

Governing Policies and Procedures

WILLINGDON 
CHURCH

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I. The History of Willingdon Church

Foreword

Willingdon Church is founded on Jesus Christ. It is a church mobilized by the power of His gospel. Proclaiming the cross, upholding scripture, and believing God in all circumstances characterizes the church – where faith allows the church to build upon truth, to offer hope to others in need, and to witness changed lives, strengthened families and personal growth. Its mission is to know Jesus Christ personally and to carry on His ministry.

Situated in the heart of Burnaby suburbs and home to over 10,000 in its community, Willingdon Church was once known as “the small brown church in the wildwood.” It was born out of the vision of 116 individuals who united to share the gospel of Christ with their community.

The 1950’s pressured the Vancouver Mennonite Brethren Church, the city’s only MB church, to expand its reaches in order to accommodate the rising number of European immigrants. Unable to develop at its location at Prince Edward Island Street and 43rd Avenue, the church planted several new churches, one of which was Willingdon M.B. Church in the spring of 1961.

However, the prevailing desire that led the church founders to plant Willingdon was their passion to proclaim the gospel to their city. The church purchased an empty lot at 4812 Willingdon Avenue and built a 450-seat sanctuary for a total of \$78,000. Willingdon’s property, which was once just a farmland, is now the geographic centre of the Vancouver Lower Mainland.

The 1960’s: The Church with a Vision

Willingdon Church held its first service on April 30, 1961 with 116 members, a 25-person choir, and 137 children attending Sunday school under the interim leadership of George Letkemen. Reverend Jacob Thiessen gave the first sermon. Motivated by their desire to minister in Burnaby, Willingdon’s founding families traveled long distances from their Vancouver homes to plant the church with former staff of Vancouver M.B. Church, including the Assistant Pastor, Sunday School Superintendent, Youth Leader, Choir Conductor, Church Secretary, Registrar, and both Treasurers participating in Willingdon’s founding. This enabled the church to run a full program from its inception.

Willingdon held its initial services in German. However, the congregation’s desire to engage its neighbours with the gospel motivated the church to change services to English. In 1962, George and Carol Braun accepted the position as Willingdon’s senior pastoral leadership. During this period Willingdon also purchased an adjacent one-acre lot where the church built a parsonage. After Pastor George’s resignation in 1966, Willingdon hired Isaac and Anna Redekop in 1968 to take over church leadership. In 1970, he resigned from the position due to health problems. George Letkemen again assumed interim pastoral leadership.

Willingdon’s first ministries included many children and youth programs to serve the younger to middle-aged families that made up the majority of the congregation. These programs included Pioneer Girls and The Christian Service Brigade for boys. Willingdon connect to families through neighbourhood children who participated in these programs, seeking friendships with their neighbours and often sharing meals with these families. God enabled members to witness the gospel and the love of Christ, and see Him transform lives as He grew Willingdon Church.

Its vision, devotion to scriptural teaching, passionate worship, prayer, and faith during uncertainty began to define Willingdon as an early church; God filled its congregation with a sense of unity and family. The average attendance during the first decade was 200.

The 1970's: The Church is Strengthened

The 1970s marked a period where God strengthened Willingdon's leadership and core ministries.

In 1971, Herbert and Adeline Neufeld accepted Willingdon's senior pastorate. Under his leadership, the church established Home Bible Studies, with an initial 12 studies and nearly 120 members. This strengthened church fellowship, encouraging personal growth and church unity. Some referred to the Bible studies as the 'heart' of the church which represents Willingdon's early Small Groups.

During a pastors' retreat in 1977, God led Willingdon to establish elder leadership guided by scripture given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The intentional approach to selecting church leaders reinforced Willingdon's solidarity by centralizing leadership with a group of elders. Elders prayerfully sought God's vision for the church, holding each other accountable and responsible for the spiritual growth of Willingdon and its members.

Pastor Herb strengthened Willingdon's missional focus by forming church outreach goals. By 1978 Willingdon added a Minister of Evangelism and Visitation to its pastoral staff. Willingdon's Music Ministry conducted several outreach events, including one youth musical performed by 100 singers at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre to an audience near capacity.

Willingdon hired its first Youth Director in 1971 and a Minister of Youth in 1972. In 1972 church members designed and built the Christian Education Wing for its Sunday School, which trained children, youth, and adults in biblical studies. By 1978, Willingdon offered nine adult classes emphasizing evangelism, teaching, and discipleship. Willingdon founded its Children's Church program in 1974 and a ministry to single adults called Positive Christian Singles in 1977.

In 1976, the church added a second Sunday service as attendance rose. The elder leadership and Home Bible Studies network formed during the 1970s set Willingdon on a course for growth, first spiritually, then numerically. The average attendance during the 1970s reached 360.

The 1980's: The Church Multiplies

Out of the prayer-led desire to double church attendance within six years, Willingdon constructed and completed a renovation that included its 1250-seat sanctuary in 1982. The generosity of its members made the project debt-free, despite the construction taking place during a period of high inflation with interest rates over 18%.

In 1983, Willingdon formed its Counseling Ministry which directed a program called Careline, a phone service available to the Vancouver community for people seeking social and spiritual support. Willingdon founded its Mom's Place program in 1988 to provide shelter and personal care to young women who decided to carry their babies to term as an alternative to abortion.

During the decade, Willingdon also formed its Ministry to the Deaf in 1982, New Horizon's Seniors Ministry in 1984, Spanish Ministry in 1985, Young Adults ministries in 1985, and Korean Ministry in 1988.

By 1983, Willingdon developed a two-year curriculum called "Training for Discipleship" for its Adult Sunday School class in Christian Basics, Old Testament Studies, New Testament Studies, Christian Living, and Christian Ministry.

Pastor Carlin and Marcia Weinbauer joined Willingdon in 1984 as the church's Minister of Leadership Development. He became Willingdon's senior pastor after Herb Neufeld resigned in 1986.

Church attendance rose faithfully through the 1980s. In 1986 Willingdon helped plant Cornerstone Church in Surrey as well as Hyde Creek Church in Coquitlam in 1989. Only six years after the completion of Willingdon's renovation, church attendance reached the seating capacity of its sanctuary. Church Elders again sought to

accommodate Willingdon's growing membership, pursuing alternate properties in the Lower Mainland. However, God clearly directed the church to instead expand its current facility for the third time. The building project, known as "Vision for Ministry", began in 1990.

God worked in Willingdon's ministries to touch lives and call people into His church. Attendance reached an average of 1400 by the end of the decade, exceeding the church's vision to double membership and attendance.

The 1990's: The Church Diversifies

Willingdon completed its building project in 1992, adding the chapel, gymnasium, kitchen, multiple classrooms, renovated sanctuary and renovated offices. Throughout the 1990s, the church formed many of its international language ministries, including its Cantonese, Japanese, Mandarin, Indonesian, and Russian ministries. Each of Willingdon's language ministries began through the initiative of a church member who desired to reach their countrymen living in Vancouver. This led Willingdon to engage the ethnic diversity of the city. International ministries translate sermons live to the sanctuary to unite members of different languages into one church congregation. Both the Spanish and Indonesian ministries went on to plant their own churches.

Willingdon formed its Missions Committee in 1990, partnering with the Mennonite Brethren Missions Service International (MBMSI). Willingdon also reached out through several street evangelism ministries, conventions, Ladies' Teas, Men's Breakfasts, Dinner Theatres, musicals, prison and correctional facility outreaches, and short-term missions trips through the 1990s. In 1997, Willingdon began its Discovery Program, connecting new believers and seekers with foundational truth about Christ and the gospel.

During the 1990s, Willingdon also founded its Food Services Ministry in 1992, InTouch Phone Ministry in 1995, Healing Place Ministry in 1996, Family Ministries in 1998, and Men's Ministry in 1999.

Willingdon introduced its L.I.N.K. mission strategy in 1998: to *lead* people to commitment, *include* people in community, *nurture* people to completeness, and *kindle* people in their calling. The strategy focuses Willingdon's growing ministries on shared objectives as the church pursues its mission to 'know Jesus Christ personally and to carry on His ministry.'

The diverse groups of people God brought to Willingdon gave the church a unique platform to preach the gospel to "people of all nations" living in Vancouver. By the end of the decade, Willingdon's average attendance reached nearly 3000.

The 2000's: The Church Broadens its Borders

Willingdon entered the 21st century with the addition of its French, Romanian, and Arabic ministries. The church added a fourth weekend service on Saturday evenings in 2003 and opened The Connection video venue in the building's Chapel in 2005.

In 2006 Willingdon began streaming translated video and audio of services on its website. Willingdon translates sermons and worship songs into Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, French, Russian, Romanian, Spanish and Filipino, preaching the Word to people of different languages around the world.

Willingdon's Media and Communications (MAC) Ministries began to decisively focus their productions on engaging unbelievers and sharing the gospel with their audience. Willingdon promotes its repeatedly sold-out shows through media advertising, welcoming approximately 12,000-14,000 attendants each year and donating ticket revenues to charity.

Each of its ministries began to broaden universally, including Women's Walk ministry in 2005, Willingdon Fine Arts Academy in 2006, Imagine Ministry in 2008 and Alongside Ministry in 2008.

Willingdon School of the Bible was founded in 2003 to teach college-level courses in biblical foundations to students from the church congregation and across the city. By the end of the decade, the program was instructing over 400 students with a curriculum of 17 different courses taught by Willingdon pastors.

In 2003, Pastor John and Kathy Neufeld accepted Willingdon's pastoral leadership after serving five years as Assistant Senior Pastor. Pastor Carlin became Willingdon's first Missions Pastor, eventually moving on to a leadership position with MBMSI. During this period Willingdon furthered its involvement in global ministries. In particular, it formed a strategic partnership with Emanuel University in Romania in 2005, with the purpose of providing financial support and helping to train students to plant churches across Eastern Europe. Emanuel University is the only government accredited evangelical Christian university in Europe at the time. Willingdon pursues such missions around the world through church planting and training leaders for church planting. The church also sends and supports many church families on mission as they strive to take the gospel to the ends of the earth and make disciples of all nations. The church launched Willingdon School of Missions in September of 2008 to train short-term teams for projects to assist its missionaries. Towards the end of the decade, Willingdon also began to be involved in a major leadership development program in the Middle East.

In 2007 Willingdon founded reFocus Canada, uniting, training, and encouraging like-minded individuals to take a stand for expositional preaching. The network brings its members together for an annual conference, seminars, and workshops from across the nation. By standing together, reFocus members encourage each other as they uphold the supremacy of Christ and the sufficiency of His Word.

In September 2008, Willingdon formed the Willingdon School of Ministry to cultivate church leaders. The one-year internship program combines practical training and mentorship to develop solid biblical convictions, ministry philosophy and skill, and discipline toward godliness in the lives of future church leaders.

Willingdon Church had reached an average adult attendance of 4500 with 800 children and 400 youth in the second half of the decade and a fifth service was added on Saturday evenings in 2009. In 2008, Willingdon launched its "Building On Up" expansion and renovation project, adding a 600-seat worship centre for The Connection venue, a renovated Sanctuary with 120 additional seats, the Willingdon Café, a new office and expanded facilities to serve its growing ministries. The project added a total of 18,000 square feet to the church's facilities. Willingdon completed the renovations in 2011.

Willingdon partnered with Church Planting BC in 2009 as church Elders envisioned Willingdon's support of new churches as an effective means of reaching the city with the gospel. Willingdon sought to resource church plants that are "Gospel-centred, Spirit-led, and Mission-focused" in the city. The church's partnership follows Willingdon's support of Westside Church plant in 2005 and Reality Church plant in 2009. At the end of the decade, Willingdon supported pastors Lee Francois and Andy Frew in their decision to plant Crossridge Church in 2011 to reach the city of Surrey for Christ.

The 2010's: The Church Celebrates God's Faithfulness

On June 12, 2011, Willingdon Church celebrated its 50th anniversary with a combined service held at the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver. This milestone event was evangelistic and the church family was encouraged to invite their unreached friends to the service. 7,500-8,000 were in attendance that day to celebrate what God has done at Willingdon Church over the past 50 years and in the lives of its members, glorifying the name of Jesus Christ in one united voice in the heart of the city of Vancouver.

Throughout the early 2010's, Willingdon Church looked to expand the ways it could assist in training people in the truth of God's Word throughout Vancouver and the world. During this period many churches participated in the biblical training at Willingdon School of the Bible. WSB expanded to overseas schools, translating its curriculum into Arabic, Spanish and Chinese and the Arabic International Bible Institute was established in Egypt.

The congregation got more involved in Global missions to look beyond ourselves and provide support, people and resources to mission's organizations and partners around the globe to reach the lost and share the gospel. Willingdon, along with the Willingdon Charitable Holdings Society, welcomed the opportunity to help provide financial support to church plants with funds for renovations (Westside, Christ City Church), building purchases (Clova Theatre - Crossridge Church), and supported the planting of Reality Church in Vancouver and Meta Community Church.

The International language Ministry renewed its focus on "many nations, one church" with the 12 official language ministries, including English. The congregation continued to worship together through translation services during weekend services. An ESL Bible Study Program, which helps build Christian community for many new immigrants, was started. Small Groups began to translate and published small group curriculum in several languages allowing the whole body of believers in Small Groups to study together.

A seventh service at 11:45am in the Connection was added to accommodate the growth of the church.

In 2014 Pastor Carlin Weinbauer passed into the presence of the Lord. In Fall 2014, Pastor John and Kathy Neufeld resigned as Senior Pastor. Pastor Ray and Judy Harms-Wiebe took on the role of interim pastor and then in March 2016, they were invited by the elders to take the position of Lead Pastor.

God Builds Willingdon Church

God builds Willingdon Church, transforming lives through His Spirit and by the power of the gospel. He alone is worthy of praise and is responsible for advancing His Kingdom through Willingdon Church.

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved..." – Eph. 2:4-5

We can know Him personally and carry on His ministry because of His grace, which offers us forgiveness of sins, redemption, steadfast love, salvation and eternal life. The heart of Willingdon is to reach the lost; the church evolves to engage and reflect Vancouver's dynamic society, but Jesus Christ and His gospel remain upheld and unchanging.

Willingdon stands visionary as it strives to make Jesus Christ known personally and to carry on His ministry, seeking to proclaim the mercy of the cross to people from all different walks of life, cultures, to all nations and to the ends of the earth – to the praise of His glorious grace.

II. Willingdon Church's Mission Statement and Ministry Philosophy

"To know Jesus Christ personally and to carry on His ministry"

As we focus on Jesus Christ and His ministry in this church, our problems of language, culture, levels of biblical understanding and anything else that might want to divide us, will flow together in bringing people to Jesus, moving them toward spiritual growth and service.

Our purpose statement is a succinct transferable statement, declaring the centrality of Jesus Christ in our ministry. It keeps us on course in these days of pluralism in religion. It is important to understand that without Jesus Christ there is no Christianity. All religions do not lead to God. The Bible makes that very clear.

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men . . ." (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Jesus said himself, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

All the founders of the world's great religions are still in their graves. Only Jesus Christ came out of the grave.

Christianity is not exclusive, but inclusive. It includes all, who in repentance acknowledge their need, for Jesus Christ to be their Saviour. The only way into the Church of Jesus Christ is through repentance (see Acts 2:38-41). The only way for a church to stay strong is through repentance. The Church of Jesus Christ will flourish, when we all keep short accounts with each other, and with the Lord. It means a willingness to ask for forgiveness, to repent, and grant forgiveness as the need arises. This is not only possible, but probable as we daily focus on the Lord Jesus.

The purpose of Willingdon Church is to know Jesus Christ personally, and to carry on His ministry.

A. KNOW JESUS CHRIST PERSONALLY

1) *We come to know Jesus Christ initially through conversion.*

"Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'" (Mark 1:14-15).

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23).

"...everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13).

"And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life." (1 John 5:11-12).

2) *We grow in our knowledge of Jesus Christ through discipleship.*

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20).

How are you doing as a disciple of Jesus Christ? Have you been baptized? If not, why not? If you are not growing in your discipleship, you are not growing in your knowledge of Jesus. If you are not growing in your understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ, you are not growing in your knowledge of Jesus Christ. If you are not baptized as a believer, you are not growing in your knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Just think, as a believer you are going to heaven where Jesus is, and you have never studied the gospels to understand his will, and his ways for your life. You will watch television for hours, but you will not attend an adult Sunday School class, for one hour. You have time for many things, but no time for Bible reading and prayer. You are planning on going to a heaven, made possible by Jesus Christ, but you have little interest in finding out what Jesus says about anything. You spend time reading a map and brochures about a holiday, but you do not read the Bible, which is the Road Map of Life.

It is time to give ourselves a good shake, and repent of our prayerlessness, and our worldliness, and our self-righteousness.

3) *We grow in our fellowship with Jesus Christ and with His family by repenting of sin when it occurs.*

“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” (1 John 1:6 2:1)

Walking in the light can be illustrated by a person on a dark stage, walking in the light of a spotlight, shining down on them. As long as you walk in the light of that spot, you will not trip over something. If you step out of that light, you are walking in darkness.

God is light; the Bible is light; the church that Jesus Christ is building is light; fellow believers walking in the light, are light.

B. CARRY ON HIS MINISTRY

What does that ministry look like? One of the great summaries of Jesus’ ministry is actually found in the Old Testament. It was a prophetic word written by Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.” (Isaiah 61:1-3)

Jesus read that same passage in the synagogue of Nazareth and applied it to Himself in Luke 4:21 when he said, *“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”*

Jesus’ ministry saw him:

1) *Preach the good news to the poor (vs.1a)*

The poor are certainly those who are in poverty and need. But there is also the sense of spiritual poverty here. Jesus preached to all, but the good news only did good for those who were poor in spirit, for those who were willing to see themselves as spiritually wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

2) *Bind up the brokenhearted (vs. 1b)*

If your heart has been broken, your spirit beaten down, if there is an ache in your heart and you are experiencing excruciating pain in your soul the ministry of Jesus Christ and this church, longs to bind up, to care for, and to comfort you. Jesus knows what suffering is all about. He was misunderstood. He was falsely accused. He experienced the pain of betrayal by a close friend. He was hung out in the elements to die, on a Roman cross, by a murderous mob. Jesus understands and reaches out to the brokenhearted. Only He can completely heal a broken heart.

3) *Proclaim freedom for captives and release for prisoners (vs. 1c)*

This is speaking primarily of captives, and prisoners to sin. Spiritual captivity under the powers of darkness is rampant in our city. The devil's prisons are full. The captivity of the soul to lust, greed, deceit, anger, jealousy, and envy is very real. The ministry of Jesus sets the captives free!

4) *Proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God (vs. 2)*

Most believe this was speaking of the year of Jubilee, in the Old Testament. Every 50 years in Israel, the land was returned to its original owner, all slaves were set free and the land was not farmed. It was a year of rest and renewal. In the same way, Jesus' ministry calls us to that rest and renewal today.

But where there is a day of mercy and blessing for those who believe, there is a day of increasing wrath, and God's coming judgment for those who don't believe. North America has fallen into a "God is Love" stupor. Millions are choosing to ignore the fact, that God is a holy God who will judge sin. Jonathan Edward's famous sermon entitled, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" has been lost on us. In our arrogance we think our chances are pretty good at outsmarting God. He will have to let us into his heaven, because we are as good as the next guy. We are educated, sophisticated and generally OK. But we have forgotten that one lie will send us to a devil's hell.

Don't trifle with God. He is HOLY, HOLY, HOLY. Run into the arms of Jesus where there is forgiveness, and protection from the coming judgment of God on this world.

5) *Comfort and provide for those who mourn and grieve (vs. 2b, 3a)*

This mourning and grieving speak of repentance. It includes brokenness, a contrite spirit, a pressing sense of utter emptiness, a pressing sense of sinfulness, a pressing sense of misery because of sinful practices.

Jesus' ministry brought comfort and forgiveness, to those who mourned and grieved over their sin. To those who are willing to say "I am wrong, I have sinned, and I want forgiveness." Jesus' ministry flows. The spiritual ministry of this church flows toward that person today. But the proud, the boastful, the arrogant, the self-righteous and those full of pride, have always missed the spiritual ministry and forgiveness that Jesus longs to provide. And when we do repent, Jesus wants "to bestow a crown of beauty instead of ashes" (vs. 3b), "oil of gladness instead of mourning" (vs.3c), and "a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair" (vs. 3d).

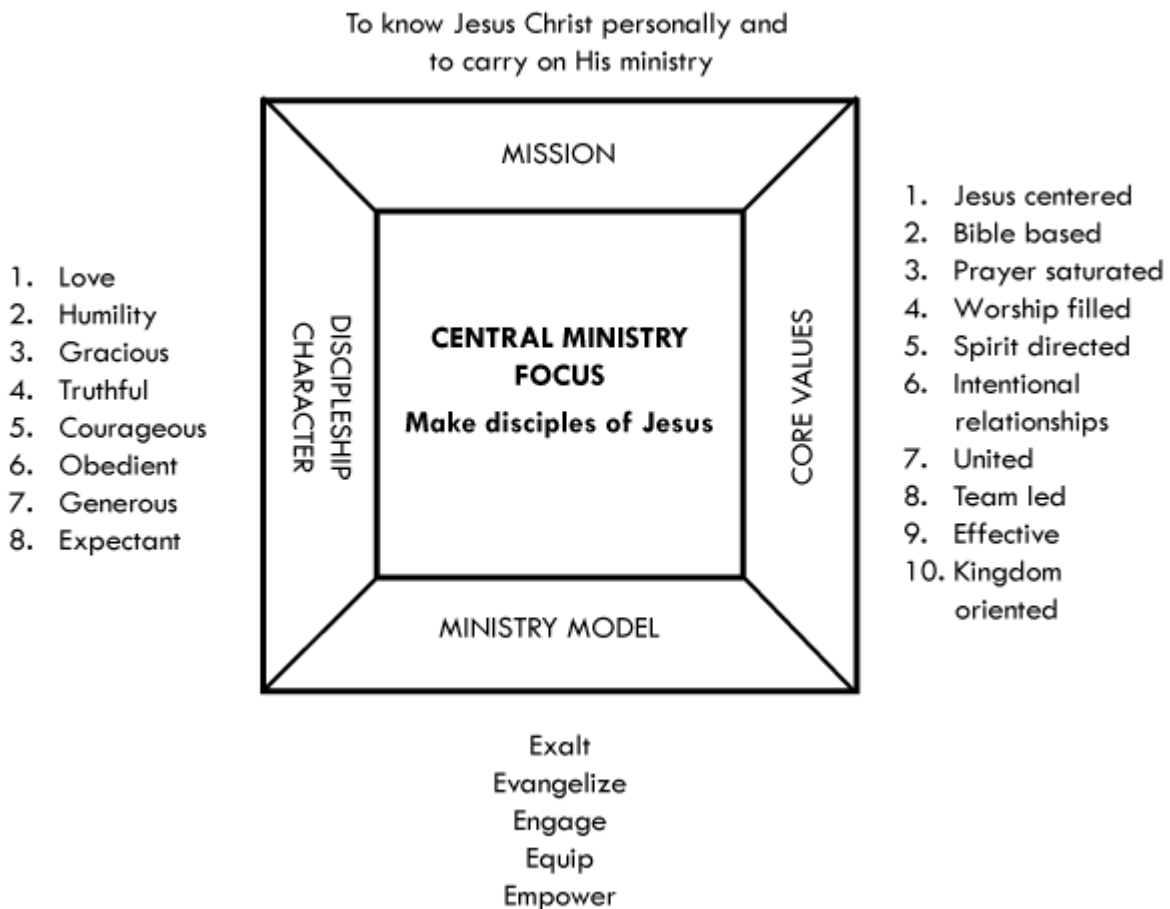
"They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour" (vs. 3e). What a beautiful description of the church. It is like a forest of oaks, oaks of

righteousness planted by the Lord. A forest and a church, display the splendour of the Lord. A forest and a church are God's work. Only God can make them grow and flourish.

The purpose of this church is to know Jesus Christ personally, and to carry on his ministry, among all nations in our community. What is your purpose today?

From a Sermon by Pastor Carlin Weinbauer

C. MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY



Central Ministry Focus (*What a disciple does every day*)

“Make Disciples of Jesus”

Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2

Ministry Model (Five overarching purposes of disciples in community)

“Exalt”

Encountering God as we lift high the name Jesus

Ps. 99, Hab 2:14, John 4:21-24; 17:3, Acts 2:46-47, Rom.12:1-2, 1 Cor.10:31, Eph. 5:18-21, Rev. 5:8-14; 7:9-122

“Evangelize”

Reaching people with the good news of Jesus in Word and deed

Matt. 28:18-20, Luke 4:18-19, John 14:6, Acts 1:8; 4:12; 31, Rom 1:16-17; 10:13-17, 1 Pet. 3:15

“Engage”

Connecting with the family of Jesus for authentic relationship

Acts 2:44-47, John 13:34-35, Eph. 4:1-6; 4:25-5:2, Col 3:12-17, Heb.10:24-25

“Equip”

Growing gifted disciples of Jesus to be kingdom servants

Acts 2:42, 1 Cor.12:4-13, Eph. 4:11-16, 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 2:2-5;14-21; 3:16-4:2, 1 Peter 2:9; 4:10-11

“Empower”

Sending equipped servants to follow their calling, both locally & globally

John 20:19-23, Titus 1:5-9 Acts 1:8; 6:1-6; 13:1-3,

III. The Governing Policies and Procedures Manual

This manual outlines the policies and procedures that govern Willingdon Church.

Willingdon Church is an Elder-led church. The Elders are the official policy making body of the Church and reserve the right to interpret, change, suspend, cancel, or dispute any part of our policies and procedures at any time during their meetings. Changes will be effective on the dates determined by the Elders.

The policies in this manual are the responsibility of the Elders Board to ensure they are implemented and adhered to.

This manual supersedes all previous governing policy manuals and memos that have been issued on subjects covered in this manual.

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1. The Church

Authorized by: Elders
Reaffirmed: October 30, 2017

1.1 THE CHURCH

The name of this Church shall be **WILLINGDON CHURCH** and shall in these articles be called the Church.

1.2 CONFESSION OF FAITH

The Church acknowledges and confesses the Holy Scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments, to be the Word of God and the only sufficient and infallible guide of faith and life unto salvation. Therefore it is required of all members who belong to this Church or who wish to affiliate themselves with it that they adhere to the fundamental doctrine of Scripture.

The “Statement of Faith” (see Section 6.1) serves the Church as a more complete confession of faith.

1.3 MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement and purpose of Willingdon Church is to know Jesus Christ personally and to carry on His ministry.

Our purpose statement is a succinct transferable statement, declaring the centrality of Jesus Christ in our ministry. It keeps us on course in these days of pluralism in religion. It is important to understand that without Jesus Christ, there is no Christianity. All religions do not lead to God. The Bible makes that very clear.

As we focus on Jesus Christ and His ministry in the Church, our problems of language, culture, levels of biblical understanding and anything else that might want to divide us, will flow together in bringing people to Jesus, moving them toward spiritual growth and service.

1.4 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- 1) To schedule regular and special services for worship and evangelism as taught in the Scriptures.
- 2) To witness and evangelize in the community, to promote and support home and foreign missions.
- 3) To establish and maintain ministries and departments within the Church, which shall serve as an aid to the objectives set forth herein.
- 4) To encourage and support Christian workers in the area of education, evangelism and Bible teaching in accordance with the Bylaws of the Willingdon Church Society.

- 5) To be affiliated with and to support the projects, policies and doctrine of the Mennonite Brethren Conference.

1.5 OFFICE AND SEAL

The office of the WILLINGDON CHURCH shall be at 4812 Willingdon Avenue, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5G 3H6.

The Seal shall be in the custody of the Executive Director and held in the Church office.

1.6 WILLINGDON CHURCH SOCIETY

The name of the Society is “Willingdon Church”.

The members of the Society are the Elders, in accordance with the Bylaws of the Willingdon Church Society.

The members of the Administrative Committee of the Board of Elders are the directors of the Society. The Administration Committee is elected annually by the Elders ('Elders') in accordance with the Bylaws of the Willingdon Church Society.

1.7 CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

See Appendix A for a copy of the complete and official signed document of Willingdon Church's Constitution and Bylaws.

2. Church Membership

Authorized by: Elders
Reaffirmed: October 30, 2017

2.1 ADMISSION FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Membership at Willingdon Church is open to all who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord, and who are in agreement with the basic doctrines and goals of the Church. There are several ways in which one may join the Church and become a member ('Member').

A. BY BAPTISM (IMMERSION)

Any person who confesses faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and gives evidence of the new birth through their conduct, may apply for baptism and membership.

B. BY TRANSFER

Any person who confesses faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and who has been baptised on the confession of their faith, may apply for membership by presenting a letter of transfer from the Mennonite Brethren Church in which they are presently members.

C. BY CONFESSION OF FAITH

Any person who confesses faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and who is able to give evidence of their baptism upon the confession of their faith, may apply for membership by confession of faith.

D. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Any person meeting the above requirements, who for various reasons is temporarily not able to fellowship in their regular place of worship, may apply for "associate membership" status.

2.2 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

A. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Those desiring membership at Willingdon shall make application to that effect by filling out the Membership Application Form which is available at the Church office.

Prospective members will be required to attend the appropriate Membership Class or Classes.

B. MEET WITH ELDERS

Under normal circumstances all those applying for membership at Willingdon Church shall meet with the Elders, or with those designated by the Elders. It is expected that each prospective member will share a personal testimony of their faith in Christ.

C. MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

- 1) New members must sign the membership covenant.

2.3 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

It is requested that when a member moves to another area or for personal reasons chooses to attend another Evangelical Church, that they notify the Church to that affect as soon as possible. Under normal circumstances this should be finalized within six months. There are several ways in which a membership may be terminated.

A. BY TRANSFER

A member may request a letter of transfer to another church.

B. BY RELEASE

A member may request release from membership, and/or the Church may recommend release of a member.

C. BY EXCOMMUNICATION

If a member is living in open sin and after brotherly admonition continues in their wayward way, the Elders may recommend disciplinary action, even to the extent of excommunication as taught in the Bible. (See Section 6.2 – “Restoring One Another In Love”)

D. BY DEATH

When a member dies, membership will be terminated.

E. INACTIVITY

If there has been no activity by the member for a period of twelve months or more (inactivity is not limited to, but includes participation in a small group, tithing, volunteering and regular attendance).

F. BY NOT UPHOLDING THE MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

If a member does not uphold the membership covenant.

3. Business Meetings and Procedures

Authorized by: Elders
Reaffirmed: October 30, 2017

3.1 ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS

Dates for the meetings shall be set by the Elders.

The agenda and reports for these meetings shall be published and distributed at least one week prior to the actual time of the meetings.

Only members in good standing may vote at these meetings. All members will be required to register to be able to vote. Adherents are encouraged to attend and contribute to the discussion.

A. ANNUAL CHURCH MINISTRIES MEETING (AMM)

The meeting, called the Annual Church Ministries Meeting, shall take place in May/June.

The Annual Church Ministries Meeting shall be held to primarily receive reports from the Elders and the Ministries, to respond to questions, recommendations and to conduct the affirmations of Elders and Deacons.

B. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

The second meeting, called the Annual General Meeting, must be held once a year in accordance to the Bylaws of the Willingdon Church Society. The date of this meeting is determined by the Administration Committee and is attended by the Elders who are the members of the Willingdon Church Society.

3.2 INTERIM CHURCH MINISTRY MEETINGS

These Church Ministry Meetings shall be called, when required, by the Administration Committee or the Elders.

3.3 PROCEDURES

All affirmations of Elders and Deacons shall be conducted by secret ballot unless otherwise moved. A majority vote shall determine candidate affirmation as outlined in Sections 4.3 and 5.5.

3.4 VACANCIES

Vacancies for Deacons due to resignation or similar reasons which occur during the course of the term shall be reported to the Elders. The Elders shall take suitable action to fill these vacancies by

appointment. These appointments shall be confirmed by the membership at the next Annual Church Ministries Meeting.

3.5 APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY COMMITTEES

The Elders shall appoint temporary committees for special assignments whenever the need arises.

3.6 ESTABLISHMENT AND AMENDMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Elders are the official policy making body of the Church and as such may waive or amend the policies at their meetings. The Elders do this by reaching a consensus. (See Section 4.5 – ‘Consensus Seeking and Decision Making Within the Elders’)

3.7 MB CONFERENCES

A. DELEGATES

Elders, the Lead Pastor and/or other ministry staff so designated shall represent the Church as delegates. Other delegates shall be elected or commissioned as required.

B. PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

The Provincial Conference meets annually. One delegate for every 25 members from a provincial church may attend.

C. CANADIAN CONFERENCE

The Canadian Conference meets bi-annually, early in July. One delegate for every 25 members from a Canadian church may attend. Its Council of Boards usually meets in January and acts as the Conference in interim.

3.8 SIGNING OFFICERS

A. CONCERNING LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Concerning all legal documents, including all loans, two of the following officers shall sign on behalf of the Church:

- 1) the Moderator
- 2) the Assistant Moderator
- 3) the Secretary
- 4) the Elder of Finance

B. CONCERNING NORMAL BANKING TRANSACTIONS

Concerning normal banking transactions, two of the following shall sign cheques on behalf of the Church:

- 1) the Chairman of the Finance Committee
- 2) the Elder of Finance
- 3) others by appointment

4. Elders

Authorized by: Elders
Reaffirmed: October 30, 2017

4.1 ROLE OF THE ELDERS

The Elders of the Church are charged with the responsibility of providing leadership and biblical oversight as led by the Holy Spirit.

- 1) Submitting to Jesus as the chief shepherd
- 2) Interceding
- 3) Setting overall direction
- 4) Supporting and holding accountable the lead pastor and team leaders to strategic direction
- 5) Monitoring the effectiveness of church-wide ministry
- 6) Spiritual well-being of the Church and its members

Scriptural references: Acts 11:30; 15:2; 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 3:2-5; 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:25; Titus 1:9; James 5:16; 1 Peter 5:2-3; 1 Corinthians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17.

4.2 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ELDERS

The Elders of Willingdon Church have the following responsibilities:

- 1) Prayerfully discern, provide counsel for, review and approve the church's mission and vision (most often generated by lead pastor and team leaders)
- 2) Provide leadership in the establishment of new goals for the advancement of the Kingdom
- 3) Hold Lead Pastor and Team Leaders accountable for effective ministry
- 4) Provide counsel and support for Lead Pastor and Team Leaders
- 5) Provide financial oversight (budget approval; resource allocation)
- 6) Empower Lead Pastor and Team Leaders for ministry
- 7) Ensure legal, ethical and spiritual integrity
- 8) Write and keep 'Governing Policies, constitution, bylaws, operations handbook'

4.3 **EXPECTATIONS OF THE ELDERS**

The expectations of an elder are to be in alignment with the core values that we hold as a church and should be a demonstration of discipleship at work in the church. It is expected that elders will exemplify the biblical qualifications of an elder as listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5 but these are not listed below as they are already expected of elders in any church. As every elder is a member of Willingdon he has agreed to the membership covenant which covers a large number of areas of Christian responsibility which is assumed to apply for the conduct of every elder. The expectations are unique for elders at Willingdon Church are listed below:

- 1) He commits to increasing his personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- 2) He commits to engage with non-Christians to foster relationship and share the gospel.
- 3) He commits to increasing his theological training by personal biblical study and/or attendance of WSB classes or other learning options.
- 4) He commits to teach that which is faithful to Scripture and is also true to our Confession of Faith, committing to learn and to grow in the truth.
- 5) He commits to being loyal to the Elders, Lead Pastor, Pastors and Staff. Committing to pray for them and will speak well of them when they are not in his presence.
- 6) He commits to keeping the discussions within our Elder team confidential and will commit to supporting decisions made. He commits to loving, honouring and encouraging the members of all ministries.
- 7) He commits to seek to contribute to an atmosphere of trust and safety that allows elders to share openly. He will not gossip.
- 8) He will make every effort to attend all elder meetings unless unusual circumstances do not permit.
- 9) He is prepared for elder meetings by having read over meeting minutes, agendas and other relevant meeting information. He is ready to participate in the discussion of the meeting and will do so as opportunity is given.
- 10) He is demonstrating spiritual leadership and shepherding others. There must be a clear demonstration that the elder is discipling others. This can be accomplished with a combination of efforts such as one on one mentoring or other group meetings that involve meeting regularly for the purpose of spiritual nurturing.
- 11) He engages in significant biblical relationships with members of the church by attending a small group.
- 12) He is meeting regularly with another elder or elders in a small group on a regular basis for the purpose of sharing his life, supporting each other, and working through the challenges they are facing. It is a support group dedicated to the wellbeing of every elder.
- 13) He attends Willingdon church services on a regular basis and at times attends other service times to experience different service times and to ensure there is elder representation in all of the services. He will make time to participate in all aspects of the services.

- 14) He shares in the responsibility of church ministries by interviewing new members, praying with or for others, hospital visitation, resolving conflicts in the church, greeting and welcoming newcomers to the church, identifying new leaders, and the encouragement of the church members and volunteers. Elders are encouraged to have more visible roles when the opportunity arises such as communion serving, praying with people in church services, getting to know volunteers and others that serve in the church, meeting with church staff and pastors for coffee or a meal as time permits.
- 15) He shares in the oversight of committees that are formed to serve the church. This may include Elder Committees and/or the oversight of Deacon Committees. This is not a given for every elder for every year but needs to be part of the elder's role at some point during their elder term.
- 16) He partners with the Team Leaders and Pastors of the church. This is a commitment to meet with them for the purpose of giving encouragement and sharing of information between pastors and the elders. Every elder (except pastor-elders) have this responsibility.
- 17) He shares in the responsibility of being aware of the different ministry areas of the church by attending banquets or services of other ministry areas. Recommended that each elder attend such services/meetings/banquets during the year.
- 18) He shares in the responsibility of attending meetings with parachurch organizations and MB church conference meetings. It is recommended that each elder attend at least one meeting per year.
- 19) He is aware that as a servant of God and as a Willingdon Church Elder, he needs to be sensitive to the danger of any use of the authority of the elder office for personal benefit or gain. He will submit to the boundaries and guidelines with regards to conducting private business endeavors, personal financial gain or the distribution of products.
- 20) He commits to read at least three books per year written by Christian authors that will serve to bring a greater understanding of God and His work in the church. Books that help the elder to carry out his role are also encouraged.

4.4 THE DISCERNMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

A. THE PROCESS

Since Acts 20:28 states that Elders are made by the Holy Spirit, and Titus 1:5 and Acts 14:23 state that they are appointed by other Elders, Elder selection is a process of discernment where present Elders identify from the congregation who the Holy Spirit has chosen and then subsequently affirm and appoint them as Elders. This means that the prospective Elders must already be manifesting this call of God on their lives in the manner in which they presently minister within the Church. They must be showing evidence that they are eldering/shepherding already.

Furthermore, they must:

- 1) Be a male member in good standing with the Church.
- 2) Meet the requirements as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

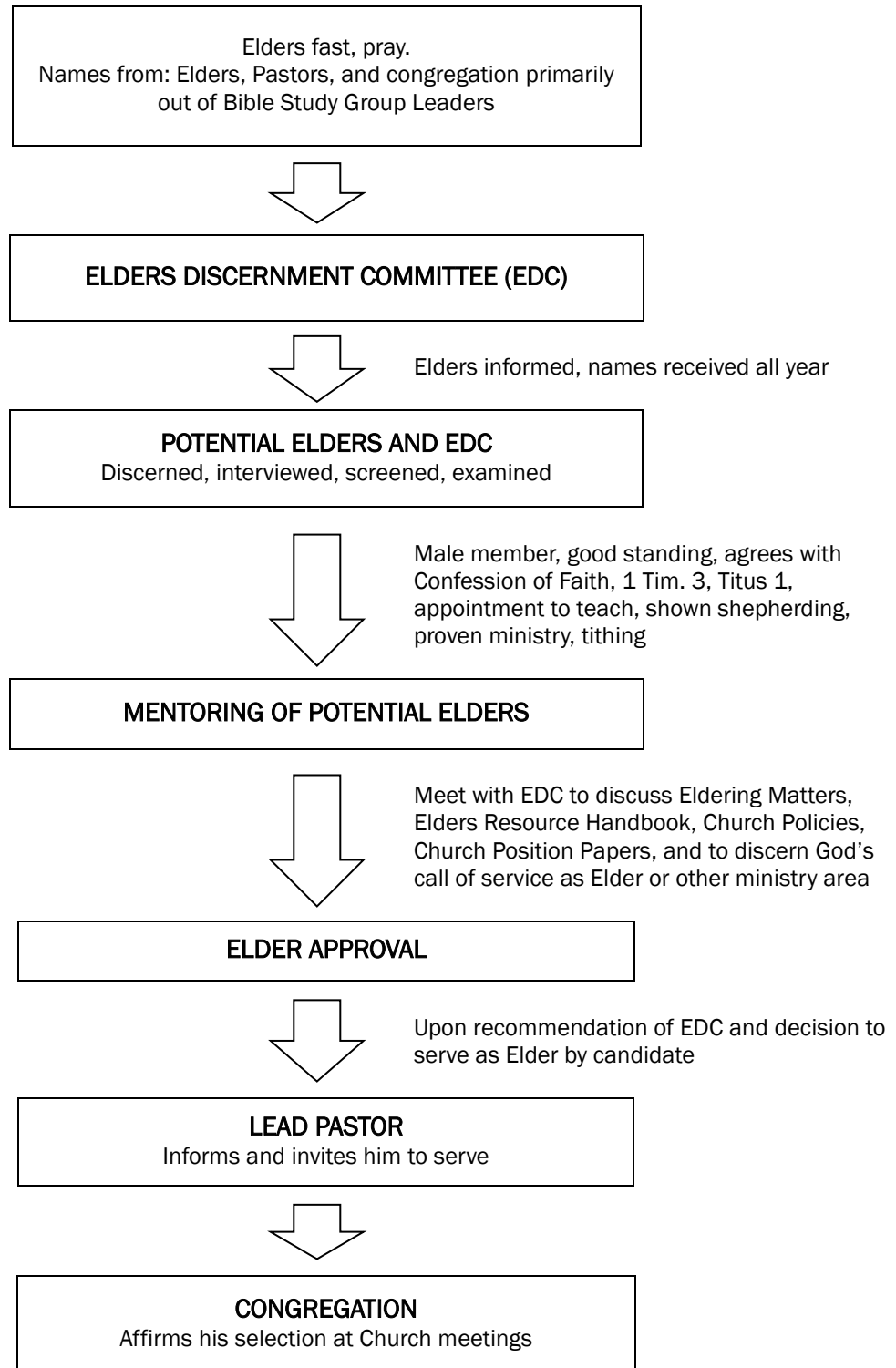
B. THE APPOINTMENT AND AFFIRMATION OF ELDERS

- 1) Candidates for Elders are received throughout the year by the Elders Discernment Committee from the members of the congregation, especially our Elders, Small Group Leaders, and Deacons. They are reported to the Elders as soon as the names are received.

Serving Elders will spend time in prayer and fasting for prospective Elders periodically during the year (Acts 6:3, 13:2, 14:23).

- 2) All potential Elders are discerned, reviewed and examined according to the biblical qualifications by the Elders Discernment Committee. This Committee is a standing committee of Elders, chosen annually by the Elders, who are active throughout the year in their discernment of potential Elders. Their activities include discussing and presenting eldering matters, the Elders Resource Handbook, and Willingdon Church policy and study papers with and to all potential candidates.
- 3) To serve as an Elder, a man must meet these requirements as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9:
 - a. The man is to have shown the gifts of teaching, proclaiming, exhorting and shepherding (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9). Therefore, he should be a Small Group Leader having demonstrated such gifting. Alternatively, he should have been a Small Group Leader in the past, but may currently be designated to other assignments requiring these gifts (Acts 11:30, 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 14; 1 Timothy 3:1, 5, 5:17; Titus 1:9-10, 13; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:14,16; 1 Peter 5:2-3, 30).
 - b. The man is not to have been divorced and remarried except if the divorce took place prior to salvation. The key New Testament passages setting the qualifications for Elders give stringent requirements that would exclude some Christians from qualifying (1 Timothy 3:1-8; Titus 1:6-9). The key phrase under consideration is “a one-wife husband”. This means a man totally devoted to one woman. Although we believe that the qualification “husband of one wife” refers mostly to present and established marital stability, we recognize that the far-reaching effects of divorce make it difficult for a previously divorced person to meet the other biblical qualifications, especially for position of Elder or Pastor. For a detailed statement regarding this position, see Section 6.3.E on “Guidelines for Applying our Position Paper on Marriage, Separation, Divorce, and Remarriage”.
- 4) Upon a pending recommendation for Elder by the Elders Discernment Committee, the person will make his decision whether he is willing to serve and will communicate his decision to the Committee.
- 5) The Elders Discernment Committee then presents the discerned candidates to the Elders for their approval. After Elder approval, the Moderator will inform and invite him to serve.
- 6) Those candidates who receive the support of the Elders will be presented to the membership at the Annual Ministry Meetings for affirmation.
- 7) Those presented to the membership for affirmation must receive at least 75% majority vote of the members attending. All affirmed Elders become members of the Elders.
- 8) Only two members of a family may serve as Elders at any one time. Only one member of a family may serve on the Administration Committee at any one time. Family is defined as parent, child, sibling, and in-laws.

C. FLOW CHART FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS: THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS



4.5 TERMS OF OFFICE

- 1) An Elder will be reviewed annually by the Elder Review Committee.
- 2) An Elder in good standing may serve no more than three consecutive 3 year terms. They must take a minimum of one year off after their third 3 year term before being able to return to eldering.
- 3) An Elder is to be reaffirmed by the congregation every 3 years for each term at the Annual Ministries Meeting. Prior to an Elder's reaffirmation they will be reviewed by the Elder Review Committee.
- 4) A one-year leave of absence when deemed needful, may be taken for personal renewal and rest upon request to the Elders.
- 5) An Elder may be dismissed from their position by consensus of the elders after fully committing to the reconciliation and restoration process outlined in Matthew 18.

4.6 THE COMPOSITION OF THE ELDERS

- 1) There must be a minimum of 3 lay elders to 1 pastor elder.

4.7 ORGANIZATION OF ELDERS

- 1) The Moderator will serve as chairman of the Elders and Administrative Committee meetings.
- 2) The Moderator will be elected annually from within the Elders.
 - a. He will chair the Elders during times of potential conflict of interest for Ministry staff. During these times, the Ministry staff may be asked to leave the meeting.
 - b. He will lead the Church business meetings.
- 3) An Assistant Moderator will also be elected in the same manner to assume all the duties of the Moderator in his absence.
- 4) A Secretary will be chosen from the members of the Elders, who will record the minutes of each meeting, as well as the minutes of the regular Church business meetings. An official copy of all minutes will be filed in the Church office.
- 5) An Overseeing Elder of some Deacon committees may be appointed annually. He will serve as a liaison between the Elders and the respective Deacon committee.
- 6) An Administration Committee consisting of the Moderator, the Assistant Moderator, the Secretary, and Elder of Finance and up to two members at large as needed. The Lead Pastor, Executive Pastor and Executive Director are to attend the meetings as ex-officio members. The Moderator will serve as chairman of this committee.
- 7) Other subcommittees of the Elders may be formed as required.
- 8) The Elders will meet eight to ten times each year in regular monthly meetings. Additional meetings may be called as needed.

- 9) Ministry staff are invited to attend the Elders meetings as ex-officio members.

4.8 CONSENSUS SEEKING AND DECISION MAKING WITHIN THE ELDERS

- 1) The intention of our decision making process is to find the highest level of agreement, under the guidance of the spirit without dividing the participants into factions. It involves utilizing all ideas regardless of their diversity to generate commitment to both action and to each other. Another goal of this process, which we call consensus seeking, is to work together in positive ways in an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding.
- 2) Our definition of consensus is: To have open-ended discussion until each Elder has come to a place of agreement or to have liberty to submit to the larger group and not take a public position against it.

4.9 DUTIES OF THE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

- 1) To handle the administrative matters of the Church and report to the Elders.
- 2) To serve as an advisory group for the Lead Pastor, Executive Pastor and Executive Director.
- 3) To assist the Lead Pastor in the administration and evaluation of the staff and their related ministries.
- 4) To oversee the establishment of salaries and benefits for all paid employees of the Church.
- 5) To assist the Lead Pastor in the final interviewing of potential Pastoral Staff.
- 6) To prepare recommendations for the Elders.
- 7) To provide counsel to all Pastoral Staff through the Lead Pastor, including:
 - a. The periodic review of a staff member's ministry, keeping in mind the welfare of the individual and of the congregation.
 - b. The periodic review of the working conditions of the staff, with appropriate recommendations to the Elders.
 - c. The presentation of appropriate recommendations to the Elders regarding the employment or termination of any pastoral staff.

4.10 THE MODERATOR

- 1) The Moderator will be chosen annually from among the Elders by the Elders.
 - a. He is an experienced Elder who demonstrates spiritual maturity.
 - b. He is gifted in leadership and administration.
 - c. He has a vision for the local church.
 - d. He is a good communicator.

- e. He is a peacemaker and exerts a moderating influence in emotional issues and situations.
- 2) Administratively:
- a. He chairs the Annual Church Meetings and the Administration Committee of the Elders. He also chairs Elders Meetings in times of potential conflict of interest for Church staff.
 - b. He assists in policy or procedural changes implementation.
 - c. He serves under the authority of the Church appointed Elders.
 - d. He entrusts the Lead Pastor and Team Leaders to manage their ministries.
- 3) Relationally:
- a. He helps resolve areas of disagreement or misunderstanding.
 - b. He is an encourager of and an advisor to the Lead Pastor.
 - c. He shields the Ministry Staff from unfair criticism or attack but ensures that fair criticism is met and dealt with openly.
 - d. He brings the concerns of the congregation and staff to the attention of the leadership.
 - e. He promotes unity within the Body.
- 4) An Assistant Moderator is likewise chosen and assumes the Moderator's duties in his absence.

4.11 ELDER EMERITUS

A. SENIOR ELDER ON CALL

- 1) In the spirit and instruction of 1 Timothy 3:1-9 and Titus 1:5-9, the office of Elder Emeritus provides the Church with opportunity to draw on the wisdom and counsel of a seasoned leader who for various reasons may not be able to serve as an active Elder.
- 2) After an Elder has served the congregation well, is in good standing, and is age 65 or older, or where health may require, and there is a willingness to serve, the Elder may be appointed by the Elders to be an Elder Emeritus.
- 3) An Elder Emeritus will serve as a Senior Elder on Call for the Elders and Pastoral Team. The Elder Emeritus is encouraged but not required to attend regular Elder meetings, does not serve as an Overseeing Elder, or have an Elder vote. However, the Elder Emeritus may be called upon to work on Elder committees, ad hoc Elder committees, invited to attend an Elder meeting, serve in counseling situations, and make their experience and wisdom available to the Elders and Pastoral Team.
- 4) The Elder Emeritus will continue to pray for the Church family, support the Church financially, provide positive support for the ongoing ministry of the Elders and Pastoral Team, provide

watch-care and spiritual support for individuals and groups in the congregation as opportunities arise.

- 5) The Elder Emeritus will continue to share in the prayer times at the front of the Church, serve communion, and be welcomed at special planning and prayer times held by the Elders.
- 6) The Elder Emeritus will be free of the day-to-day responsibilities and care of the Church but will provide wise counsel and encouragement where possible.
- 7) An Elder Emeritus may be re-nominated by the Elders or the congregation and affirmed to serve again as an active Elder.

5. Deacons

Authorized by: Elders
Reaffirmed: October 30, 2017

5.1 DEACON COMMITTEES

- 1) Our Deacons are assigned areas of responsibility to accomplish specific tasks as specified by the Team Leaders and then affirmed by the Elders.
- 2) The number of Deacons in each committee may vary and is determined by the need. New committees may be formed or rescinded as recommended by simple majority vote of the Elders.

These Deacon Committees have authority to appoint workers for their area of responsibility with the approval from the Team Leader overseeing the ministry area.

5.2 OVERSEEING ELDER

At the beginning of each ministry year, the Elders may appoint an Overseeing Elder of each Deacon Committee. On occasion ministry staff who are not Elders may be given overseeing responsibilities for a ministry area.

Scriptural References: Acts 15:30; 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:24; Titus 1:7-9; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:2-3.

A. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) The Elder is an ex-officio member of the Deacon Committee he is overseeing but need not become directly involved in the ministry of that committee. He must be a good listener, a resource person and an encourager. He must be sure that the committee knows what the expectations are for them to function effectively. He must not lord it over them but his presence must be felt so that he can effectively help resolve problems.
- 2) Until the committee has elected a chairperson, he needs to be the acting chairperson. This appointment generally occurs at the first meeting of the newly elected committee. He is the reference person whom the Elders rely on for communication with the committee. The committee needs to know that he is appointed by the Elders and functions in that position.
- 3) He needs to attend most committee meetings and must be aware of how it is functioning, the decisions that are made, how they are carried out, etc.
- 4) His primary function is to communicate the joys and any concerns expressed by the Elders to the Team Leader who will then communicate it to the respective committee. The Team Leader will also bring back any issues or questions from that committee to the Elders, giving reports as needed.
- 5) He has the prerogative to request minutes be taken at committee meetings and copies be submitted to him.

5.3 ORGANIZATION OF DEACON COMMITTEES

- 1) Each Deacon Committee will elect a chairperson and a recording secretary as soon as possible after the Annual Church Ministries Meeting.
- 2) The first meeting will be called by the chairperson of the previous year, with the Overseeing Elder serving as the chair until the new chairperson is elected.

5.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEACON COMMITTEES

- 1) Each Deacon Committee will oversee and direct those specific areas of ministry as specified by the Elders and Team Leaders.
- 2) Each Deacon Committee will appoint appropriate committees as required for their areas of ministry in consultation with the Team Leader.
- 3) It will be the responsibility of the chairperson of each committee to inform the respective Overseeing Elder and Team Leader of all scheduled meetings and to inform them of any major items on the agenda.
- 4) It will be the responsibility of the chairperson to prepare a projected budget for the year, covering all areas of ministry under the jurisdiction of the committee. This budget will be submitted to the Executive Director.
- 5) If the Overseeing Elder or Team Leader requests minutes be taken at committee meetings, it will be the responsibility of the committee to appoint a recording secretary to properly record the decisions of each meeting and submit a copy of these minutes.

5.5 THE AFFIRMATION OF DEACONS

A. QUALIFICATIONS

To be eligible for nomination, an individual must:

- 1) Be a member in good standing with the Church in accordance with the membership covenant.
- 2) Meet the requirements as outlined in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13

B. NOMINATION AND AFFIRMATION OF DEACONS

- 1) Nominations for Deacons are received annually from the membership at large prior to the Annual Church Ministries Meeting. Each member in good standing will be entitled to nominate as many Deacons as required. All nominations must be signed.
- 2) All nominees are reviewed and examined according to the biblical qualifications by the Team Leaders and the Nominations Committee chosen from the Elders. This committee, on consensus, then presents the screened candidates to the Elders.
- 3) Those nominees who receive the approval of the Elders shall be, with their consent, presented to the membership for affirmation at the Annual Church Ministries Meeting.

- 4) To be affirmed, those presented as nominees for Deacons must receive at least 75% majority vote of the members attending the Annual Church Ministries Meeting.

C. TERM OF OFFICE

- 1) Deacons will be affirmed for a three-year term.
- 2) Deacons, who are approved by the elders, may continue their term indefinitely by being re-affirmed by the congregation every three years.
- 3) Deacons may be removed from their position by the elders if they no longer meet the qualifications of a member in good standing or meet the requirements as outlined in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

6. Position Papers

Authorized by: Elders

6.1 STATEMENT OF FAITH

(Affirmed 2006; Reaffirmed February 15, 2012)

1) GOD

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- a. We believe in God the Father, the Creator and Sustainer of this universe, who in His infinite wisdom and love planned the redemption of mankind and accomplished it through Jesus Christ.
- b. We believe in Jesus Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the virgin Mary, lived a perfect life, was crucified for our sins, rose from the dead and was exalted to the right hand of God.
- c. We believe in the Holy Spirit who effects redemption in the lives of those who believe in Christ. He convicts, guides, teaches, rebukes, indwells, empowers, comforts, intercedes, unites believers into one body, and glorifies Christ.

Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4-6; Ps. 139; Is. 40; Mt. 28:19; Jn. 1:1, 18; 4:24; 15:26; Rom. 8:1-17, 26-27; 2 Cor. 3:17; 5:19; 13:14; Phil. 2:6-8; 1 Tim. 3:16; 6:15-16; Heb. 11:6; Jude 25.

2) THE REVELATION OF GOD

We believe that God has made His power and deity known in creation. He revealed Himself also in word and deed in the Old Testament. He revealed Himself supremely and finally in the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament. We believe that all Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, are inspired by God as men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit. We accept the entire Bible to be without error in the original writings, the infallible Word of God and the final, complete and authoritative guide for the faith and life of Christian discipleship.

Ps. 19; 119:105; Lk. 24:27, 44; Rom. 1:18-23; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; Heb. 1:1-2; 8:5-13.

3) MAN AND SIN

We believe that man was created in the image of God, sinless and in fellowship with God, with a free will to make moral choices. By sinning he brought death upon the whole human race. As a consequence all people are sinful by nature, guilty before God and in need of forgiveness and restoration.

Gen. 1:27; 3:1-19; Mt. 19:13-15; Rom. 3:10-18; 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3.

4) SALVATION BY GRACE

We believe that there is one God and Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ, who by his substitutionary death has redeemed humanity from the power of sin, death and eternal punishment. We are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ, and by faith alone. Those who repent receive forgiveness of sins and by the power of the Holy Spirit are born into the family of God, and, as faithful disciples, joyfully obey God's Word.

Acts 2:42, 46; Eph. 1:13-14; 2:8-9; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 4:12; 9:15-28; 1 Jn. 1:9.

5) THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer and transforms every believer into the image of Christ and enables the believer to witness to their Lord in daily life. The Christian lives in fellowship with God and other believers and joins a local church at baptism. Every believer contributes to the building of the body of Christ with their material and spiritual gifts. By the means of grace provided by Christ, the believer seeks to grow to maturity as this is expressed particularly in the "fruit of the Spirit." Since every believer's body is a "temple of the Holy Spirit" he or she refrains from those things which harm the body and the mind. In striving for perfection the believers recognizes their complete dependence on God and, are constantly in need of His forgiving and cleansing grace.

Mt. 5:14-16; Jn. 12:26; 15:4-5; Rom. 6; 8:9-16; 12; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:1-4; 4:1-16; Tit. 2:11-14; Heb. 12:14; 1 Jn. 3:17-18.

6) THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

We believe that the church was established through Christ's redemptive work in history, and that it is comprised of all who put their faith in Him and who are baptized by the Spirit into one body, regardless of nation, race or social class. Despite the diversity in congregations and denominations, the Holy Spirit creates unity among all the people of God. The local church is an association of baptized believers.

Mt. 18:15-35; Jn. 13:1-17; Jn. 17-21; Acts 2:38-44; 15:1-28; 1 Cor. 12-14; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:10-22; 5:21, 25-27; 1 Thes. 5:11, 14; 2 Thes. 3:6, 14-15; Rev. 5:9

7) THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

We believe that the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation," and that the command to make disciples of all nations is the primary task of the church. Every member of the church is called to participate in the mission of the church as he/she is enabled by God's grace.

Mt. 2:23; 11:5; 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:18-20

8) THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

We believe that God through the Holy Spirit has endowed all His children with gifts for Christian ministries. All are called to use their gifts to build up the body of Christ and to glorify the Lord. Some members of the church are called to lead, to preach, to teach and to care for the church. For this reason, God gives some to be Elders and Pastors. The church commissions or ordains people for such ministries and loves, respects, and supports those who serve faithfully. Those in leadership are to live exemplary Christian lives.

Is. 6:1-10; Jer. 3:15; Acts 6:1-6; 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:1-31; 1 Thes. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:1-10; 5:17-22; Tit. 1:5-9; 3:10; 1 Pet. 5:1-5

9) CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

We believe that Christians should be baptized in water upon confession of their faith in Christ. We practice baptism by immersion, although we receive into fellowship those who have been baptized on confession of their faith by another mode. By baptism a believer enters into the fellowship of the local church and commits him/herself to a life of discipleship and service.

Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:2-6; Col. 2:12-13; 1 Thes. 5:23-24; 1 Pet. 3:21

10) THE LORD'S SUPPER

In preparation for the fellowship of the Lord's Supper, all believers examine themselves. All those who understand its meaning, confess Jesus Christ as Lord in word and life, are accountable to their congregation and are living in right relationship with God and others are invited to participate in the Lord's Supper.

Mt. 16:24; 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-32; Rev. 3:20

11) MARRIAGE AND THE CHRISTIAN HOME

We believe that God instituted marriage. Marriage is a sacred union between one man and one woman. Believers who marry should have a common Christian commitment; a believer should not marry an unbeliever. We believe that divorce, and all sex outside of marriage constitutes a violation of God's intention for marriage. Christian parents should nurture their children through exemplary living, prayer, worship, instruction in God's Word, and godly discipline.

Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18-24; Prov. 5:18-19; Mal. 2:13-16; Mt. 5:31-32; 19:4-9; 1 Cor. 7:10-11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:22-23; 6:4; Heb. 13:4

12) THE LORD'S DAY AND WORK

We believe that God has called us to work and that work is honourable. However, the Christian also needs to have time for worship, instruction in the faith and fellowship. Therefore, following the example of the New Testament Church, we set aside one day a week for spiritual upbuilding and limit our labours on that day to work of necessity and deeds of mercy.

Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-10; Mt. 6:33; Lk. 24:1-36; Acts 2:1; 20:7; Rom. 14:5-6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Thes. 4:11-12; Heb. 10:23-25.

13) CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY

Christians are obligated to speak the truth at all times. As a witness to our integrity we affirm that we will tell the truth at all times in keeping with what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Also, we avoid holding membership in lodges and secret societies which may require an oath, or may otherwise conflict with allegiance to Christ and his church, but seek rather to foster fellowship among believers.

Mt. 5:33-37; 23:1-12; Jn. 18:19-23; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:6-13; Jas. 5:12

14) THE STATE

We believe that God has instituted the state. Our chief concern and primary allegiance, however, is to Christ's kingdom. We pray for our government, respect those in authority, pay

taxes, obey all laws not in conflict with the Word of God, and witness against corruption and injustice in society.

Mt. 22:17-21; Acts 4:19; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-6; 1 Pet. 2:13-14

15) LOVE AND PEACE

We believe that Christians should live by the law of love and practice forgiveness of enemies as taught and exemplified by Jesus. We seek to be agents of reconciliation; our bond with other followers of Jesus transcends all racial, social and national barriers. We view violence as contradictory to the new nature of the Christian. In times of national conscription or war, we will teach and encourage alternate service where possible.

Ex. 20:1-17; Mt. 5:17-28, 38-45; Rom. 12:19-21; 13:8-10; 1 Pet. 2:19-23

16) CHRIST'S FINAL TRIUMPH

We believe that God will some day bring His purposes to a final consummation. We believe that Christ will return visibly, personally and bodily. When Christ returns the dead in Christ will be raised bodily and together with the living believers they will be bodily transformed and they shall be forever with the Lord. In the end all evil powers will be defeated and whereas the ungodly shall suffer eternal punishment, the saints shall enjoy eternal bliss in the presence of God.

Is. 2:4; 61:1-11; Mt. 25:13, 31-46; Mk. 9:43-48; Lk. 16:22-23; Jn. 5:25-29; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 15:21-58; Phil. 1:21-24; 1 Thes. 4:16-17; Tit. 2:11-14; 2 Pet. 3:3-13; Rev. 1:15, 20-22

6.2 RESTORING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE

(Affirmed 2006; Reaffirmed February 15, 2012)

"The Church is composed of many members, each contributing to the overall health of the Body. We are interdependent and where one suffers, we all suffer and where one is honored, everyone rejoices." ~1 Corinthians 12:26

In a healthy church, the loving restoration of a sinning member is a quiet process. It calls for each of us to care enough to speak to someone we know who is sinning. Frequently, this loving maintenance of the body is all that is required. Where resistance occurs and sin deepens and persists, the restorative process will require others to become involved to assure that health is restored to the member and to the Body. Love must always be our motivation and restoration our goal in all aspects of church discipline.

It is important that we begin by being open ourselves with fellow members in personal confession of sin, when that occurs, seeking their counsel and support. The study of pertinent passages on restoration and a willingness to practice it on a personal level will help a church address the majority of concerns that need correcting. In any matter calling for restoration we must never merely admonish someone but always assure individuals of our love and our willingness to help in the repentance process.

When a member sins he breaks the Law of God and needs to be reconciled with God as soon as possible. When a member's sin involves another person, it is his spiritual responsibility to go and be reconciled to the person he has sinned against as soon as possible (Matthew 5:23-24). If he confesses his sin, submitting to God and the person he has sinned against and sincerely seeks reconciliation, his sin is forgiven (1 John 1:9).

When sin knowingly is not confronted by the member or the church, the teaching of scripture is violated even further, and instead of sin being properly confronted and contained, it multiplies (1 Corinthians 5:6-7, Galatians 5:9). Restoring an erring member is one of the marks of the true Church and must not be neglected by the leadership of our congregation.

When sin is apparent, there are two possibilities that exist when a person is faced with his sin. He either eventually listens* to the admonishment and confesses his sin, or refuses to listen, does not confess, is not reconciled and is not restored to fellowship with Christ or His Church. It is the latter possibility that may become more complex and involves the formal discipline of the member by the church. The scripture provides specific instruction for both possibilities.

Formal discipline is intended to preserve the honour of God's name, to assure the purity of the church (1 Corinthians 5:7) and to eventually reconcile and restore the offending member.

A. PRIVATE LEVEL: ALWAYS START HERE

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over." (Matthew 18:15) When this is done and the member truly "listens" the restorative process has begun. Confidentiality is crucial for restoration to occur at this time. Galatians 6:1-5 elaborates that the "going" and "showing" must be aimed at restoring the member in gentleness, humility and love with a willingness to help "carry each other's burdens." James 5:9 gives us powerful motivation to go in such a case: "...whoever turns a sinner away from error will save him from death and cover a multitude of sins." The concept of

* "Listens" in the context of this paper and Matthew 18:15 means to acknowledge (confess) the fault and be willing to submit, turn away from the sinful conduct, and make restitution when appropriate in order to be reconciled or restored. "Listens" takes the nuance to agree, follow, heed or obey — John 5:25, 9:27; Acts 28:28 — which is necessary for repentance and forgiveness to occur (Luke 17:3).

prevention is very clear in this passage. Confession is made to only those sinned against and those the sinner finds liberty in confessing to. Unfortunately, as fellow believers we often do not “go” and “show” our brother his fault. The fault can then lead to a “multitude of sin.”

B. SEMI-PRIVATE LEVEL: TAKE ONE OR TWO OTHERS

If the member refuses to listen and achieve reconciliation, “take one or two others along” (Matthew 18:16) so that “every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses” (Deuteronomy 19:15-21). This step is semi-private and only is to occur if Step 1 was unsuccessful. Confidentiality again is crucial here, keeping it confined only to those directly involved. Notification of intent to move to this step is reported to the Restorative Committee of the Elders. It is the original person sinned against or who has knowledge of the sin who has the responsibility to take no more than two other members with him to meet again. The intent now is to achieve factual clarity about the sin and also still to counsel and help the person confess his sin and “win your brother over.” The “witness” according to Galatians 6:1, ought to be “spiritual” and so the person may well ask Bible Study Leaders or Elders to be involved in helping to restore the member. Since there is no time frame given in this step not in the first, this could involve several attempts at restoration.

Confession again is made to those in the meeting and to any person sinned against. It is assumed that if there is openness to listen, this step should be continued to complete restoration.

C. ELDERS-CONGREGATIONAL LEVEL: FORMAL DISCIPLINE IS INITIATED

Refusal to listen to two or three results in the witnesses telling the facts of the sin and their meeting(s) to the Elders Restorative Committee – 3 members. These Elders will conscientiously review whether the restoration process has been sound up to this point. Further consultation may be required to exhaust all possibilities of restoring the erring member. When all efforts have failed up to this point, the Elders Restorative Committee will bring the matter to a Restorative Committee attended only by the Elders and members of the congregation. An announcement to the congregation will emphasize the importance and seriousness of the planned meeting concerning the erring member giving time, place and urging all members to attend.

D. CONGREGATIONAL LEVEL: TELLING IT TO THE CHURCH – SEEKING TO WIN THEM BACK

The Restorative Meeting is in keeping with the Scriptural injunction “*If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.*” (Matthew 18:17) Ideally the person involved would be present at the meeting.

The members attending the Restorative Meeting will be given opportunity to face the person with his sin and the established facts in expectation that he will yet listen to them. A reasonable amount of time (2-3 months) will be given for members to win back the erring member. Their approach needs to be always in love and with compassion seeking to restore the errant member back to fellowship. Any personal contacts by members should be shared with the Elder’s Restorative Committee. This Committee in due time, will make a final contact with the errant member to determine if members have made contact and any progress towards restoration that may have occurred.

If the member continues to refuse to listen, then the Elder’s Restorative Committee, on behalf of the church with the authority and agreement of Jesus Christ Himself (Matthew 18:18), must expel the member formally from the church and the fellowship it provides.

An announcement will be made to the congregation that the unrestored member’s name has regrettably been removed from our membership and that according to 1 Corinthians 5:11 we are no longer to associate with this member. A letter to that effect will also be delivered in person

where possible by a member of the Elders Restorative Committee or the Lead Pastor. Otherwise the letter will be mailed.

E. CONGREGATIONAL LEVEL: RELATIONSHIP WITH DISFELLOWSHIPED MEMBER

Once the member has been disfellowshipped, the statement in 1 Corinthians 5:9 would apply to his relationship with other church members, *“you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral, greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.”*

This treatment is crucial for any brother to experience the discipline of the Lord, which is designed to eventually restore him. It is a very powerful thing to be disfellowshipped by your spiritual family in this way and it should not be continued indefinitely. Nevertheless, the scripture teaches us that it is God’s way to achieve full restoration. To do anything less would be to rob the greatest opportunity to win the member back. Application in this matter involves spiritual relationships, not natural or family relationships.

6.3 MARRIAGE, SEPARATION, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

(Affirmed April 1998; Reaffirmed February 15, 2012)

A. CONCERNING MARRIAGE

God's perfect blueprint for marriage is expressed in both the New and Old Testaments. In the very beginning God said, *"Therefore a man shall leave his mother and father and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh."* (Genesis 2:24) Jesus quotes these same words and then adds, *"Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate."* (Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:7-9) These verses speak of permanence, unity, and intimacy which the Apostle compares to the relationship that exists between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22-23).

POSITION: *Marriage represents the union of a man and woman for life.*

A Christian marriage is one of God's most powerful illustrations of Christ's love and faithfulness to His own. Marriage should therefore not be entered into lightly, but reverently under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with the help of spiritual counsel from those mature in the Christian faith. The following specific directives are given to us regarding marriage:

- 1) If an individual is able to remain single, the apostle Paul states, *"it is good for them to remain even as I am, because He who is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord – how he may please the Lord, while the married person has responsibility to please his spouse."* (1 Corinthians 7:8, 32-33)
- 2) Sexual intimacy was given by God for enjoyment in the context of a marriage union. Husband and wife are not to deny each other sexually what is both natural and a part of God's design for marriage. All sexual intimacy outside the marriage relationship, whether that be with members of the opposite or the same sex, is sin and considered as sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Hebrews 13:4). For further information on lesbian or homosexual relationships, please see the Mennonite Brethren Faith and Life pamphlet entitled *"Homosexuality: A Compassionate Yet Firm Response"* available through the church office or Information Desk.
- 3) Christians are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. *"For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness, and what communion has light with darkness?"* (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)
- 4) Marriage is a public declaration by a man and a woman, committing themselves to share the joys and trials of life together until death parts them. The marriage ceremony therefore represents both a spiritual and a legal agreement which recognizes a specific act whereby *"the two become one flesh"* (Matthew 19:6; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39, 40).
- 5) Couples planning to be united in marriage at Willingdon Church are required to attend the Marriage Preparation Classes, which are designed to assist couples in their preparation for this important step. The final commitment by a pastor to officiate at a wedding will be made after the first two counselling sessions.

B. CONCERNING SEPARATION

We encourage spouses to seek early counsel and prayer for unresolved issues within their marriage. We believe that every effort should be made to make the marriage as workable as possible (1 Peter 3:1-7), so that separation need not occur. If it does, the Bible states that spouses are to remain unmarried or else be reconciled (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). This indicates that separation would be time-framed and purposeful.

POSITION: We accept that separation becomes necessary at times and only advised if there is a risk of personal safety for either spouse or their children.

This includes cases of physical or sexual abuse of spouses or their children and where threat of such exists. Cases where separation is being contemplated or has occurred will be referred to the Elders for assessment and counsel based on the following values and principles:

- 1) the sanctity and permanence of marriage
- 2) intervention for the unprotected, oppressed, and those needing refuge
- 3) justice and fairness
- 4) the prevention of violence
- 5) security and safety
- 6) the sanctity of life

C. CONCERNING DIVORCE

POSITION: Any position we take on divorce and remarriage must take a high view of marriage with regard to its unity in permanence and the picture it provides to all people of Christ's covenant relationship to the church.

We believe and teach that marriage unites a man and woman for life. However, we also realize that due to our sinful nature and the influence of a godless society, some marriages are broken. We believe that such a disruption is always the result of sin and disobedience. However, when the person, or persons involved recognize their failure and repent of their sin, they receive forgiveness and are accepted by the Lord as members of His body. Should such a person seek to become a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church, the church is willing to receive that person as a member and provide nurture and fellowship. Such nurture and fellowship would include encouragement and support in seeking to achieve reconciliation with the estranged partner.

1) Biblical Grounds for Divorce

God never intended divorce but under certain prescribed conditions He allowed it. We understand Scripture to recognize specific situations where divorce is a legitimate option.

a. An immoral and unrepentant partner

When one's spouse is guilty of sexual immorality and is unwilling to repent and live faithfully with the marriage partner, Jesus indicates that there is the option of divorce. This provision does not imply that a divorce should be considered after an isolated case of unfaithfulness, but only where there is indication that the unfaithful partner refuses to repent and change his/her behaviour. As in other situations, every effort should first be made to bring restoration and healing to the marriage relationship. The help of a qualified counsellor can provide objectivity and wisdom in such a situation (Matthew 5:32, 19:9).

POSTION: If, after a period of time and every effort at reconciliation has failed, the church will accept and support a decision to remain married or a decision to seek to divorce the immoral and unrepentant partner.

b. Desertion by an unbeliever

When one partner in a marriage relationship is an unbeliever and willfully and permanently deserts the believing partner, the Scripture in 1 Corinthians 7:12-15 provides some specific counsel: *"But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace."*

The key phrase in this passage is found in verse 15, *"the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases..."* Again, it should be stated that the believer should made every effort to make the marriage as workable as possible (1 Peter 3:1-7), and not give cause for the unbelieving partner to leave the marriage. If, however, he or she chooses to leave the marriage, the Christian is not under obligation to plead, beg, bargain, or to force the non-Christian partner to remain married. Rather ... *"let him/her leave..."*

POSITION: Where a believer has made every effort to make the marriage as workable as possible, then willful desertion by the unbelieving spouse is legitimate grounds for divorce.

We would always counsel toward reconciliation where possible, however, when grounds for divorce are biblical, the possibility of reconciliation no longer seems present, and the church has spent much time in prayer and counsel with the couple or individual involved, then we as a church must recognize and accept the choice of divorce.

D. CONCERNING REMARRIAGE

Where reconciliation is not possible and a believer wishes to remarry, such a person should seek the counsel of the Elders of the church. Where there is not the grace to live alone or as a single parent, and where there is agreement by the Elders of the church, a remarriage may take place. The church will seek to provide guidance and support of the persons involved.

1) Remarriage of the Divorced Person

a. From Jesus' teaching – Matthew 5:31, 32

We understand scripture to teach that divorce is permitted on the grounds of ongoing immorality. If divorce is enacted on any other ground, marriage to, or by the divorcee is considered adultery. If ongoing immorality has been the basis for the divorce, then remarriage would not be considered committing adultery. In other words, biblically legitimized divorce allows for remarriage. (See item C.1)

POSITION: Remarriage is permissible when a marriage has been dissolved by divorce because of ongoing immorality.

b. From Paul's teaching – 1 Corinthians 7

In verses 6-9 Paul addresses the unmarried and the widows. He says it is good for them to stay single, but he clearly opens the door for marriage to them. (See also verses 27-28)

POSITION: Remarriage is permissible when a marriage and divorce occurred prior to salvation.

When the marriage and divorce occurred prior to salvation, we recognize the grace of God in providing full forgiveness for every sin. *“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.”* (2 Corinthians 5:17) (See also 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Psalms 103:10-12)

2) Remarriage of the Deserted Person

In 1 Corinthians 7:12-16, the Apostle Paul gives some specific advice to those who are married:

- a. *To the Christian Couple (vs. 10-11)*
 - i. do not divorce
 - ii. if you divorce, remain single or be reconciled
- b. *To a Christian married to a non-Christian (vs. 12-14)*
 - i. stay together
 - ii. if the unbeliever divorces, let him/her leave

The believer is not under bondage (legal obligation, see Romans 7:2) and so remarriage is open to the person (vs. 15, 27, 28).

POSITION: Where a marriage is dissolved by reason of “desertion” (see item C.1.b) by the unbelieving partner, the privilege of remarriage is open to the believer.

It is obvious that most cases pertaining to separation, divorce and remarriage are surrounded with unique difficulties and circumstances. Therefore each situation must be considered individually. Requests regarding these situations will be referred to the Elders for assessment and counsel.

E. GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING OUR PAPER ON MARRIAGE, SEPARATION, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

(Affirmed October 21, 1998)

1) Dealing with Divorce

(Basic Steps to Consider in Dealing with Divorced or Divorcing People)

a. Dealing with the Divorce Process

In the case of a couple considering or pursuing divorce the following steps will be taken:

- i. Upon awareness, the Elders will contact both parties. This initial contact will be an attempt to understand the nature and severity of the marital conflict. Both parties will be questioned regarding their willingness to:
 - meet with a qualified counsellor, and
 - pursue reconciliation

- Individuals may be willing to pursue one of these, both, or none. For example, a spouse may be willing to meet a counsellor in order to minimize conflict over the children after the divorce but not willing to pursue reconciliation.
- ii. If both parties are willing to meet, then a pastor or qualified counsellor will be asked to meet with them as soon as possible.
 - iii. Regardless of whether the grounds are biblically legitimate or not, the church believes that divorce is never God's best and therefore will not support a divorce action until a "bona fide" effort has been made toward reconciliation. The following exemplifies a "bona fide" effort:
 - A genuine recognition and wholehearted repentance regardless of their own wrongfulness in the relationship. This would include clear attempts to change these attitudes and behaviours.
 - A willingness to prayerfully seek reconciliation in the marriage and to enter into marital counselling with a qualified counsellor.
 - A willingness to join or be assigned a fellowship group for the specific purpose of joining together in prayer for the reconciliation of the couple to God and each other.
 - iv. If either or both parties are members or adherents of the church and they are unwilling to make a "bona fide" effort toward reconciliation, then the steps of Matthew 18: 15-20 will be employed for the purpose of repentance and restoration. This means the use of the Church's "Restoring One Another in Love" paper and the involvement of the Elder's Restoration Committee.
 - v. The church will recognize and support a decision for divorce where one party:
 - has biblical grounds
 - has made a "bona fide" effort at reconciliation, and
 - reconciliation either due to a marriage of the other spouse or evidence of his/her long-term unwillingness to repent.

b. Dealing with People Already Divorced

In the case where a person enters the church and is already divorced and they and their former spouse are not married, or where a person in the church is contemplating marrying a divorced person, the following steps will be taken:

- i. Upon awareness, either a pastor or an Elder will contact the individual. This meeting will attempt to establish the present status of the relationship and where possible verify the facts with the divorced spouse.
- ii. If in the judgement of the Elders, the individual entered the divorce:
 - on biblical grounds
 - having made a "bona fide" effort at reconciliation, and
 - in the belief that no reconciliation seemed possible,

then the church will recognize and support the divorce decision.
- iii. If in the judgement of the Elders, the individual entered the divorce:

- not on biblical grounds, or
- not having made a “bona fide” effort at reconciliation, and
- where reconciliation may still be possible,

then the individual will be questioned regarding their willingness to pursue reconciliation.

iv. If in the judgement of the Elders, the individual entered the divorce:

- not on biblical grounds, or
- not having made a “bona fide” effort at reconciliation, and
- where reconciliation is no longer possible,

then the church will recognize but not support the decision for divorce and will counsel the individual to make a statement of confession of their sinfulness in the matter. A statement of confession may be made in such a manner and directed toward such parties as may be appropriate in the circumstances as deemed necessary by the Elders.

v. If they are willing to pursue reconciliation, then the steps toward a “bona fide” effort will be implemented first.

vi. If and when both parties are willing to meet, then the pastor or qualified counsellor will be asked to meet with them.

vii. If, after ongoing discussion, the individual is unwilling to pursue reconciliation where reconciliation is still possible in the view of the Elders, then the steps in our “Restoring One Another In Love” paper (see Section 6.2) will be employed for the purpose of repentance and reconciliation.

c. *Dealing with the Divorced and Remarried*

Where a member or adherent of the church is divorced and they or their former spouse are remarried, the following steps will be taken:

i. Upon awareness, a pastor or an Elder will contact the individual. This contact will seek to determine the circumstances leading up to the divorce and where possible, verify the facts with the previous spouse.

ii. If the individual entered the divorce:

- having biblical grounds, and
- having made a “bona fide” effort at reconciliation, and
- in the belief that no reconciliation seemed possible,

then the church will recognize and support the divorce decision.

iii. If the individual entered the divorce either:

- not having biblical grounds, or
- not having made a “bona fide” effort at reconciliation, or
- while reconciliation with the partner was still possible,

then the church will recognize but not support the decision for divorce and will counsel the individual to make a statement of confession of their

sinfulness in the matter. A statement of confession may be made in such manner and directed toward such parties as may be appropriate in the circumstances as deemed necessary by the Elders.

- iv. Where such a statement is made or has been made in the satisfaction of the Elders, that person would be fully forgiven and accepted by the church.
- v. If they are unwilling to make such a statement, then steps in our “Restoring One Another In Love” paper (see Section 6.2) will be employed for the purpose of repentance and restoration.

2) The Christian Service of the Divorced or the Divorced and Remarried

a. Service in General

It seems clear that when those involved in a prior divorce or a divorce and remarriage recognize their failure and repent of their sins, they receive forgiveness and are accepted by the Lord as members of His body. As such, full restoration to the privileges and responsibilities of fellowship and service afforded all Christians occurs.

Furthermore, the gifts given by the Holy Spirit for service are not withdrawn because of moral failure, especially when moral failure has been repented of and forgiven. Therefore we agree that:

POSITION: Divorced and divorced and remarried persons who have been restored to fellowship with God may serve in the church according to their giftedness and according to the approval of the Elders. (Psalm 32, 51:10-12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

b. Service as Elders/Deacons

(Affirmed March 24, 1999)

It is evident from both the Old and New Testaments that the Lord requires a higher standard for the spiritual leaders of His people than He does for the ones being led. Spiritual leaders lead by example as well as by authority. Consider the example of Moses striking the rock. The key New Testament passages setting the qualifications for Deacons and Elders give stringent requirements that would exclude some Christians from qualifying. (1 Timothy 3:1-8; Titus 1:6-9)

The key phrase under consideration is “a one-wife husband”. This means a man totally devoted to one woman. It seems clear from the context that the qualifications are present and established qualities of character and testify to the work of sanctification in the life of believers as God’s grace restores and transforms each one of us into His image. Although we believe that the qualification “husband of one wife” refers mostly to present and established marital stability, we recognize that the far-reaching effects of divorce make it difficult for a previously divorced person to meet the other biblical qualifications, especially for the position of Elder or Pastor.

Therefore we agree that:

POSITION: Divorced and remarried persons may be appointed to the office of deacon provided they meet the biblical qualifications. Because of more stringent requirements, such persons may not be appointed to the office or ministry of Elder or Pastor except if the divorce took place prior to salvation.

6.4 **ABORTION**

(Affirmed April 1989; Reaffirmed February 15, 2012)

A. PREAMBLE

Life is a gift of God and very precious (Genesis 1:27; Psalms 139:13-16). Therefore, we are for life. The seemingly wanton taking of life by means of abortion is undermining the sacredness of life in our land. There is need for us in our church fellowship to become informed regarding abortion. As Elders, we want to affirm the position of our larger Mennonite Brethren General Conference related to abortion as follows:

B. M.B. GENERAL CONFERENCE POSITION

“We believe that man was made in the image of God; that an attack on man’s life constitutes a violation of God’s expressed will; that life begins for man at conception and that even in the unborn state, man possesses life as God gave it with all potential for development into knowledge of, and faith in God as Creator, Savior and Lord.”

Because we so believe, we affirm:

- 1) That all abortion, that is the deliberate termination of a pregnancy except where a mother’s life is seriously threatened, is a violation of God’s will.
- 2) That we as brotherhood support and encourage those in the helping professions (social workers, nurses, doctors, psychiatrists, and ministers) to stand firm in this view and to seek to bring their colleagues and the community at large to see how abortion seriously contributes to the erosion of human values.
- 3) That we as individuals inform ourselves as best we can towards a realistic understanding of the whole issue of abortion with its related considerations, and that we give expression to such understanding as we have opportunity, and that when we can do so, without suggestion of compromise, we align ourselves with like-minded groups to strengthen our witness in the community.
- 4) That we as individuals and as church(es), share the above concerns with the elected representatives of our governments, influencing the formulation of the laws of our land with respect to abortion.
- 5) That we recognize our responsibility for social, moral, and spiritual conditions in our communities, and the shaping of attitudes, and that we seek to fulfil such responsibilities by:
 - a. Lending support to whatever preventive measures we can conscientiously support.
 - b. Seeking to develop attitudes of social acceptance of the single parent without endorsing their actions leading to the pregnancy.
 - c. Helping to provide caring facilities for those who choose to let their pregnancy go full-term rather than choosing abortion.

C. IMPLICATIONS

- 1) We need to realize the New Testament view of fighting evil is different than the Old Testament. For example in the Old Testament the adulterer was to be put to death (Leviticus 20:10). In the New Testament, the woman taken in adultery was forgiven by Jesus (John 8:4-11).

In the Old Testament, armies were arrayed to destroy evil in the name of the Lord (1 Samuel 17:26). In the New Testament Jesus calls us to be peacemakers (Matt. 5:9).

In the New Testament when the soldiers came to take Jesus, Peter was prepared to use force and cut off the High Priest's servant's ear (Matthew 26:51-53; John 18:10-11, 36). Jesus indicated that His kingdom is not of this world otherwise He would have called an army together and fought. The New Testament fight against evil is a spiritual one.

- 2) Our position is one of persuading people not to sin but not physically forcing people not to sin. If we are no longer allowed to speak and persuade we will then and only then be prepared to break the law of the land (Acts 4:18-20).

6.5 THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY

(Affirmed January 15, 1986; Reaffirmed February 15, 2012)

We believe...

- 1) The term “Baptism by the Spirit” best describes the initial conversion experience of an individual rather than a post conversion experience.
 - a. All the Pre-Pentecost passages that use the words "baptize you with the Holy Spirit" speak of that which happened to those on the Day of Pentecost, who heard the Word, who repented and who were baptized (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:37-39).
 - b. The term “baptized by (the) Spirit” following the Day of Pentecost, is only used to describe how believers were initiated into the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:3-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13).
- 2) It is God’s will that Christians keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit through obedience to His Word and to the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-20). The infilling of the Holy Spirit may come subsequent to conversion and may be accompanied by various manifestations of the Spirit. We should avoid making any one manifestation “normative.”
 - a. Every Christian’s response must be a response of faith in Jesus Christ and in obedience to His eternal Word (John 7:37-39; Galatians 3:1-5).
 - b. Obedience to the promptings of the Holy Spirit will lead to spiritual freedom and victory over the flesh (Romans 8:1-4; Galatians 5:16-18).
 - c. Disobedience to the Word of God and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit grieves the Holy Spirit and results in carnality and spiritual defeat (Ephesians 4:30; Galatians 5:17-21).
- 3) The gifts of the Spirit are sovereignly given by the Spirit of God to enable the members of His Body to minister in the power of the spirit. It is further evident from Scripture that no one gift is complete in itself and on the other hand no gift should be despised as unnecessary (1 Corinthians 12:14-31).
 - a. Gifts of the Spirit are given for the good of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7).
 - b. Gifts are given for doing the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:7-16).
 - c. Gifts are given as a trust and therefore we are accountable to God and to the body of believers regarding our use of them (1 Peter 4:7-11).
 - d. Gifts are to be exercised in the context of sensitivity and orderliness (1 Corinthians 13; 1 Corinthians 14:26-39).
- 4) We commit ourselves to be open to the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives and to lead our congregation in a greater understanding of these truths. We will seek to do this by being good examples, by faithfully preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God and by encouraging individuals in their discovery and exercise of the spiritual gifts which God has given to them.

6.6 **BELIEVERS AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

(Affirmed 2006; Reaffirmed February 15, 2012)

A. THE REALITY OF SATAN AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Every human being is affected by the reality of spiritual warfare. The Bible teaches us there is a fallen angel whose name is Satan. Job 1:7 warns he roams through the earth going back and forth in it. 1 Peter 5:8 says he prowls like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Jesus warned us he comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). We have every reason for believing his handiwork inspires wars and great human conflict. Indeed, Revelation 12:9 teaches us Satan leads the whole world astray. 2 Corinthians 11:14 even tells us he masquerades as an angel of light.

For many who are unaware of his schemes, he easily deceives them into thinking his intentions are good, and so they become victims of his insidious designs. He is at work to blind the minds of unbelievers, causing them to discount the message of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan is called the ruler of the kingdom of the air and the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient to God (Ephesians 2:2). His impact is felt widely, and many are affected by his destructive designs on the human race and his hatred toward God. He is ultimately the leader of everyone who has failed to submit to God.

Satan has a host of angels called demons who have great effect in this world. We are not told their number, but we know they have spread out throughout the earth to bring chaos and destruction to people. According to Revelation 9:20 and 16:14, they are able to perform miracles and bring about false religions. They deceive people and inspire false doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1). They are able to torment people and even bring sickness into their lives (Luke 6:18). The ultimate effect of their work is known when an individual becomes possessed either by a demon or a group of demons. This can be referred to as being demonized, in which an individual has lost all power to control himself and whose will is ruled by demons. Jesus spent much of his ministry driving out demons from people who were so afflicted. The spiritual reality of wickedness in the heavenly realms has affected everyone. The apostle Paul states it this way, *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”* (Ephesians 6:12)

B. THE MIRACLE OF NEW BIRTH

God is concerned over the spiritual dilemma facing human beings. The Bible tells us that *“while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). Everyone who has surrendered his or her life into the hands of Jesus has witnessed an astounding miracle. Something new has been born. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* The new birth has not only assured us of heaven when we die, it has changed everything here and now. This is especially felt in the realm of spiritual warfare.

Colossians 1:13 tells us, *“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.”* This rescue from the dominion of darkness is a rescue from Satan and his dark kingdom of demons and their effects. Satan is no longer able to do to followers of Jesus what he is able to do to those who do not know Christ. The most explicit description of this new relationship is found in Ephesians 2:1-7, *“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated*

us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

We conclude conversion is a transfer from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Christ. Christians now live in a different realm. They are not dead in Satan's grasp but alive in Christ's care. They are no longer the property of the evil one, for they have been purchased with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19). Therefore Christians cannot be demonized. They cannot have demons living in their bodies, since even their very bodies are now "*temples of the Holy Spirit*" (1 Corinthians 6:19). Every person who is in Christ should reflect on the great love of God, who has made this possible.

C. THE REALITY OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE AFTER CONVERSION

Many Christians are confused about what to make of spiritual warfare after conversion. Many testify they still sense a great warfare around their lives. Some have even wondered whether a demon is living inside them, especially when they find themselves struggling with sin that doesn't immediately disappear when they come to Christ. Some Christians have sensed demonic attack, and even a few have experienced bizarre behaviour. What are they to make of this? A great deal of confusion reigns.

We must begin by making two very important observations. The first is that it is necessary to affirm the genuineness of the experience of spiritual warfare after conversion. We take very seriously the reports of Christians in their warfare with demons. The second observation surrounds itself around the value of these experiences. We believe experiences with demons to be an unreliable guide to truth. Demons frequently lie and attempt to deceive. Any theology of spiritual warfare cannot take as its starting point the experience itself. Any experience with demons can be interpreted in many different ways. We believe the only reliable interpreter of experience is the Scriptures. The Bible is the Word of God, which accurately teaches us how to interpret our experiences with demons. We must learn to trust what it teaches and not what demons want us to believe.

D. WHAT SCRIPTURES TEACH US ABOUT CHRISTIANS AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

We would make the following three observations about spiritual warfare and Christians.

1) ***The Bible teaches us believers in Christ cannot be possessed by demons, nor can they have demons living in their bodies.***

We base this conclusion upon numerous scriptures; especially those already cited which point out conversion is a transfer from darkness into light. We add to these, the following three important passages of scripture.

- a. *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own."* (1 Corinthians 6:19)
- b. *"...For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." (2 Corinthians 6:14-16)*
- c. *"We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him."* (1 John 5:18)

We must therefore conclude whenever anyone is truly converted to Christ, Christ has also provided for him or her a special protection not afforded to them prior to their coming to Christ. Christians should therefore rest secure in the knowledge that Christ will never fail them, and they will never be handed over to demons inhabiting their bodies or souls.

2) ***Scripture warns believers are locked in genuine spiritual warfare.***

Although believers are protected from possession and defeat at the hand of Satan, we readily acknowledge a real and genuine warfare with the forces of evil all of our lives. The Bible teaches all temptation comes to us from one of three sources. The first is called the world. This is the influence of culture, which is at variance to the commands of Christ. The second source of temptation comes from our own flesh. This refers to the lower nature or the tendency toward sin found within each of us. The third source of temptation comes from Satan and the demonic realm. It is the task of Satan and his demons to influence and seduce believers into evil behaviour.

The apostle Paul acknowledged this reality when he wrote telling believers their ultimate fight was not against flesh and blood, but against forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12). Scripture acknowledges a number of ways in which this warfare is fought. The first and most obvious avenue of this warfare is in temptation to sin. Satan is referred to as the 'tempter,' and indeed, he is involved in tempting believers (1 Thessalonians 3:5). We also know Satan schemes and persuades believers to stray from Christ. The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthian believers, sounds the following warning, *"But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."* (2 Corinthians 11:3) Revelation 12:10 calls Satan the 'accuser of the brethren' who accuses them before God.

Clearly Satan is involved in taking every opportunity for slandering believers for any shortcoming in their behaviour. We learn from Acts 5:3, that Satan can even so affect believers that their hearts become filled with thoughts, intentions and actions that are in disobedience to God. Finally, 1 Thessalonians 2:18 even informs us Satan can hinder believers from being effective in their ministry and in their service to Christ.

Most troubling of all of Satan's activity is that he can even ensnare or trap believers into given forms of behaviour (1 Timothy 3: 7; 2 Timothy 2: 24-26). Ephesians 4:27 teaches us how he does this, *"In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold."* Evidently some believers in the church in Ephesus had allowed their anger against other believers to spill over and remain unchecked. Satan had used this sin to gain a foothold into their behavioral patterns, so his activity was felt throughout the church. Having sensed his advantage, Satan continued to fan the flame. His activity was allowed to become rampant so as to bring great harm into the lives of believers.

We should be careful to note we must never blame our evil behaviour on the devil. James 1:14 reminds us that *"each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed."* We must come to terms with our part in our own sin. Satan uses our own evil behaviour and exploits this situation to full effect.

Ephesians 4 cites a number of sins which we are warned to avoid. These include theft, unwholesome talk, bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander and malice. The next chapter warns specifically against sexual immorality and impurity. In a culture fascinated with sexual sins, believers are warned to avoid pornography and any other form of sexual expression divorced from God's plan in marriage. Ephesians also warns against obscenity, foolish talk and coarse joking. All of these things are out of place with God's people. These forms of sin do indeed give Satan a foothold into the behavioural patterns of believers.

We conclude while Satan is unable to gain entrance into the bodies and souls of Christians,

he is still able to bring great disruption to their lives. If left to get out of control, he gains advantage against them and all relationships become effected by his damaging influence. Christians can then become confused by his assaults, so much so they are unable to resist him effectively and hence become ineffective in their lives. We know of numerous believers who have become obsessed with Satan's devices. Satan uses this to great advantage. They become focused on the power of the evil one to the point they are insecure of their position in Christ. Some have even become so confused they have imagined the relentlessness of Satan's attacks to be evidence of their own possession by demons, and so have lurched into hopeless and bizarre personal behaviour. Consequently they find themselves out of step with the Holy Spirit and unable to live the victorious Christian life Christ had planned for them.

3) ***Scripture promises believers they can be victorious in their struggle with Satan.***

In 2 Corinthians 2:11-12, the apostle Paul warns us Satan is attempting to outwit us. But, lest we find that too disconcerting he adds, *"we are not ignorant of his schemes."* We are most effective in this when we are aware of what Christ intends for us. The nature of temptation becomes apparent not when we become focused on Satan, but rather when we are focused on the truths of Scripture. The New Testament more frequently reminds us of the desires of Christ than the wiles of Satan. By focusing on Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, we have authority to resist Satan.

But even in our assaults by Satan, we are given an impressive promise. James 4:7 assures us of the following: *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* The promise comes to us in the proper order. First we submit to God. After that, resistance to the devil becomes possible. Finally comes the promise. Once Satan becomes aware of our ability to resist him he loses his confidence and hastily bids his retreat.

How then can we be effective in our resistance of Satan? Again, the Scriptures show us the way. Believers should study Ephesians 6:10-18 in order to gain confidence they will be victorious in spiritual warfare. We are told to concentrate on truth, righteousness and to have a readiness to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are reminded of the effectiveness of faith, of the assurance of our salvation, of the power of the Spirit and the effectiveness of the Word of God. All of these virtues are to be worn in the way an ancient soldier wore his armor on the day of battle.

Here is how the Apostle Paul describes it: *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."*

6.7 CELEBRATING THE LORD'S DAY

(Affirmed 2006; Reaffirmed February 15, 2012)

A. INTRODUCTION

Willingdon Church has worship services both on Sunday morning and Saturday night. Believers will typically make a decision around which day they choose to worship. Multiple worship opportunities assure that in a world of diverse and conflicting schedules, we can all find a time for worship every week.

But this opens a number of questions that committed Christians need to address. Are we free to worship on any day we choose, or does God mandate which day he shall be worshipped? Are we free to tack on a worship service at the end of a busy day or does God have specific commands around how we worship? Is the 4th commandment, which demands that we observe the Sabbath and keep it holy, still valid for New Testament believers? Are there specific instructions from Scripture that tell Christians how to structure their week, and how to make God our first priority?

B. WHAT DOES THE 4TH COMMANDMENT SAY?

The 4th commandment teaches us two very important things. First, it teaches us that God wants one day each week to be holy, that is, it is to be different than all other days. It is for that reason we stress that one day each week is to be dedicated to worship. We are not free to ignore this command. Secondly it teaches that we are to refrain from work one day each week. God wants us to rest. He commands that we take one day when we simply refuse to work.

C. IS THE 4TH COMMANDMENT STILL VALID FOR NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS?

Yes! The same principles that were laid out in the 4th commandment are valid today. God has not reduced the Ten Commandments to the Nine Commandments. But the way that Christians celebrate the 4th command is different from the way it was celebrated in the Old Testament.

The book of Acts records believers observing Sabbath, which of course was held on Saturday. But gradually the inevitable separation between Judaism and the Christian faith occurred. Believers were persecuted and were no longer welcome in the Temple and Synagogues. The New Testament records that believers began to worship on Sunday. Acts 20:7 says, "On the first day of the week we came together to break bread."

In 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, the apostle Paul commands the Corinthian church regarding the practice of collecting an offering: *"Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made."*

A similar pattern can be seen in John's statement about the visions he saw, described in the book of Revelation 1:9-10: *"I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit..."* This passage shows that early Christians began to use the phrase, "The Lord's Day," rather than the word "Sabbath," and worshipped on Sunday rather than Saturday.

Historically, and with only a few exceptions, the entire church of Jesus Christ has followed the tradition of the early church to make Sunday rather than Saturday our day of worship and rest. We remember that even while God rested on the 7th day after his work of creation, that Jesus rose on

the 1st day, indicating the beginning of a new creation. The 4th command is then interpreted as an opportunity for rest, fellowship and worship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

D. ARE WE FREE TO MAKE ANY DAY OUR DAY OF REST, WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP?

Yes! Colossians 2:16-17 says, *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”* The New Testament warns about an improper, legalistic interpretation of the 4th commandment. Jesus spent a great portion of his ministry warning about the attitude of the Pharisees toward the Sabbath. Their rules around the day had become contrived and were filled with rules that formed an external religion. It was keeping the 4th command without dealing with the heart. The point is not that we should abandon any thought of making one day a week as the day of worship. We should rather beware of the legalistic traditions of the Pharisees. We also are no longer required to keep it in a Jewish way, nor is it necessary that it must be on Saturday, or for that matter on Sunday. What is necessary is that believers learn the principles of worship, rest and fellowship with Christ at the center.

E. WHY DID GOD GIVE THE COMMANDMENT ABOUT REST AND WORSHIP?

Jesus said, *“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”* (Mark 2:27) In other words, the purpose of Sabbath was to provide us with a benefit, not to test our ability to keep rules. Tremendous benefits come to us from keeping a weekly pattern of work and rest. Taking a day of worship and rest allows us to be refreshed, to consider our lives, to stay focused on God, and to remember the things that matter most. It keeps our hearts and minds stayed on obedience, faith and love for Christ.

F. WHAT PRINCIPLES AROUND THE LORD’S DAY ARE HELPFUL TO BELIEVERS?

We must be wary about legalism when it comes to practicing a day of worship and rest. We counsel believers to use the Lord’s Day as a way of helping them reorient their lives and give priority to the kingdom of God. Here are some of the principles that we believe are helpful in observing the Lord’s Day so as to make it a priority in our lives.

1) *Make sure that a weekly time of worship is a priority.*

Do not miss worship. Make it a way of telling the Lord that you value relationship with him more than all other things. This then becomes a test of priorities and value.

2) *Make sure that a weekly time of worship and rest lasts for a full day.*

If at all possible, set aside a 24-hour period of time. Do not deviate from this pattern. There will be enough time for work during the other 6 days. In many ways, this becomes a test of our faith. We believe that honouring God by not working for 24 hours will not handicap us, but will allow us to grow in grace and holiness.

3) *Keep all work to acts of charity or matters of necessity.*

4) *Exercise freedom on this day.*

Some believers will not shop on this day. Others keep from business discussions. Many decide not to mow lawns, or even housework. Some decide to make this a day for fellowship with believers. Others choose to use this day to be alone. All these things are matters of conscience. We counsel all believers who are serious about following Christ, to search their hearts as to how to best honour God on this day. The Lord’s Day should be pursued out of

love and devotion to Christ. It should inspire holiness and faith. It should not be used as a way of judging the behaviour of others, or becoming legalistic. Jesus wanted us to have a benefit from this day. We encourage believers to share with each other how the keeping of the Lord's Day has been a benefit to them, and so encourage each other.

6.8 HUMAN SEXUALITY

(Affirmed February 03, 2018)

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to examine key biblical texts which clarify God's perspective on human sexuality and provide a foundation for pastoral application in our day.¹

B. CORE CONVICTIONS

- a. Jesus came that we might all have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).
- b. Sexual practice really matters and we all need to grow in our understanding of human sexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18-20).
- c. We all depend on the written revelation of God, the Bible, to receive God's perspective on human sexuality (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- d. As we move from the brokenness of sin to wholeness in Christ, we must extend grace to one another without compromising the truth of God (John 1:14).

C. BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is an exclusive, covenant relationship for life between one man and one woman, publicly recognized, consummated by heterosexual union, and providing an environment for bearing and nurturing children (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; Eph. 5:31).

D. GOD'S PURPOSES FOR MARRIAGE

1) *A Context to Experience the Joy of Sexual Intimacy*

God created human beings "in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27-28). Human sexuality is a gift from God, not of our human invention, designed for oneness and the continuation of human life, to be enjoyed in the union of one man and one woman. The Scriptures counsel marriage partners to not deny each other sexual intimacy, which is both natural and God's design for marriage (1 Cor. 7:1-5).

Marriage is introduced in response to God's observation that "it is not good that the man should be alone." So God declares: "I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:18-20). The marriage relationship is modeled after God, who does not exist in isolation, but in loving relationship. God wanted someone like Adam, but different from him, to be his companion. He created someone "suitable for him" to complement him. Man and woman differ in sexuality but are equals as bearers of God's image and in their standing before God. Together

¹ Canadians have diverse ways of practicing marriage in a pluralistic society. Our society has determined that marriage can be lifelong or temporary, legalized or common-law, same-sex or heterosexual, with one spouse or a succession of spouses. Cohabitation, for many, is a valid alternative to marriage. Canadian law requires only three elements for marriage: exclusivity, public recognition (lawful) and the union of two people (monogamous). Marriage, under Canadian law, requires neither a life-long pledge nor a heterosexual union. Canadians have different understandings of sexuality. The elevation of self and the unrestrained pursuit of sexual love, as higher values, have challenged the biblical foundation for heterosexual marriage. Sexual activity has become the domain of two consenting persons, with or without love, committed or uncommitted, heterosexual or otherwise (Civil Marriage Act, S.C. 2005, c. 33)

they express the wonderful duality of gender that God created in humanity – “and behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:26-31; Eph. 5:31-32).

Jesus bases his teaching on the creation mandate. Weaving together Genesis 1:28, “he who created them from the beginning made them male and female” (Mt. 19:4), and Genesis 2:24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (Matt. 19:5), Jesus taught that, at its heart, marriage is a unique union, between a man and a woman, where they become one flesh in a life-long covenant relationship (Mt. 19:4-6). The intimacy of the marriage union demands faithfulness for life (Romans 7:2-3; cf. Mt. 22:30; Mark 10:9; 1 Cor. 7:39).

In marriage, God himself knits together a man and a woman – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually (1 Cor. 6:16-20; Eph. 5:31). Heterosexual union within covenant marriage offers a depth of intimacy unparalleled in any other relationship. It is a pleasurable celebration of the commitment of two partners (Prov. 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; Eccl. 9:9).

2) A Living Model of God’s Covenant Faithfulness

The Scriptures use the word “covenant”, in a variety of ways, to describe the loyalty that endures in bonded relationship (Genesis 2:16, 3:15, 9:8-17, 12:1-3; 15:1-16; Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 30:3; 2 Samuel 7:16; Jeremiah 31:31). The concept of covenant is rooted in the understanding of God’s covenant faithfulness in His relationship to His people. He will always fulfill what He has said He will do, no matter the unfaithfulness of the other party. This theme permeates the Old and New Testaments. When God makes a covenant, He will never break it. It is an eternal commitment on His part to the covenant partner.

The Bible teaches that marriage was designed to picture God’s covenant relationship with his people. God is steadfast in his love and ever faithful toward his people. The Old Testament prophets express God’s desire that Israel be like a virgin bride who gives herself willingly, continually and exclusively to her husband (Jer. 2:2), so becoming his delight (Is. 62:5). God earnestly desires faithfulness (Ex. 20:5; cf. 2 Timothy 2:13; James 4:5). In Malachi, God stands as a witness to the marriage covenant (Mal. 2:14-16).

Jesus, the Son of God, gave his life to make possible a new covenant between God and his people. The New Testament writers refer to the church as the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:21-33; cf. Mark 2:18; John 3:29). The marriage relationship, including sexual union, is to image the loving union between Christ and the church. The wife is to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. In fact, marriage points forward to the consummation of history and the glorious relationship that God’s people will enjoy with Christ forever (Rev. 19:7; 21:9-10; 21:2).

3) Procreation

In the Scriptures, God charges men and women to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen. 1:28; 9:1). As a sacred trust, the marriage relationship was designed to have and nurture children. God created; Adam and Eve procreated. To have and lovingly nurture children is a marvelous way of portraying God’s nature and character (Eph. 6:4).

E. SEX OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE

The Bible teaches that all sexual acts, both physical and emotional, outside the covenant marriage relationship fall outside of God’s design and are sin (Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 21:8). These include, but are not limited to, fornication (sexual relations outside of covenant marriage), adultery (a married person having sexual relations with someone other than his or her spouse), bestiality (sexual relations with animals) and homosexuality (sexual relations with partners of the same sex) [Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:10].

In Scripture, sin has everything to do with relationships (Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:5; Ephesians 5:3-14). First, sin is to turn our backs on the God who wants to live in an intimate relationship with us; it is to live as if God's design and his purposes for us do not matter. Second, in the realm of sexual relationships, it is to turn from the gender created to complement us.

The term we translate as "sexual immorality"² is an umbrella term for all sexual activity outside of marriage (Mark 7:20-23). According to Jesus, all sexual sin defiles us. God intends that heterosexual marriage be the sole context for sexual union (intercourse). Hence, the biblical writers repeatedly warn against engaging in sexual intercourse outside the context of marriage (e.g., 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 18-20), a covenant relationship imaging the character and glory of God.

F. THE BIBLICAL CALL

1) *Spiritual Transformation*

The call to all human beings is to repent of their sin and trust in Jesus for salvation. Followers of Jesus submit to the work of the Holy Spirit and seek to be transformed into the likeness of Christ (Mark 8:34-38; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Romans 8:29, 12:1-2; Ephesians 2:1-10, 5:3; Colossians 3:1-11). The call to all who are living outside of heterosexual marriage is a call to abstinence - a chaste and celibate life (Matt. 19:11-12; 1 Cor. 7).

Although the demands of the gospel are challenging, the grace of God is more than sufficient to free us to be who we were created to be and to enable us to walk in fullness of life in God (Matt. 11:28; John 10:10; Gal. 5:1; 2 Peter 1:3-4). All are called to repentance, submission to God's will and transformation. Forgiveness, cleansing and healing are available to all.

2) *Identity in Christ*

Sexual orientation is not core to our identity. The call to all believers is to find their identity in Christ. Paul refers to all who have practiced sexual sin as "such were some of you" (1 Cor. 6:11), but in Christ they are now washed, sanctified and justified. They have a new standing and identity before God. As sons and daughters of the Father, they are a new creation, called to live a life of sexual purity (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:23-29; Eph. 1:3-14). They are to be holy as He is (1 Peter 1:13-16).

All humans have a strong need for relational intimacy. And, although sexual intercourse can fulfill a part of that need for intimacy, it is not necessary for intimacy or wholeness. All human beings made in the image of God can live full, rich lives without expressing their need for intimacy through sexual intercourse (e.g., Jesus, Paul). The church must recognize that singleness and celibacy does not make one a second class person, nor is a single person, regardless of orientation, merely a pre-married person.

3) *Church Family*

A relationship with Christ offers grace, forgiveness and salvation; it also offers us a new family community. The call to celibacy for those who yearn for a life-long partner can be a heavy burden. Meaningful, platonic relationships must become normative for Christian friendships rather than the exception (Romans 12:9-13). As the church develops this kind of relationship, there will be room for authenticity and accountability, a place for struggles and victories to be shared, and a place where sexual brokenness can be healed at the cross.

Many people who struggle with their sexual orientation recount experiences of psychological aloneness and relational isolation. This is an opportunity for the church family to be a gracious, inclusive, counter-cultural community that embraces the broken and struggling with

² *porneia* is a catch-all term for any form of sexual activity outside of marriage. Our English word "pornography" is derived from this term.

the love of Jesus, proclaims the good news of the gospel clearly and unashamedly, and provides a tangible, supportive family to all. Although not called to condone illicit sexual practice, the body of Christ is called to love all people. The church, called to be “a pillar and buttress of the truth,” is also “the household of God,” that is, God’s family (Romans 15:1-7; Ephesians 4:1-6, 29-32; 1 Tim. 3:15; Hebrews 13:1; 1 Peter 3:8; cf. John 13:34-35).

As the Church journeys together with people of every sexual orientation, it must become a place that is willing to understand the depths of the issues we all face, as well as the struggles, hurts and longings. It must also be a place that has been educated and is aware of these issues.

G. SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

Scripture teaches same-sex intercourse to be unnatural and in violation of the complementary image of God expressed in the maleness of man and the femaleness of woman (Romans 1:21-27). Regardless of genetic or hormonal causes, the call of God is to respectfully submit to his created design for life.

Same-sex sexual activity contradicts God’s purpose for men and women. Natural feelings of same-sex attraction do not preclude that homosexual practice is not sin. In Romans 1:26, “contrary to nature” refers to acts that are contrary to the created order. It does not mean “contrary to our subjective experience of what feels right or natural to us.”

The complementarity of a man and a woman are foundational to marriage. Two men, or two women, cannot become one flesh. They cannot reflect the union between Christ and his church. For this reason, same-sex relationships are expressly forbidden in the Old and New Testament Scriptures (Lev. 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10).³

God takes sexual sin very seriously. Among other sins (i.e., lack of hospitality and injustice in Ezekiel 16:49), God judges Sodom and Gomorrah for sexual sin (Gen. 19:4-5; Jude 7; 2 Peter 2:6). Paul rebukes the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 5). A faithful and committed same-sex relationship is no more permitted than any other sexual sin that is unfaithful and promiscuous. At the same time, homosexuality is not to be regarded as a special class of sin.

As mentioned above, the call to everyone is to submit their lives to God’s will. Everyone is marred by the stain of sin and all face the consequences of the fall on their sexualities. All will be held accountable for their actions. The implication for the same-sex attracted Christian is that they must also choose abstinence and celibacy. This is the same act of submission for all who claim to follow Christ. The call to take up one’s cross and follow Jesus is universal for all Christians (Mark 8:34-38).

H. PORNOGRAPHY

We live in a world that considers the public display of sexual images as normal. Through the means of literature, television, movies, the internet or other forms of media, the average person is exposed to hundreds of sexual images every day and this does not even include viewing pornography. Whereas in times past, financial cost, difficulty of access and public shame hindered the possession of pornography, the advent of the internet has largely removed these natural hindrances. Pornography can now be cost-free, immediately accessible with the click of a mouse and anonymous.

³ In 1 Cor. 6:9-10, Paul addresses both active and passive partners in same-sex relationships. *malakoi* is a pejorative term used for men who were effeminate; that is, for the younger, passive partners in a man-boy relationship or to refer to male prostitutes; *arsenokoitai* is a compound of “male” and “bed” and refers to a same-sex sexual relationship (this word is used in 1 Timothy 1:9-10 as well). These are the two words used in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (LXX), therefore suggesting that Paul is referring back to these Old Testament passages.

Contrary to this pattern of the world that promotes sexual lust of the eyes through pornography, the Bible says that the viewing of another person lustfully other than one's spouse is sin; thus, the viewing of pornography is sinful (Matt 5:27-28). Moreover, for those who indulge in pornography, it often is accompanied by guilt, shame, fear of exposure, lack of intimacy with God, and the absence of peace. Thus, for those who view pornography, the warning is clear; repent and do whatever it takes to flee from it (Matt 5:29-30; 1 Cor 6:9, 18; Eph 5:3).

Sadly, not only is our world immersed in such impurity, but many Christians, both married and single, also presently struggle with pornography. However, the good news of the Gospel is that we can be freed from the guilt and the power of sin, even the sin of viewing pornography. The call is to trust that Jesus died for this sin and to walk in sexual purity by Jesus' resurrection power and the leading of the Holy Spirit. The anti-dote to pornography is intimacy with God (1 Peter 1:13-16).

This walk of obedience requires faith in God, and our action. We are to rely on God the Holy Spirit through prayer that He may cleanse our hearts and give us strength to resist sexual temptation (Gal 5:16-21). However, this does not mean that Christians are to be passive in obedience, rather we need to daily make the choice to clear our minds from that which is impure, renew our minds with Scripture, lean on other Christians for spiritual support and set up practical boundaries to overcome temptation (Rom 12:1-2; Psalm 119:9-11; Phil 4:8; 2 Tim 2:22; Matt 5:29).

I. TRANSGENDER (GENDER DYSPHORIA)

There are only two biological sexes, male and female (Genesis 1:26-28). Gender, the expression of masculinity or femininity, may be environmentally and culturally conditioned, but it is always intimately tied to our biological sex.

Gender Dysphoria is a psychological term used to describe the distress experienced by a person whose experience of gender does not align with their biological sex. Transgender is an umbrella term for "the many ways in which people might experience and/or present and express their gender identities differently from people whose sense of gender identity is congruent with their biological sex."⁴

Gender Dysphoria exemplifies how humankind's separation from God has affected every aspect of human existence. People do not choose to experience gender dysphoria. They choose how to respond to the distress they are feeling. Often, these choices are difficult, especially when people experiencing gender dysphoria are stigmatized and rejected.

The pastoral challenge is to walk alongside those who struggle, while still maintaining God's design of gender. "Rather than reject the person facing such conflicts, the Christian community would do well to recognize the conflict and try to work with the person to find the least invasive ways to manage the dysphoria in keeping with their biological sex."⁵

⁴ Mark Yarhouse, *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*, Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015, p. 20

⁵ Mark Yarhouse, *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*, Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015, p. 144

Recommended Readings:

1. Allberry, Sam. Is God Anti-Gay? And Other Questions about Homosexuality. The Bible and Same-Sex Attraction (The Good Book Company, 2013)
2. Butterfield, Rosaria. Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ (Crown and Covenant, 2015)
3. DeYoung, Kevin. What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality? (Crossway, 2015)
4. Wilson, Todd. Mere Sexuality: Rediscovering the Christian Vision of Sexuality (Zondervan, 2017)
5. Yarhouse, Mark. Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture (InterVarsity Press, 2015)

Appendices

APPENDIX A: WILLINGDON CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

The following 20 pages is a copy of the complete and official signed document of Willingdon Church's Constitution and Bylaws, certified and filed with the Registrar of Companies on March 15, 2006.



File Number: S-50390

WILLINGDON CHURCH

I hereby certify that the documents attached hereto are copies of documents filed with the Registrar of Companies on March 15, 2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Townshend".

**RON TOWNSHEND
Registrar of Companies**

SOCIETY ACT
WILLINGDON CHURCH
CONSTITUTION

Part 1 - Name

1. The name of the Society is “Willingdon Church” (the “Society”)

Part 2 - Purposes

2. The purposes of the Society are:
 - (a) to advance the Christian religion by undertaking activities, programs and projects in pursuit of this purpose as are exclusively charitable at law, and in particular by:
 - (i) establishing, maintaining, and operating a Christian church in accordance with this constitution;
 - (ii) proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the church;
 - (iii) promoting the principles and teachings of the Holy Bible, the inspired and infallible Word of God, in the church;
 - (iv) fulfilling the Biblical mandate enunciated by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:18 - 20 to “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” by actively supporting and promoting Christian missions through the church;
 - (v) training the members of the church to be witnesses for the gospel;
 - (vi) through the church extending mercy and help to those in distress by reason of natural catastrophe and disaster, illness, old age, poverty, unemployment, war, and the like;
 - (vii) supporting charitable organizations engaged in bringing a Christian approach to public and social issues; and
 - (viii) providing for the financial support and security of ordained and unordained personnel of the church;

- (b) to receive, acquire, hold, maintain, invest, administer, distribute, and operate all types of property, directly or indirectly, through any form of ownership or to dispose of such property to religious and charitable organizations that are registered charities under the *Income Tax Act of Canada* in furtherance of the purposes of the Society stated in paragraphs (a) above; and
- (c) to do all such things as are incidental and ancillary to the attainment of the charitable purposes of the Society.

Part 3 - Non-Profit

- 3. The activities of the Society shall be carried on without purpose of gain for the members and any profits or other accretions to the Society shall be used in promoting the purposes of the Society. This clause is unalterable.

Part 4 - Dissolution

- 4. In the event of dissolution or winding up of the Society, all its remaining assets, after payment of liabilities, shall be distributed to the **British Columbia Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches** (the "Conference"), provided that the Conference is then a registered charity or qualified donee under the *Canada Income Tax Act*. In the event that the Conference no longer exists or is no longer a registered charity or qualified donee under the *Income Tax Act* at the time of dissolution or winding up of the Society, the remaining assets of the Society shall be distributed to such charities, registered under the provisions of the *Income Tax Act*, or such qualified donees allowed under the *Income Tax Act*, having purposes similar to the Society, as shall be designated by the members at a meeting of the Society by two-thirds or a greater number of the members of the Society who are not subject to discipline or suspension under the Bylaws and are present at the meeting. This clause is unalterable.

SOCIETY ACT
WILLINGDON CHURCH

BYLAWS

PART 1 - INTERPRETATION

1.1 Definitions

In these bylaws, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) "Administrative Committee" means the administrative committee elected by the Board of Elders in accordance with these Bylaws. Administrative Committee also means the directors of the Society;
- (b) "Bylaws" means the Bylaws of the Society;
- (c) "Board of Elders" means the Elders of the Society;
- (d) "Congregation Member" means every person who has been accepted into membership of the congregation of the church operated by the Society in accordance with the Policy Manual and these Bylaws;
- (e) "Constitution" means the constitution of the Society;
- (f) "Elder" means a person or Pastor recommended for the office of Elder by the Board of Elders and affirmed as an Elder by Congregation Members in accordance with the Policy Manual and the Bylaws. Elder also means Member of the Society;
- (g) "Member" means every person who becomes and remains a Member of the Society in accordance with the Bylaws;
- (h) "Pastor" or "Pastors" means a person called by the Board of Elders and affirmed as a Pastor by Congregation Members in accordance with the Policy Manual and the Bylaws;
- (i) "Ordinary Resolution" has the meaning given to that term in the *Society Act*;
- (j) "Policy Manual" means the policies of church doctrine, governance, practice, operations and order of the church operated by the Society, adopted by the Board of Elders, as amended by the Board of Elders from time to time;
- (k) "Society" means the society incorporated under the name Willingdon Church;

- (l) "Society Act" means the *Society Act* of British Columbia in force and all amendments to it;
- (m) "Special Resolution" has the meaning given to that term in the *Society Act*;
- 1.2 Words importing the singular include the plural and vice versa; and words importing a male person include a female person and a corporation.

PART 2 - POLICY MANUAL

- 2.1 The church government, organization, and activities of the Society shall be conducted in accordance with the Policy Manual, unless the Bylaws otherwise provide.

PART 3 - MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 The Members of the Society are the applicants for incorporation of the Society, and those persons who have been recommended for the office of Elder by the Board of Elders, and been affirmed as an Elder by Congregation Members in accordance with the Policy Manual and the Bylaws, and who have accepted the appointment as Elder, and who have not ceased to be Members.
- 3.3 Every Member must uphold the Constitution and comply with the Bylaws.
- 3.4 Every Member must subscribe to the following statement of faith:

WILLINGDON STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. GOD

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- a) We believe in God the Father, the Creator and Sustainer of this universe, who in His infinite wisdom and love planned the redemption of mankind and accomplished it through Jesus Christ.
- b) We believe in Jesus Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the virgin Mary, lived a perfect life, was crucified for our sins, rose from the dead and was exalted to the right hand of God.
- c) We believe in the Holy Spirit who effects redemption in the lives of those who believe in Christ. He convicts, guides, teaches, rebukes, indwells, empowers, comforts, intercedes, unites believers into one body, and glorifies Christ.

Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4-6; Ps. 139; Is. 40; Mt. 28:19; Jn. 1:1, 18; 4:24; 15:26; Rom. 8:1-17, 26-27; 2 Cor. 3:17; 5:19; 13:14; Phil. 2:6-8; 1 Tim. 3:16; 6:15-16; Heb. 11:6; Jude 2-5.

2. THE REVELATION OF GOD

We believe that God has made His power and deity known in creation. He revealed Himself also in word and deed in the Old Testament. He revealed Himself supremely and finally in the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament. We believe that all Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, are inspired by God as men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit. We accept the entire Bible to be without error in the original writings, the infallible Word of God and the final, complete and authoritative guide for the faith and life of Christian discipleship.

Ps. 19; 119:105; Lk. 24:27, 44; Rom. 1:18-23; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; Heb. 1:1-2; 8:5-13.

3. MAN AND SIN

We believe that man was created in the image of God, sinless and in fellowship with God, with a free will to make moral choices. By sinning he brought death upon the whole human race. As a consequence all people are sinful by nature, guilty before God and in need of forgiveness and restoration.

Gen. 1:27; 3:1-19; Mt. 19:13-15; Rom. 3:10-18; 5:12; 18:21; Eph. 2:1-3.

4. SALVATION BY GRACE

We believe that there is one God and Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ, who by his substitutionary death has redeemed humanity from the power of sin, death and eternal punishment. We are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ, and by faith alone. Those who repent receive forgiveness of sins and by the power of the Holy Spirit are born into the family of God, and, as faithful disciples, joyfully obey God's Word.

Acts 2:42, 46; Eph. 1:13-14; 2:8-9; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 4:12; 9:15-28; 1 Jn. 1:9.

5. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer and transforms him or her into the image of Christ and enables the believer to witness to his or her Lord in daily life. The Christian lives in fellowship with God and other believers and joins a local church at baptism. The believer contributes to the building of the body of Christ with his or her material and spiritual gifts. By the means of grace provided by Christ, the believer seeks to grow to maturity as this is expressed particularly in the "fruit of the Spirit." Since the believer's body is a "temple of the Holy Spirit" he or she refrains from those things which harm the body and the mind. In striving for perfection the believer recognizes his or her complete dependence on God and, is constantly in need of His forgiving and cleansing grace.

Mt. 5:14-16; Jn. 12:26; 15:4-5; Rom. 6; 8:9-16; 12; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:1-4; 4:1-16; Tit. 2:11-14; Heb. 12:14; 1 Jn. 3:17-18.

6. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

We believe that the church was established through Christ's redemptive work in history, and that it is comprised of all who put their faith in Him and who are baptized by the Spirit into one body, regardless of nation, race or social class. Despite the diversity in congregations and denominations, the Holy Spirit creates unity among all the people of God. The local church is an association of baptized believers.

Mt. 18:15-35; Jn. 13:1-17; Jn. 17-21; Acts. 2:38-44; 15:1-28; 1 Cor. 12-14; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:10-22; 5:21, 25-27; 1 Thess. 5:11, 14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Rev. 5:9.

7. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

We believe that the Gospel is “the power of God unto salvation”, and that the command to make disciples of all nations is the primary task of the church. Every member of the church is called to participate in the mission of the church as he/she is enabled by God's grace.

Mt. 2:23; 11:5; 28:19-20; Acts. 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:18-20.

8. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

We believe that God through the Holy Spirit has endowed all His children with gifts for Christian ministries. All are called to use their gifts to build up the body of Christ and to glorify the Lord. Some members of the church are called to lead, to preach, to teach, to evangelize and to nurture. For this reason, God gives some to be Elders and Pastors. The church commissions or ordains people for such ministries and loves, respects, and supports those who serve faithfully. Those in leadership are to live exemplary Christian lives.

Is. 6:1-10; Jer. 3:15; Acts 6:1-6; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:1-10; 5:17-22; Tit. 1:5-9; 3:10; 1 Pet. 5:1-5.

9. CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

We believe that Christians should be baptized in water upon confession of their faith in Christ. We practice baptism by immersion, although we receive into fellowship those who have been baptized on confession of their faith by another mode. By baptism a believer enters into the fellowship of the local church and commits him/herself to a life of discipleship and service.

Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:2-6; Col. 2:12-13; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 1 Pet. 3:21

10. THE LORD'S SUPPER

In preparation for the fellowship of the Lord's Supper, all believers examine themselves. All those who understand its meaning, confess Jesus Christ as Lord in word and life, are accountable to their congregation and are living in right relationship with God and others are invited to participate in the Lord's Supper.

Mt. 16:24; 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-32; Rev. 3:20.

11. MARRIAGE AND THE CHRISTIAN HOME

We believe that God instituted marriage. Marriage is a sacred union between one man and one woman. Believers who marry should have a common Christian commitment; a believer should not marry an unbeliever. We believe that divorce, adultery and homosexuality constitute a violation of God's intention for marriage. Christian parents should nurture their children through exemplary living, prayer, worship, instruction in God's Word, and godly discipline.

Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18-24; Prov. 5:18-19; Mal. 2:13-16; Mt. 5:31-32; 19:4-9; 1 Cor. 7:10-11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:22-23; 6:4; Heb. 13:4.

12. THE LORD'S DAY AND WORK

We believe that God has called us to work and that work is honorable. However, the Christian also needs to have time for worship, instruction in the faith and fellowship. Therefore, following the example of the New Testament Church, we set aside one day a week as the Lord's Day for spiritual up-building and limit our labors on that day to work of necessity and deeds of mercy.

Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-10; Mt. 6:33; Lk. 24:1-36; Acts 2:1; 20:7; Rom. 14:5-6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Thess. 4:11-12; Heb. 10:23-25.

13. CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY

Christians are obligated to speak the truth at all times. As a witness to our integrity we affirm that we will tell the truth at all times in keeping with what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Also, we avoid holding membership in lodges and secret societies including those that require an oath, but seek rather to foster fellowship among believers.

Mt. 5:33-37; 23:1-12; Jn. 18:19-23; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:6-13; James 5:12.

14. THE STATE

We believe that God has instituted the state. Our chief concern and primary allegiance, however, is to Christ's kingdom. We pray for our government, respect those in authority, pay taxes, obey all laws not in conflict with the Word of God, and witness against corruption and injustice in society.

Mt. 22:17-21; Acts 4:19; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-6; 1 Pet. 2:13-14.

15. LOVE and PEACE

We believe that Christians should live by the law of love and practice forgiveness of enemies as taught and exemplified by Jesus. We seek to be agents of reconciliation; our bond with other followers of Jesus transcends all racial, social and national barriers. We view violence as contradictory to the new nature of the Christian. In times of national conscription or war, we will teach and encourage alternate service where possible.

Ex. 20:1-17; Mt. 5:17-28, 38-45; Rom. 12:19-21; 13:8-10; 1 Pet. 2:19-23.

16. CHRIST'S FINAL TRIUMPH

We believe that God will some day bring His purposes to a final consummation. We believe that Christ will return visibly, personally and bodily. When Christ returns the dead in Christ will be raised bodily and together with the living believers they will be bodily transformed and they shall be forever with the Lord. In the end all evil powers will be defeated and whereas the ungodly shall suffer eternal punishment, the saints shall enjoy eternal bliss in the presence of God.

Is. 2:4; 61:1-11; Mt. 25:13, 31-46; Mk. 9:43-48; Lk. 16:22-23; Jn. 5:25-29; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 15:21-58; Phil. 1:21-24; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Tit. 2:11-14; 2 Pet. 3:3-13; Rev. 1:15, 20-22.

3.5 A person ceases to be a Member of the Society:

- (a) on acquiescence by the Board of Elders of his resignation;
- (b) upon transfer of his membership to another church in accordance with the Policy Manual;
- (c) upon lapse of his membership in accordance with the Policy Manual;
- (d) on his death;
- (e) on ceasing to be an Elder; or
- (f) on the termination of a Member's membership in accordance with the Policy Manual.

3.6 A Member may be disciplined, have his membership privileges suspended, or have his membership terminated, all in accordance with the Policy Manual and the Bylaws.

3.7 A Member may be readmitted as a Member in accordance with the Policy Manual and the Bylaws.

PART 4 - DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

4.1 The members of the Administrative Committee of the Board of Elders, as it is constituted from time to time, shall be the directors of the Society. In order to be qualified to serve or to continue to serve the Society as a member of the Administrative Committee, a person must be an Elder or Pastor provided however that an Elder or Pastor who is subject to discipline or suspension under paragraph 3.6 shall not be qualified to serve as a member of the Administrative Committee..

4.2 The duties and responsibilities of the Administrative Committee shall be as set out in the Policy Manual and the Bylaws.

- 4.3 The Administrative Committee shall be appointed or elected and called by the Members and take office in accordance with the Policy Manual and the Bylaws.
- 4.4 The number of the Administrative Committee must be three or a greater number as determined from time to time by the Board of Elders.
- 4.5 The term of office of each member or members of the Administrative Committee shall be one year or such other period as may be determined by the Board of Elders from time to time. Successors for members of the Administrative Committee whose terms of office are then expiring shall be appointed or elected by the Members in the year such terms expire. A member of the Administrative Committee may succeed himself in office.
- 4.6 In the event that a vacancy arises in the Administrative Committee for any reason, the Members may appoint or elect a Member as a substitute member of the Administrative Committee in accordance with the Policy Manual and the Bylaws, which member of the Board of Elders shall hold office for a term as provided in paragraph 4.5.
- 4.7 The duties and responsibilities of the Administrative Committee shall be as set out in the Policy Manual and the Bylaws and the Administrative Committee shall exercise them in accordance with the Policy Manual and the Bylaws.
- 4.8 The Administrative Committee shall administer the affairs of the Society in all things and make or cause to be made for the Society, in its name, any kind of contract which the Society may lawfully enter into and, except as provided in the Bylaws and the Policy Manual, generally, may exercise all such other powers and do all such other acts and things as the Society by the Constitution and Bylaws or otherwise is authorized to exercise and do.
- 4.9 Subject to the limitations of:
 - (a) the Policy Manual;
 - (b) the Constitution and the Bylaws;
 - (c) the requirement that the Members authorize by Special Resolution at a general meeting:
 - (i) the borrowing of money by the Society in accordance with paragraph 4.11 (c) where such borrowing requires that the Society guarantee, mortgage, hypothecate, pledge or otherwise create a security interest in all or substantially all of its currently owned or subsequently acquired real or personal movable or unmovable property of the Society including book debts, rights, powers, franchises, and undertakings;
 - (ii) the disposition by the Society of all or substantially all of the currently owned or subsequently acquired personal property of the Society including book debts, rights, powers, franchise and undertakings; and

- (iii) the disposition by the Society of any currently owned and subsequently acquired real property of the Society; and
- (d) the requirement that the Members authorize by Ordinary Resolution at a general meeting the annual operating budget of the Society,

all corporate power of the Society shall be exercised by or under the authority of and the business and affairs of the Society shall be controlled by the Administrative Committee.

4.10 Without limiting the limited general power set out in paragraph 4.10 and subject to the limitations in paragraph 4.10 (a) - (d), the Administrative Committee shall have the following powers:

- (a) to select and remove all officers, representatives, agents, independent contractors, and employees of the Society; prescribe such powers and duties for them as may be consistent with law, the Constitution and the Bylaws, and the Policy Manual and fix their compensation;
- (b) to conduct, manage, and control the affairs and business of the Society, and to make rules and regulations consistent with law, the Constitution and the Bylaws, and the Policy Manual; and
- (c) to borrow money upon the credit of the Society, to issue, re-issue, sell, or pledge bonds, debentures, notes, or other evidence of indebtedness, or guarantee, mortgage, hypothecate, pledge, or otherwise create a security interest in all or any currently owned or subsequently acquired real or personal moveable or immovable property of the Society including book debts, rights, powers, franchises, and undertakings, to secure any such bonds, debentures, notes, or other evidence of indebtedness or guarantee, or any other present or future indebtedness or liability of the Society. Subject to the limitations in paragraph 14.10 (a) - (d), nothing in this provision limits or restricts the borrowing of money by the Society on bills of exchange or promissory notes made, drawn, accepted, or endorsed by or on behalf of the Society provided however that no debenture shall be issued without the authorization of the Members by Special Resolution.

4.11 A member of the Administrative Committee may be disciplined or suspended or deposed from office before the expiration of his term in accordance with the Policy Manual.

4.12 A member of the Administrative Committee may be reinstalled to the office he previously held in accordance with the Policy Manual.

4.13 A member of the Administrative Committee must not be remunerated for being or acting as a member of the Administrative Committee but a member of the Administrative Committee may be reimbursed for all expenses necessarily and reasonably incurred by the member of the Administrative Committee while engaged in the affairs of the Society.

- 4.14 The officers of the Society shall be the Moderator, the Assistant Moderator and the Secretary who shall be elected annually by the Board of Elders from among the members of the Board of Elders at the time and place they think fit and shall serve on the Administrative Committee and hold office for a term of one year and until their successors are chosen. A vacancy occurring in any of these positions may be filled for the unexpired term by the Board of Elders.
- 4.15 The duties and responsibilities of the officers of the Society shall be as set out in the Policy Manual and the Bylaws.
- 4.16 The Moderator presides at all meetings of the Society.
- 4.17 The Moderator shall ensure that the other officers carry out their duties.
- 4.18 The Assistant Moderator shall carry out the duties of the Moderator during the Moderator's absence.
- 4.19 The Administrative Committee may delegate some but not all of the responsibilities of an officer to a Member or an employee of the Society.

PART 5 - INDEMNITIES TO DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

- 5.1 Subject to the provisions of the Society Act, every member of the Administrative Committee, Board of Elders or officer who has properly undertaken or is about to undertake any liability on behalf of the Society or any society controlled by it and their heirs, executors, administrators or personal representatives respectively, shall from time to time and at all times, be indemnified and saved harmless out of the funds of the Society, from and against:

- (a) all costs, charges, and expenses whatsoever which such member of the Administrative Committee, Board of Elders or officer, actually and reasonably sustains or incurs in or about any action, suit, or proceeding which is brought, commenced, or prosecuted against him, or in respect of any act, deed, matter or thing whatsoever, made, done, or permitted by him, in or about the execution of the duties of his office or in respect of any such liability; and
- (b) all other costs, charges, and expenses which he actually and reasonably sustains or incurs in or about or in relation to the affairs thereof, except such costs, charges, or expenses as are occasioned by his own willful neglect or default

provided that:

- (c) the member of the Administrative Committee, Board of Elders or officer acted honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the Society; and

- (d) in the case of criminal or administrative proceedings, the member of the Administrative Committee, Board of Elders or officer had reasonable grounds for believing that their conduct was lawful.

PART 6 - COMMITTEES

- 6.1 The Administrative Committee may delegate any, but not all, of their power to committees consisting of a member or members of the Administrative Committee or Board of Elders, or any other person as they think fit. Subject to the Policy Manual and the Bylaws, the number of members, the officers, the mandate, and the rules of proceedings for each committee shall be determined by the Administrative Committee from time to time.

PART 7 - PROCEEDINGS OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEES

- 7.1 The Administrative Committee shall meet at least four times each year at the place they think fit to conduct business, adjourn, and otherwise regulate their meetings and proceedings, as they see fit.
- 7.2 A majority of the members of the Administrative Committee or members of a committee of the Administrative Committee or Board of Elders shall constitute a quorum.
- 7.3 The Moderator is the chair of all meetings of the Administrative Committee and Board of Elders, but, subject to the Policy Manual, if at a meeting the Moderator is not present within 30 minutes after the time appointed for holding the meeting, the Assistant Moderator must act as chair, but if neither is present the Administrative Committee may choose one of their number to be the chair at the meeting.
- 7.4 A committee of the Administrative Committee or Board of Elders must conform to any rules imposed on them by the Administrative Committee or Board of Elders, and as required must report acts or things done in the exercise of those powers to the earliest meeting of the Administrative Committee and Board of Elders held after the act or thing has been done, except as otherwise provided for by the Administrative Committee, Board of Elders, the Policy Manual, or the Bylaws.
- 7.5 The members of a committee of the Administrative Committee or Board of Elders shall meet at the time and place they think fit to conduct business, adjourn, and otherwise regulate their meetings and proceedings as they see fit, except as otherwise provided for by the Administrative Committee, Board of Elders, the Policy Manual, or the Bylaws.
- 7.6 For a first meeting of the Administrative Committee held immediately following the appointment or election of a member of the Administrative Committee or members of the Administrative Committee at an annual or other general meeting of Members, or for a meeting of the Administrative Committee at which a member of the Administrative Committee is appointed to fill a vacancy in the Administrative Committee, it is not necessary to give notice of the meeting to the newly appointed or elected member of the Administrative Committee or members of the Administrative Committee for the meeting to be constituted, if a quorum of the Administrative Committee is present.

- 7.7 Questions arising at a meeting of the Administrative Committee and a committee of the Administrative Committee or Board of Elders must be decided by consensus, except as otherwise provided for by the Administrative Committee, Board of Elders, the Policy Manual, or the Bylaws.
- 7.8 The chair may vote at a meeting of the Administrative Committee or Board of Elders. The chair may vote at a meeting of a committee of the Administrative Committee or Board of Elders.
- 7.9 A resolution proposed at a meeting of the Administrative Committee or Board of Elders or a committee of the Administrative Committee or Board of Elders shall be seconded, and the chair of a meeting may move or propose a resolution.
- 7.10 A resolution in writing, signed by all the members of the Administrative Committee and placed with the minutes of the Administrative Committee, is as valid and effective as if regularly passed at a meeting of the Administrative Committee.

PART 8 - MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

- 8.1 General meetings of the Society must be held at the time and place, in accordance with the *Society Act*, that the Administrative Committee decides.
- 8.2 Every general meeting, other than an annual general meeting, is an extraordinary general meeting.
- 8.3 The Administrative Committee may, when they think fit, convene an extraordinary general meeting.
- 8.4 Notice of a general meeting must specify the place, day, and hour of the meeting, and, in case of special business, the general nature of that business.
- 8.5 The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or the non-receipt of a notice by, any of the Members entitled to receive notice does not invalidate proceedings at that meeting.
- 8.6 The first annual general meeting of the Society must be held not more than 15 months after the date of incorporation and after that an annual general meeting must be held at least once in every calendar year and not more than 15 months after the holding of the last preceding annual general meeting.

PART 9 - PROCEEDINGS AT GENERAL MEETINGS

- 9.1 Special business is:
 - (a) all business at an extraordinary general meeting except the adoption of rules of order; and

- (b) all business conducted at an annual general meeting, except the following:
 - (i) the adoption of rules of order;
 - (ii) the consideration of the financial statements;
 - (iii) the report of the Administrative Committee;
 - (iv) the report of the auditor, if any;
 - (v) the appointment of the auditor, if required;
 - (vi) the other business that, under the Bylaws, ought to be conducted at an annual general meeting, or business that is brought under consideration by the report of the Administrative Committee issued with the notice convening the meeting.
- 9.2 Business, other than the election of a chair and the adjournment or termination of the meeting, must not be conducted at a general meeting at a time when a quorum is not present.
- 9.3 If at any time during a general meeting there ceases to be a quorum present, business then in progress must be suspended until there is a quorum present or until the meeting is adjourned or terminated.
- 9.4 A quorum is all or a lesser number of the Members present at a general meeting provided the number of Members so present is not less than 10% of the Members of the Society as set out in the register of Members as at the date notice of the general meeting was given to the Members.
- 9.5 If within 30 minutes from the time appointed for a general meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting, if convened on the requisition of Members, must be terminated, but in any other case, it must stand adjourned to the same day in the next week, at the same time and place, and if, at the adjourned meeting, a quorum is not present within 30 minutes from the time appointed for the meeting, the Members present constitute a quorum.
- 9.6 If at a general meeting:
 - (a) there is no Moderator, Assistant Moderator or other member of the Administrative Committee present within 15 minutes after the time appointed for holding the meeting; or
 - (b) the Moderator, Assistant Moderator and all the other members of the Administrative Committee present are unwilling to act as the chair,the Members present must choose one of their number to be the chair.
- 9.7 A general meeting may be adjourned from time to time and from place to place, but business must not be conducted at an adjourned meeting other than the business left unfinished at the meeting from which the adjournment took place.

- 9.8 When a meeting is adjourned for 10 days or more, notice of the adjourned meeting must be given as in the case of the original meeting.
- 9.9 Except as provided in paragraph 9.8 it is not necessary to give notice of an adjournment or of the business to be conducted at an adjourned general meeting.
- 9.10 A resolution proposed at a meeting shall be seconded, and the chair of a meeting may move or propose a resolution.
- 9.11 The chair may vote at a meeting.
- 9.12 A Member who is not subject to discipline or suspension under paragraph 3.6 is entitled to one vote which may be cast by show of hands or by ballot if requested by a Member. A Member may cast a vote in advance of the meeting in such manner as may be approved by the Administrative Committee from time to time.
- 9.13 Voting by proxy is not permitted.

PART 10 - SEAL

- 10.1 The Board of Elders may provide a common seal for the Society and may destroy a seal and substitute a new seal in its place.
- 10.2 The common seal must be affixed only when authorized by a resolution of the Administrative Committee and then only in the presence of the persons specified in the resolution, or if no persons are specified, in the presence of any two of the officers of the Society.

PART 11 - NOTICES TO MEMBERS

- 11.1 A notice may be given to a Member, either personally or by mail or by electronic mail or by facsimile to him at the address of that person as recorded in the register of members or the register of directors or by an announcement from the pulpit of the church operated by the Society which announcement is published not less than 14 days before the general meeting in the church bulletin which is made available to all Members.
- 11.2 A notice sent by mail shall be deemed to have been given on the third day following that on which the notice is posted, and in proving that notice has been given it is sufficient to prove that the notice was properly addressed and put in a Canadian post office receptacle. In the case of notice by either electronic mail or facsimile, an acknowledgment of receipt by return facsimile or electronic mail shall be obtained from the Member.
- 11.3 Notice of a general meeting shall be given to:
 - (a) every Member shown on the register of members on the day notice is given, and

- (b) the auditor, if any, and
- (c) no other person is entitled to receive a notice of general meeting.

PART 12 - DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- 12.1 Disputes which arise within the Society shall be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution provisions contained within the Policy Manual.

PART 13 - BYLAWS

- 13.1 Subject to the provisions of the *Society Act*, the bylaws of the Society may be repealed or amended by bylaw enacted by a majority of the members of the Administrative Committee at a meeting of the Administrative Committee and approved by an affirmative vote of at least 3/4 of the Members by Special Resolution at a meeting duly called for the purpose of considering the said bylaw, provided that the enactment, repeal, or amendment of such bylaw shall not be enforced or acted upon until the approval of the Registrar of Companies for British Columbia has been obtained.
- 13.2 On being admitted to the membership, a Member is entitled to and the Society shall give to the Member, without charge, a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Society.

PART 14 - AUDITOR

- 14.1 This part shall apply only in the event that the Society has resolved to have an auditor.
- 14.2 The first auditor shall be appointed by the directors who shall also fill all vacancies occurring in the office of auditor.
- 14.3 At each annual general meeting the Society shall appoint an auditor to hold office until he is re-elected or his successor is elected at the next annual general meeting.
- 14.4 An auditor may be removed by ordinary resolution.
- 14.5 An auditor shall be informed forthwith in writing of appointment or removal.
- 14.6 No director and no employee of the Society shall be auditor.
- 14.7 The auditor may attend general meetings.
- 14.8 The remuneration of the auditor shall be fixed by the directors.

PART 15 - BOOKS & RECORDS

- 15.1 The Administrative Committee shall see that all necessary books and records of the Society required by the by-laws of the Society or by any applicable statute or law are regularly and properly kept.

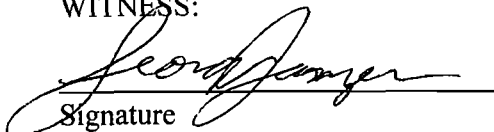
PART 16 - MISCELLANEOUS

- 16.1 The Administrative Committee shall from time to time determine whether and to what extent and at what times and places and under what conditions or regulations the documents, including the books of account, of the Society and minutes of the meetings of the Board shall be open to the inspection of Members of the Society not being directors. In the absence of such determination by the Members, the document, including the books of account, of the Society shall not be open to inspection by any Member of the Society or Congregation Members not being a director.
- 16.2 Any meeting of the Society, the Administrative Committee or any committee may also be held, or any member, Elder, Pastor, director or member of the committee may participate in any meeting of the Society, the Administrative Committee, the Board of Elders or any committee by conference call or similar communication equipment or device so long as all the members, directors, or persons participating in the meeting can hear and respond to one another. All such members, directors, or persons so participating in any such meeting shall be deemed to be present in person at the stated location of such meeting and, notwithstanding the foregoing bylaws, shall be entitled to vote by a voice vote recorded by the secretary of such meeting.

Dated this 20th day of February, 2006.

APPLICANTS FOR INCORPORATION:

WITNESS:


Signature

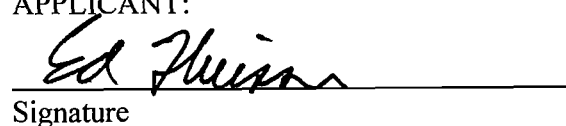
GEORGE JANZEN
Full Name

4025 GILPIN ST
Address

BURNABY B.C.
City

MECHANIC
Occupation

APPLICANT:


Signature

Edward Peter Thiessen
Full Name

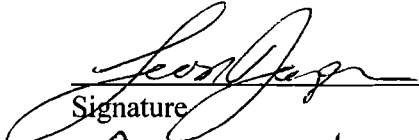
1421 Lemax Ave
Address

Cogitlam, BC
City

Professional Engineer
Occupation

APPLICANTS FOR INCORPORATION (continued):

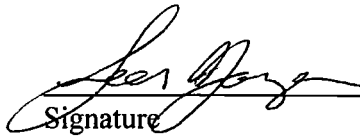
WITNESS:


Signature
GEORGE JANZEN
Full Name
4025 GILPIN ST
Address
BURNABY, BC
City
MECHANIC
Occupation

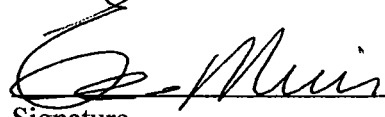
APPLICANT:

Dave Chula
Signature
Dave Chula
Full Name
1502 Madore Ave
Address
Cogitiam RP
City
Retired Salesman
Occupation

WITNESS:


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MECHANIC
Occupation

APPLICANT:


Signature
ERIC ARTHUR MUIR
Full Name
5850 SPERLING AVE
Address
BURNABY, BC
City
INVESTMENT ADVISOR
Occupation

APPLICANTS FOR INCORPORATION (continued):

WITNESS:


Signature

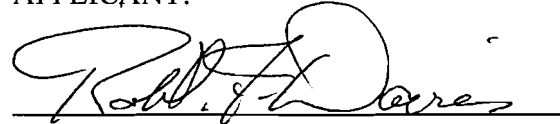
GEORGE JANZEN
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MECHANIC
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APPLICANT:


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RETIRED
Occupation

WITNESS:


Signature


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APPLICANT:


Signature

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Full Name

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Burnaby BC
City

DISAULT SONS & MANAGERS
Occupation