealt with according to provisions made in the *General Constitution and By-Laws* of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

In the event of a credential holder being charged under the *Criminal Code* and ministry is restricted; they shall continue to receive remuneration for a maximum of three (3) months.

2.2 OFFICERS

- 2.2.1 SECRETARY – TREASURER:** The secretary-treasurer shall be capable of performing such clerical duties as this office requires, and shall be appointed annually by the church board, and may be one (1) of its own members. The offices of secretary and treasurer may be filled by the same person, who may or may not be a member of the church board.
- 2.2.2 DUTIES – SECRETARY:** The secretary shall be custodian of the records of the various congregational meetings and shall record the same in record books provided for that purpose. The secretary shall preserve the records of the local church and prepare reports as directed by the church board.
- 2.2.3 DUTIES – TREASURER:** The treasurer shall be the custodian of the general funds of the local church and shall deposit the same in a chartered bank in the name of the local church, and shall disperse such funds as authorized by the church board. The treasurer shall ensure that an accurate record of accounts is kept, and shall present a financial statement at the annual congregational meeting and at any other time when requested to do so by the church board or the local church congregation. The books shall be reviewed before the annual congregational meeting by financially qualified individuals appointed by the church board.
- 2.2.4 DUTIES - OTHER OFFICERS:** Departmental officers' terms of reference shall be outlined in the departmental constitution, as adopted by this congregation.

2.3 CHURCH BOARD

2.3.1 QUALIFICATIONS: The qualifications for service on the church board shall be determined and approved in accordance with the policy of this local church, as guided by such scriptural provisions as are cited in Acts 6:3, I Timothy 3:8-13, and Titus 1:5-9. The official church board shall be comprised of members who are of good report and sound judgment, examples to the congregation in matters of stewardship, church attendance, and spiritual maturity, and seeking constantly, as sanctified vessels, to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; Ephesians 5:18).

2.3.2 DUTIES

2.3.2.1 The church board is chosen to serve the church with the pastor in matters pertaining to the operation of the local church. They shall assist in the ministry of its ordinances and shall act in the examination of applications for membership, and also in the administration of the discipline of the local church. They shall appoint a recording secretary from among their members to record the minutes of their meetings.

2.3.2.2 A majority present in any meeting of the church board shall constitute a quorum, provided that all the members have been notified to be present.

2.3.2.3 It shall be the duty of the church board to ensure that an adequate compensation package is provided for the pastor, together with suitable housing facilities. Suitable housing facilities shall be understood to mean an adequate dwelling in good repair, together with utilities such as heat, water, electricity and telephone or financial provision for such services, and a vehicle allowance. An annual salary review shall be made.

2.3.2.4 A majority of the church board shall have the right to ask the pastor to convene an official church board meeting.

2.3.2.5 Where there is need for trustees, the church board shall name at least three (3) of its members to act in that capacity.

2.3.2.6 The church board, with the pastor, shall meet regularly for the transaction of routine business for the local church, the time and place to be announced by the pastor

2.3.3 ACCOUNTABILITY

2.3.3.1 TO THE PASTOR: To support the pastor in his/her primary responsibility to his/her family; encourage and enable the pastor to a continual growth in leadership through

continuing education, development, courses, seminars, and resources; assure administrative excellence in financial reporting, strategic planning, communication, labour relations and other assigned duties; assist in creating and implementing a vision and strategy for the church; assist in the development of that church as a disciple-making, equipping community; ensure a global missions strategy and commitment; respect and understand mutual accountability (Rom. 1:8); and provide covering, care, and nurture for the pastor.

2.3.3.2 TO OTHER MEMBERS OF LEADERSHIP: Support the church board in their primary responsibility to their family; encourage and enable the church board to a continual growth in leadership through prescribed courses made available through The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada; assume responsibility for areas of expertise and giftedness to assure administrative excellence in the church; fulfill assigned duties as directed by the church board; assist in creating and implementing a vision and strategy for the church; assist in the development of the church as a disciple-making, equipping community; ensure that adequate resources are available for touching, reaching and discipling the community; ensure a global missions strategy and commitment; respect and understand mutual accountability (Rom. 1:8); and provide covering, care, and nurture for each member of the church board. It is expected that the church board will function in confidentiality and loyalty, and model personal discipleship, which will contribute to the well being, reputation, and respect of the entire church board.

2.3.3.3 TO THE CONGREGATION: Model healthy family life and teach family values; ensure that adequate resources are available for touching, reaching and discipling the community; ensure clear communication of the vision, strategy and needs to the congregation; ensure that an adequate membership process is in place (including education, ministry, accountability and discipline); assist the congregation in understanding their spiritual responsibility to serve, give, share and be involved; assist the congregation in understanding their responsibility to support the leadership in its vision and direction for the future and health of the church; and assist the congregation to understand its role in, and commitment to, the community, as an agency of grace and spiritual light.

2.3.3.4 TO THE COMMUNITY: Understand their role of modeling Christian values of grace, love and acceptance to the community; raising church awareness of the community's needs, and the responsibility of the church to the community; to pray for and encourage the leadership of the community; and uphold and communicate justice and truth in the community.

2.3.4 TERM OF OFFICE

2.3.4.1 The term of office of all lay members of the church board shall be for either one, two or three years, as determined by the local congregation. After a member has served for six consecutive years, the member will not be considered eligible to serve on the church board for a period of one (1) year.

2.3.4.2 Termination of membership on the church board shall occur if any board member, during the term of office, shall resign, move away, and cease to be a member of the congregation or be disqualified according to By-Law 1.4 of these by-laws. Provision is hereby made for the remaining members of the church board to appoint a successor until the next annual meeting.

2.3.5 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

2.3.5.1 Church board members shall not place themselves in a position where there is conflict of interest between their duties as board members and personal interests. Every board member who is in any way directly or indirectly interested in, or may become interested in, an existing or proposed contract, transaction, or arrangement with the church or who otherwise has a conflict of interest by virtue of involvement of a family member or the involvement of an employer, partner, business associate, or a corporation that the

member is involved with as either a director, shareholder, officer, employee, or agent, then such board member shall declare a conflict of interest fully at a meeting of the board and withdraw from any discussion or vote.

2.3.5.2 The pastor, who serves as a member of the church board, or any member of the pastoral staff, shall absent himself/herself from a board meeting when salary and allowance review is being considered.

BY-LAW 3 SELECTION OF CHURCH BOARD AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

3.1 NOMINATIONS

3.1.1 The nominating committee shall be comprised of the pastor and church board or a committee appointed by the church board, which shall be constituted of the pastor, one (1) board member and three (3) non-board members.

3.1.2 The nominating committee, after its appointment, shall invite submissions from members of the congregation, until 21 days prior to the annual congregational business meeting, or a longer period as approved by resolution of the membership and recorded in minutes of the congregation. The submissions shall be in writing, signed by the local church member, and submitted without the knowledge of the person.

3.1.3 It shall be the duty of the nominating committee to receive submissions for each office to be filled and, after determining if such individuals are qualified and willing to serve, shall present a slate of nominees for consideration at the congregational business meeting.

3.2 VOTING: All the elected officers of this local church, except the pastor, shall be declared elected upon receiving more than 50 percent of all votes cast for the office at the annual congregational business meeting. If the candidate is not elected on the first ballot, voting shall continue until an election is declared. If no election is declared as a result of the second election ballot, the name receiving the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated on each succeeding ballot.

When the church congregation is voting on business matters, a definite voting bar shall be made between those who are entitled to vote and those who are not so entitled. A member of the congregation wishing to challenge the right of another to vote may do so. In the event of such a challenge, a majority vote of the congregation shall decide.

3.2 APPOINTED OFFICES: It shall be the duty of the newly elected church board to fill all appointed offices for the ensuing year without delay.

3.3 ORDER OF BUSINESS: The regular order of business for the annual congregational business meeting of this local church shall be determined by the pastor and church board which may include such items as:

- Devotional
- Reading of previous minutes by the secretary
- Report of treasurer
- Report of committees
- Unfinished business
- Selection of officers
- New business
- Adjournment

3.4 QUORUM: Twenty-five (25) percent of the voting membership shall be required to constitute a quorum. Those members who by reasons of health are unable to regularly attend church meetings may be omitted from the quorum calculation.

3.5 PARLIAMENTARY ORDER: In order to expedite congregational business meetings this local church shall be governed by the spirit of Christian love and fellowship and by the accepted rules of parliamentary procedure as outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order*, or *Code Morin*.

BY-LAW 4 DEPARTMENTS: All departments of this local church shall be responsible to the pastor and the church board, and shall present annual reports to the annual congregational business meeting.

BY-LAW 5 MEETINGS

5.1 REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES: The time and place of the regular church services shall be determined by the church board and the pastor.

5.2 No member or any number of members shall call any private, secret, business or devotional meetings without the knowledge and consent of the church board and the pastor.

BY-LAW 6 DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION

6.1 NATURE AND PURPOSES OF DISCIPLINE: Discipline is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the local church is responsible. The aims of discipline are that God may be honoured, that the purity and welfare of the local church may be maintained, and that those under discipline may be brought to repentance and restoration.

Discipline is to be administered for the restoration of local church members, while fully providing for the protection and advancement of the spiritual welfare of our local churches. It is to be redemptive in nature as well as corrective, and is to be exercised as under a dispensation of both justice and mercy. The following shall be proceeded with only after all other avenues of Christian counsel and brotherly admonition have been attempted.

6.2 CAUSES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION: Any proven act or conduct which, in the opinion of the church board, after a full investigation of the evidence may be determined to be in contradiction of the actions and principles as stated in Article 6.1 of the *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws* may give just cause for disciplinary action by the church board. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, among such causes for action shall be:

6.2.1 Any moral failure involving sexual misconduct or sexual deviation (including, but not limited to adultery, homosexuality, incest, sexual assault, pornography and improper contact with the opposite sex).

6.2.2 Any moral or ethical failure other than sexual misconduct or any conduct unbecoming to a local church member (including, but not limited to deception, fraud, theft and assault).

6.2.3 Any act or action of a local church member, which is the cause of serious discord or dissension, with or without malicious intent (Romans 16:17, 18; Proverbs 6:19).

6.2.4 The propagation of doctrines and practices contrary to those set forth in the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

6.3 INITIATIVE

6.3.1 AUTHORITY: Occasions sometimes arise which make it necessary to deal with local church members who have reached the place where, in the opinion of the church board, endorsement can no longer be given. The church board, which has the authority to approve church membership, also has the right to withdraw their approval and to dismiss church membership.

6.3.2 CHURCH BOARD RESPONSIBILITY: The church board is responsible to deal with allegations of misconduct according to the *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws*.

In the event that the church board finds itself compromised in any manner, or appearing to lack impartiality, it shall have the right to appoint a substitute committee to hear charges against a church member.

6.3.3 STATEMENT OF CONDUCT: Should a local church member admit to, or confess to a wrongdoing or misconduct to the board, such as should require disciplinary action, then the church board shall exercise discretion as to the appropriate form of discipline.

6.3.4 REPORTS, RUMOURS OR COMPLAINTS: Should there be reports, rumours or complaints, written or unwritten, which appear to be persistent, serious, becoming publicly known and posing a detriment to the testimony of the individual or church, then the pastor shall use their judgment to discuss the matter with the member being accused, always in the presence of a member of the church board. The pastor and board member shall exercise their discretion as to whether or not to commence an official investigation.

6.3.5 INVESTIGATION OF REPORTS OR COMPLAINTS OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS: Written and signed allegations of violations under By-Law 6.2 by a local church member shall be investigated. The pastor shall appoint two (2) members of the church board to investigate the allegation, having in mind that it is their responsibility to safeguard the member, the local church and the fellowship. This shall be done to determine the credibility of the allegation.

6.3.5.1 Signed written allegations shall be filed with the Pastor and/or a member of the church board, by the complainant(s) describing the alleged violations.

6.3.5.2 The persons making the allegation shall be interviewed in order to ascertain the facts in the case and the reasons underlying the allegation.

6.3.5.3 The accused local church member shall be given an opportunity to be interviewed to discuss the allegation.

6.3.5.4 Should a local church member, when presented with the allegations, acknowledge a wrongdoing that requires disciplinary action, then the Pastor or the Pastor's designate shall report the acknowledgment of wrongdoing to the church board who shall initiate appropriate disciplinary action and a restoration program.

6.3.5.5 Should the local church member deny the allegations made, the investigators shall determine if the evidence merits a disciplinary hearing.

6.3.5.6 Where an accused local church member serves in a leadership capacity in the local church, such ministry may be restricted during the investigation at the discretion of the Pastor.

6.3.6 LEGAL CHARGES

6.3.6.1 Where a local church member has been legally charged under the *Criminal Code*:

6.3.6.1.1 No disciplinary procedures will be followed until the legal proceedings, including appeal, have run their course.

6.3.6.1.2 Continuing involvement in the local church leadership may be subject to restriction during the time of the legal proceedings at the discretion of the church board.

6.3.6.1.3 In the event ministry is restricted, the credential holder charged under the *Criminal Code* shall continue to receive remuneration for a maximum of three (3) months.

6.3.6.1.4 A guilty verdict of a local church member following the legal proceedings, including appeal, shall automatically precipitate disciplinary procedures by the church board.

6.3.6.1.5 Local church members may be eligible for participation in a restoration program upon request for reconciliation.

6.3.6.2 Should the allegations against the local church member be one of a violation which is required by law to be reported (including, but not limited to, offences against minors), the church board shall report the accused to the appropriate legal authorities and delay their own investigation, until the appropriate legal authorities have opportunity to investigate.

6.3.7 PREPARATION AND FILING OF CHARGES: Allegations shall only be investigated when they have been made in writing, dated and signed by the complainant.

If, after due investigation, it is determined that a disciplinary hearing should occur, charges should be filed with the church board.

The person against whom charges have been filed shall be informed by registered mail of the charges at least 15 days before being called to appear before the church board for a disciplinary hearing. The hearing shall take place within 40 days of formal charges being delivered to the local church member, or the entire proceeding shall be rescinded. A copy of the charges shall be sent to the district superintendent.

The said local church member may be relieved immediately from local church involvement upon being notified of the charges.

6.3.8 DISPOSITION OF ALLEGATIONS

6.3.8.1 If written allegations are made and signed, but the investigators conclude under the guidelines of the *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws* that no reason exists for a hearing, then the matter shall be dropped.

6.3.8.2 The pastor, or the pastor's appointee, may seek to counsel all parties involved and to bring to an end any continuation of rumours or conflicts related to the matter.

6.3.8.3 The complainant shall be informed in writing that the investigation has been concluded and the allegations dismissed.

6.3.8.4 There shall be no record of the investigation kept.

6.3.8.5 The church member shall be informed in writing that the investigation of the allegations has concluded and no charges have been laid.

6.3.9 DISCIPLINARY HEARING: In the event the investigators find the charges merit a hearing they shall request the pastor to arrange for a disciplinary hearing by the church board for the accused local church member. The local church member shall be requested to appear at the hearing.

To ensure the ability of the hearing committee to render an impartial judgment, no member of the church board of the local church may sit on the hearing committee when they have been party to the details of the investigation or any event or incident related to the alleged offence.

The pastor may attend the hearing as an observer but shall not participate nor be present when a vote is taken in the decision as to guilt or innocence. The role of the pastor is to be redemptive to all parties involved.

If the accused local church member refuses to appear at the hearing to offer a defence, the hearing will proceed and the accused member may be disciplined if found guilty of the charges preferred.

6.3.9.1 CHAIR: A member of the hearing committee shall be appointed by the pastor to serve as chair.

The chair of the hearing committee along with the pastor shall prepare an agenda and arrange for all matters of the hearing.

The chair shall appoint a recording secretary from the membership of the hearing committee.

6.3.9.2 ROLE OF INVESTIGATORS

6.3.9.2.1 The investigators shall bring a report to the hearing and offer evidence as discovered during the investigation procedures.

6.3.9.2.2 They shall not participate nor be present when a vote is taken in the decision as to guilt or innocence.

6.3.9.2.3 No evidence or comment regarding the evidence shall be given by the investigators or accusers in the absence of the accused local church member, unless the accused local church member has failed to, or has refused to, appear at the hearing.

6.3.9.3 LOCAL CHURCH MEMBER'S SUPPORT: The accused local church member shall have the right to have a member of this local church present for support but not as an active participant in the hearing process. The supporting person may be the spouse of the accused local church member.

Legal counsel shall not be present for either side at the hearing.

6.3.9.4 The agenda and proceedings shall provide sufficient opportunity for the complainant and complainee to speak, offer evidence, cross examine, present witnesses, and to make a summation statement. It will be the role of the hearing committee to question and make inquiry of the participants and to seek to have all the facts, evidence and testimony duly presented and examined to ensure an objective decision.

6.3.9.5 The verdict shall be made by secret ballot in the absence of investigators, the complainant and the supporting member if present and the complainee. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote shall be required to determine guilt.

6.3.9.6 If it has been determined that guilt has been established, discipline shall be administered prayerfully and in the fear of God, in accordance with the Scriptures and as set forth in the *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws*.

6.3.9.7 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE VERDICT

6.3.9.7.1 The verdict shall be communicated to the pastor and placed in the minutes of the church board. If the verdict is one of guilt, then the minutes of the hearing and any other relevant documents shall be maintained in a confidential file until the disciplinary process has been completed.

6.3.9.7.2 The pastor shall communicate the verdict in writing to the local church member and the complainant within five (5) days of the decision of the hearing committee.

6.3.9.7.3 If a guilty verdict is reached, the local church member shall be informed in writing of the right and process of appeal.

6.3.9.7.4 If the verdict is one of not guilty, then no record of the hearing shall be maintained.

6.3.10 DISCIPLINE: A local church member who has been found guilty of violating or who has confessed in writing to having violated any of the principles set forth in the *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws*, shall be subject to disciplinary action by the church board.

Said discipline shall be administered in brotherly love and kindness. The church board shall weigh decisions on the basis of the offence itself.

A local church member who has confessed to, or been found guilty of, the charges may have their membership placed on probation, or suspended.

A local church member who refuses to enter the restoration program and does not complete the same shall have their membership dismissed.

6.3.11 RIGHT OF APPEAL: The local church member shall have the right of appeal. The purpose of the appeal is to examine the process and the judgment rendered.

Any appeal of the decision by the hearing committee must be made in writing within 30 days of receiving the decision of the committee to the secretary of the church board. The church board shall request the district superintendent to appoint a committee to hear the appeal.

The appeal will be heard within 60 days of receiving the request for an appeal in writing.

The accused person will be present at this appeal, but if the accused person neglects or refuses to attend the hearing, it may proceed in the absence of the accused person. The decision of this appeal committee will be final.

The decision of the appeal committee will be communicated in writing to the church member by the chair of the appeal committee within five (5) days of the appeal hearing.

Legal counsel shall not be present for either side at the appeal hearing, nor in any other investigative or disciplinary hearing provided for in these by-laws.

6.3.12 RESTORATION: In the event a local church member who has been found guilty of offence shows repentance and indicates a desire for continued fellowship with the local church, the church board shall determine an appropriate restoration program, which would have in view the completion of a suspension period or the reinstatement of membership as applicable.

The program of restoration shall be administered in brotherly love and kindness.

The restoration program may include limitations of ministry involvement during the term of restoration.

6.3.13 REINSTATEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP: Persons who have had their membership suspended and have successfully completed the restoration program may apply for reinstatement of membership by communicating their request to the secretary of the church board.

6.3.14 WAIVER OF CLAIM: Notwithstanding the provisions hereinbefore contained, certificates of membership of this local church shall be issued upon the condition that suspension of the member and withdrawal of the certificate of membership in the manner herein provided shall not give the suspended member cause for legal action against the pastor or any member taking part in the suspension proceedings; and the acceptance of the certificate of membership or fellowship in this local church shall be evidence of a waiver by the member of all rights of action, causes of action, and all claims and demands against the local church or any member or officer of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada by virtue of suspension proceedings and withdrawal of the certificate of membership or fellowship in this local church under the foregoing provision.

BY-LAW 7 RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRIVILEGES OF AFFILIATION

7.1 Accepting our responsibility under the great commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, as stated in Matthew 28

and Mark 16, this local church shall support the missionary program and policy of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, and shall take one (1) missionary offering each month for this purpose.

7.2 Recognizing the responsibility of this local church to adequately provide for those who are employed in pastoral and staff services to this local church, including adequate provision for current ministry and future retirement support; and recognizing that The Pension Fund (1969) of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada exists to serve retired ministers, missionaries, and employees of local church, as an affiliated local church, the church board shall ensure that each credentialed pastor and qualifying local church employee shall regularly participate in a retirement income plan such as The Pension Fund (1969) of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, and the local church shall match the contributions of its employees in accordance with Canadian pension legislation and regulations.

7.3 Recognizing the important services rendered to this congregation by the international and district offices of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, this local church shall support the ministry and fellowship services of the international and district offices, the international missions objectives of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Bible college serving this district, and other responsibilities as may be determined by the General Conference of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

This shall be done in accordance with the General Conference resolution that each local church forward an amount equal to ten (10) percent of its general fund offerings (does not include missionary offerings, building fund, or any other special fund) to the district office at regular intervals to support the ministry and fellowship services. The district office will forward ten (10) percent from these funds to the International Office for ministry and fellowship services.

7.4 This local church assumes the responsibilities of paying the moving expenses of an incoming pastor and the elected pastor's expenses incidental to attending the district conference and to any district-sponsored convention held for the benefit of its ministers.

7.5 FINANCES

7.5.1 This local church, prior to the making of application for loan from any source or incurring indebtedness on a purchase plan or otherwise when repayment is not to be made in full within 12 months of the date of the intended loan or where the intended indebtedness, together with all other indebtedness of the said local church, in the aggregate will exceed ten (10) percent of the total amount of the previous year's gross revenues, then the local church shall consult with and obtain the approval of the district executive before proceeding with the requirements of By-Law 7.5.2 hereof.

7.5.2 This local church shall then obtain the approval of its congregation to the proposed action by resolution, passed at a duly called special or regular annual congregational business meeting.

7.5.3 If the property title of the local church is held in trust by The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, according to the terms of the *Declaration of Trust*, the local church may be eligible to negotiate a Pension Fund mortgage with the International Office or receive investment funds from the district office. Exceptions may be made when deemed appropriate.

A district office shall have the option of lodging a lien with the International Office where the title is being held or when registering a mortgage in the regional land titles office on the title of the local church for the amount of money invested in the local church by the district office. In the event a lien is lodged against the said property at the International Office, the executive officers who have the constitutional right to bind the corporation shall provide a written undertaking to the district office that the title of the said local church shall not be released without the written consent of the district office.

7.6 The district executive has the privilege to create policies which will allow local churches to request care and intervention from time to time.

BY-LAW 8 AMENDMENTS: These by-laws may be amended at any annual congregational business

meeting of this local church or any special congregational business meeting duly called for that specific purpose, provided that a copy of the proposed amendment has been presented in writing to the church board and to the district superintendent at least 30 days before the date of the business meeting, and providing that notice of said proposed amendment shall have been given in the announcements of the said business meeting.

A copy of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be available to any voting member between the time of announcement and the time of the congregational business meeting on application to the secretary of the church board.

An amendment to be adopted shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote. Such amendment shall not be contrary to the regulations of the General Conference or *General Constitution and By-Laws* or district constitution and by-laws or *Local Church Constitution and By-Laws* of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, or contrary to the *Declaration of Trust*, where applicable.

STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL AND ESSENTIAL TRUTHS

Article 5 of the *General Constitution and By-Laws* Adopted by General Conference, 1994

PREAMBLE

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada stands firmly in the mainstream of historical Christianity. It takes the Bible as its all-sufficient source of faith and practice, and subscribes to the historic creeds of the universal church. In common with historical, evangelical Christianity, it emphasizes Christ as Saviour and coming King. It also presents Christ as Healer, and it adopts the distinctive position that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence when Christ baptizes in the Holy Spirit (See Article 5.6.3).

5.1 HOLY SCRIPTURES: All Scripture is given by inspiration of God¹ by which we understand the whole Bible to be inspired in the sense that holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the very words of Scripture.² Divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the original writings. The whole Bible in the original is, therefore, without error and, as such, is infallible, absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and practice.³

The Bible does not simply contain the Word of God, but is, in reality, the complete revelation and very Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. Christian believers today receive spiritual illumination to enable them to understand the Scriptures,⁴ but God does not grant new revelations that are contrary or additional to inspired biblical truth.⁵

5.2 THE GODHEAD: The Godhead exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, having the same nature and attributes and are worthy of the same homage, confidence and obedience.⁶

5.2.1 THE FATHER: The Father exists eternally as the Creator of heaven and earth, the Giver of the Law, to whom all things will be subjected, so that He may be all in all.⁷

5.2.2 THE SON: The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of the Father, is true God and true man.⁸ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,⁹ and by His sinless life, miracles and teaching, gave full revelation of the Father.¹⁰

He died upon the cross, the Just for the unjust, as a substitution sacrifice.¹¹ He rose from the dead.¹² He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest.¹³ He will come again to establish His kingdom in righteousness and peace.¹⁴

5.2.3 THE HOLY SPIRIT: The Holy Spirit is also God, performing actions and possessing the attributes of Deity.¹⁵ His personality is shown by the fact that He has personal characteristics and that individuals may relate to Him as a person.¹⁶

¹ 2 Tim. 3:16,17

² 2 Pet. 1:20,21

³ Psa. 119:160a; Matt. 5:17,18

⁴ 1 Cor. 2:12-14

⁵ Prov. 30:5,6

⁶ Matt. 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14

⁷ Gen. 1:1; 1 Cor. 15:28

⁸ John 1:1,14; 10:30; 17; Phil. 2:6,7; Heb. 1:8

⁹ Luke 1:26-35

¹⁰ John 12:49; Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26

¹¹ Rom. 5:6,8; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:18

¹² Matt. 28:6; 1 Cor. 15:4,20

¹³ Acts 1:9-11; 2:33; Heb. 8:1

¹⁴ Matt. 25:31

¹⁵ Acts 5:3,4

¹⁶ John 16:13-14

5.3 ANGELS

5.3.1 CLASSIFICATION: Angels were created as intelligent and powerful beings to do the will of God and worship Him.¹ However, Satan, the originator of sin, fell through pride and was followed by those angels who rebelled against God. These fallen angels or demons are active in opposing the purposes of God.²

Those who remained faithful continue before the throne of God and serve as ministering spirits.³

5.3.2 THE BELIEVER AND DEMONS: Demons attempt to thwart God's purposes; however, in Christ, the believer may have complete liberty from the influence of demons.⁴ He cannot be possessed by them because his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit in which Christ dwells as Lord.⁵

5.4 MAN: Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God.⁶ He fell through sin and, as a consequence, incurred both spiritual and physical death.⁷ Spiritual death and the depravity of human nature have been transmitted to the entire human race⁸ with the exception of the Man Christ Jesus.⁹ Man can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁰

5.5 SALVATION

5.5.1 ATONEMENT OF CHRIST: Salvation has been provided for all men through the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.¹¹ It is the only perfect redemption and substitution atonement for all the sins of the world, both original and actual. His atoning work has been proven by His resurrection from the dead.¹² Those who repent and believe in Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and receive eternal life.¹³ Furthermore, in the atonement, divine healing was provided for all believers.¹⁴

5.5.2 REPENTANCE AND FAITH: Man can be born again only through faith in Christ. Repentance, a vital part of believing, is a complete change of mind wrought by the Holy Spirit,¹⁵ turning a person to God from sin.

5.5.3 REGENERATION: Regeneration is a creative work of the Holy Spirit by which man is born again and receives spiritual life.¹⁶

5.5.4 JUSTIFICATION: Justification is a judicial act of God by which the sinner is declared righteous solely on the basis of his acceptance of Christ as Saviour.¹⁷

5.6 THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

5.6.1 ASSURANCE: Assurance of salvation is the privilege of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ,¹⁸ resulting in love, gratitude and obedience toward God.

¹ Psa. 103:20; Rev. 5:11,12

² Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; Eph. 6:11,12; 1 Tim. 4:1; Jude 6

³ Heb. 1:14

⁴ Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; 4:1-4

⁵ Matt. 6:24; 1 Cor. 6:19,20

⁶ Gen. 1:26,27

⁷ Rom. 5:12; James 1:14,15

⁸ Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-19,23

⁹ Heb. 7:26

¹⁰ John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5,6

¹¹ Isa. 53:3-6; John 12:32,33; 1 Pet. 2:24

¹² Acts 2:36; Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:14,17,20; Heb. 10:12; 1 John 2:2

¹³ Acts 20:21; 1 Pet. 1:23,25

¹⁴ Isa. 53:4,5; Matt. 8:16b, 17

¹⁵ Isa. 55:7; Acts. 17:30; Gal. 3:22,26; Eph. 2:8; 1 John 5:10-13

¹⁶ John 3:3b,5b,7; 2 Cor. 5:17 - 18a; 1 Pet. 1:23

¹⁷ Rom. 3:24; 4:3-5; 5:1-2

¹⁸ John 10:27-29; Rom. 8:35-39

5.6.2 SANCTIFICATION: Sanctification is dedication to God and separation from evil.¹ In experience it is both instantaneous² and progressive.³ It is produced in the life of the believer by his appropriation of the power of Christ's blood and risen life through the person of the Holy Spirit;⁴ He draws the believer's attention to Christ, teaches him through the Word and produces the character of Christ within him.⁵ Believers who sin must repent and seek forgiveness through faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.⁶

5.6.3 BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT: The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience in which the believer yields control of himself to the Holy Spirit.⁷ Through this he comes to know Christ in a more intimate way,⁸ and receives power to witness and grow spiritually.⁹ Believers should earnestly seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁰ The initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.¹¹ This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the experience of the new birth.¹²

5.6.4 THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural abilities given by God through the exercising of which believers are enabled to minister effectively and directly in particular situations.¹³ They serve the dual function of building up the church, and of demonstrating the presence of God within His church.¹⁴

5.6.5 DIVINE HEALING: Divine healing provided in the atonement of Christ¹⁵ is the privilege of all believers. Prayer for the sick and gifts of healing are encouraged and practised.¹⁶

5.7 THE CHURCH

5.7.1 THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH: All who are born again are members of the universal church, which is the Body and Bride of Christ.¹⁷

5.7.2 THE LOCAL CHURCH

5.7.2.1 PURPOSE: The local church is a body of believers in Christ who have joined together to function as a part of the universal church.¹⁸ The local church is ordained by God and provides a context in which believers corporately worship God,¹⁹ observe the ordinances of the church, are instructed in the faith and are equipped for the evangelization of the world.²⁰

5.7.2.2 ORDINANCES

5.7.2.2.1 THE LORD'S SUPPER: The Lord's Supper is a symbol, memorial and proclamation of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. This ordinance of communion is to be participated in by believers until Christ's return.²¹

¹ 2 Cor. 6:14; 7:1

² John 17:17,19; Heb. 10:10,14

³ 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Tim. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 1:14-16

⁴ Rom. 6:11,13,14,18

⁵ 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:22,23; 2 Pet. 1:3-4

⁶ 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2

⁷ Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; Eph. 5:18

⁸ John 16:13-15

⁹ Acts 2:1-4; 9:17, 39, 1Cor.14:18

¹⁰ Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8

¹¹ 2Cor.3:18; Acts 1:8

¹² Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46

¹³ 1 Cor. 12:4-11

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 12:7; 14:12, 24-25

¹⁵ Matt. 8:16,17

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 12:28-30; James 5:14

¹⁷ 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:25b; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:15

¹⁸ Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 16:19

¹⁹ John 4:23; Acts 20:7

²⁰ Acts 1:8; 11:19-24; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:2

²¹ Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-26

5.7.2.2 WATER BAPTISM: Water baptism signifies the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection and is practised by immersion.¹

5.7.2.3 MINISTRY: A divinely called and ordained ministry is the provision of the Lord to give leadership to the church as it fulfils its purposes.²

5.8 THE END OF TIME

5.8.1 THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DEAD: At death the souls of the believers pass immediately into the presence of Christ,³ and these remain in constant bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body.⁴ The souls of the unbelievers remain after death conscious of condemnation⁵ until the final bodily resurrection and judgment of the unjust.⁶

5.8.2 THE RAPTURE: The rapture, the blessed hope of the church, is the imminent coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself His own, both the living who shall be transformed, and the dead in Christ who shall be resurrected.⁷ This event takes place before the wrath of God is poured out during the tribulation. Believers then will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged according to faithfulness in Christian service.⁸

5.8.3 THE TRIBULATION: The tribulation will be a time of judgment on the whole earth.⁹ During this period the Antichrist will emerge to offer false hope to the nations.¹⁰

5.8.4 THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: The return of Christ to earth in power and great glory will conclude the great tribulation with the victory at Armageddon,¹¹ the defeat of Antichrist and the binding of Satan.¹² Christ will introduce the millennial age,¹³ restore Israel to her own land, lift the curse which now rests upon the whole creation, and bring the whole world to the knowledge of God.¹⁴

5.8.5 THE FINAL JUDGMENT: There will be a final judgment in which the unbelieving dead will be raised and judged at the great white throne, according to their works.¹⁵

The beast and false prophet, the devil and his angels, and whoever is not found in the Book of Life, shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to annihilation but to everlasting punishment, which is the second death.¹⁶

5.8.6 THE ETERNAL STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS: The righteous will share the glory of God in the new heaven and the new earth for eternity.¹⁷

¹ Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38,41; 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3-5

² Acts 6:2b-4c; 13:2-4a; 14:23; Eph. 4:8,11-13

³ 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21,23-24

⁴ Rom. 8:22,23; 1 Cor. 15:42-44; 2 Cor. 5:1,4b

⁵ Luke 16:22-31; John 3:36

⁶ Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:11-15

⁷ 1 Cor. 15:51-57; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:13

⁸ Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10

⁹ Matt. 24:15,21-22; 1 Thess. 5:1-3

¹⁰ 2 Thess. 2:3-12; Rev. 13:11-18

¹¹ Matt. 24:27,30; Luke 17:24,26-30

¹² Rev. 16:12-16; 17:8,12-14; 19:11-20

¹³ Psa. 2:6-12; Dan. 2:44-45; Luke 22:29-30; Rev. 3:21; 20:6

¹⁴ Isa. 1:24-27; 2:1-4; Zech. 14:3,4,9; Rom. 8:19-23; Rev. 22:3

¹⁵ Dan. 7:9-10; John 12:48; Rom. 2:2,6,11,16; Rev. 14:9-11; 20:11-15

¹⁶ Matt. 25:41b; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10,15; 21:8

¹⁷ Matt. 13:43; John 17:24; 2 Pet. 3:13; Heb. 11:10; Rev. 21:1-2,10,22-23

5.9 POSITIONS AND PRACTICES

5.9.1 MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY: Marriage is a provision of God wherein one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others enter into a lifelong relationship¹ through a marriage ceremony that is recognized by the church and legally sanctioned by the state.

Marriage establishes a "one-flesh" relationship², that goes beyond a physical union and is more than either a temporary relationship of convenience intended to provide personal pleasure or a contract that binds two people together in a legal partnership. Marriage establishes an emotional and spiritual oneness that enables both partners to respond to the spiritual, physical and social needs of the other.³ It provides the biblical context for the procreation of children.

Marriage is to be an exclusive relationship that is maintained in purity.⁴ It is intended by God to be a permanent relationship. It is a witness to the world of the relationship between Christ and His Church.⁵

Marriage requires a commitment of love, perseverance and faith. Because of its sanctity and permanence, marriage should be treated with seriousness and entered into only after counsel and prayer for God's guidance. Christians should marry only those who are believers.⁶ An individual who becomes a believer after marriage should remain with his/her partner in peace, and should give witness to the Gospel in the home.⁷

The Bible holds family life as a position of trust and responsibility. The home is a stabilizing force in society, a place of nurture, counsel, and safety for children.⁸

Marriage can only be broken by *porneia* which is understood as marital unfaithfulness⁹ involving adultery, homosexuality, or incest. While the Scriptures give evidence that the marriage vow and "one-flesh" union are broken by such acts and therefore recognize the breaking of the marriage relationship, the Scriptures do recommend that the most desirable option would be reconciliation.¹⁰

5.9.2 DIVORCE: We believe that divorce is not God's intention. It is God's concession to the "hardness of men's hearts."¹¹

We, therefore, discourage divorce by all lawful means and teaching. Our objective is reconciliation and the healing of the marriage union where possible. Marital unfaithfulness should not be considered so much an occasion or opportunity for divorce but rather an opportunity for Christian grace, forgiveness, and restoration. Divorce in our society is a termination of a marriage through a legal process authorized by the State. While the Church recognizes this legal process as an appropriate means to facilitate the permanent separation of spouses, the Church restricts the idea of divorce, in the sense of dissolution of marriage, to reasons specified in Scripture.

The weight of the biblical record is negative and the explicit statement is made, "God hates divorce."¹² Divorce is more than an action of the courts which breaks the legal contract between partners in a marriage. It is also the fracture of a unique human relationship between a male and a female. Divorce has profound consequences for the children. Divorce is evidence of the sinful

¹ Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:6

² Matt. 19:5; Mal. 2:15

³ Gen. 2:18; 1 Cor. 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4

⁴ Eph. 5:3,26,27

⁵ Eph. 5:25,31,32

⁶ 2 Cor. 6:14,15

⁷ 1 Cor. 7:12-14,16

⁸ Eph. 6:4

⁹ Matt. 5:32; 19:9

¹⁰ Eph. 4:32

¹¹ Matt. 19:8

¹² Mal. 2:16

nature expressed in human failure. Jesus gives one explicit cause for the dissolution of marriage: *porneia* or marital unfaithfulness.

Where all attempts at reconciliation have failed and a divorce has been finalized, we extend Christ's love and compassion.

5.9.3 REMARRIAGE: Remarriage is the union, legally sanctioned by the State, of one man and one woman, one or both of whom have been previously married. It is regarded as acceptable in Scripture in the event of the death of a former spouse. It is also regarded as acceptable if there has been sexual immorality on the part of the former partner or if the former partner has remarried.

5.9.4 TITHING: Tithing was divinely instituted by God under the old covenant and was compulsory upon the people who worshiped God.¹ Under the new covenant we are not bound by arbitrary laws; but the principles of right and wrong, as expressed by the law, are fulfilled in the believer's life through grace. Grace should produce as much as, or more than, law demanded. Regular systematic giving is clearly taught in the New Testament. It is known as the grace of giving.² The gauge or rule of this systematic giving is defined in the Old Testament, known as the law of tithing. All Christians should conscientiously and systematically tithe their income to God.

¹ Lev. 27:30-32; Mal. 3:10

² 2 Cor. 9:6-15