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This manual is intended to guide you as you write church documents, policies and procedures. You will also find ways to communicate, implement, evaluate and create and update your own policies and procedures.

This is to be used only as a starting point in your search. Your own judgment and your church's attorney are the best resources you can have as you develop your own church documents

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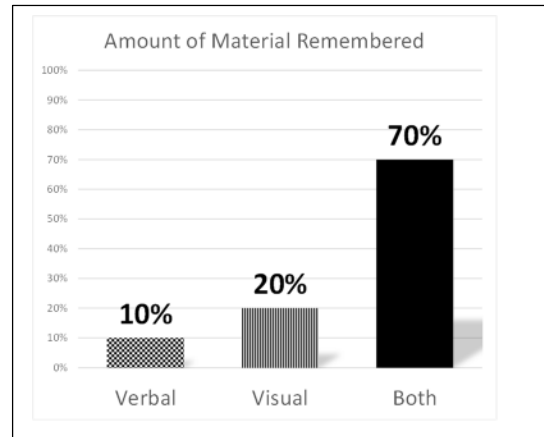
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Introduction

Your church has policies. Every church does! Your policies may be written down. They may not. Every church leader and most members have expectations based on what they believe is permitted by church policy. Problems tend to develop when one member's expectations differ from that of other members. Unfortunately, this can lead to disagreement, anger and conflict. These differences of opinion usually originate for one of two reasons. They may be caused by the fact that the church has never placed in writing a policy governing the question at hand, or they may arise out of a lack of understanding of the existing church policies and procedures.

Having policies in place is not enough to prevent problems.

To be of help, policies must be clear, concise, and effectively communicated. One study¹ has shown that people only remember a small percentage (10%) of spoken communication. Of those people who do remember verbal messages, very few fully understand the implications. The percentage doubles (20%) when written communication is used, but the percentage is still small. The best results (70%+) come when communication is written, explained verbally, and questions discussed.



Simple, concise policies are usually better than long complex policies.

- The Declaration of Independence has **1,300** words.
- The Gettysburg Address contains **285** words.
- The Ten Commandments contain **179** words.
- Archimedes' Principle contains **67** words.
- The Lord's Prayer contains **66** words.
- The Pythagorean Theorem contains **24** words.
- **The U.S. Government regulations on the sale of cabbage contain 26,911 words.**

“But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.” — Matthew 6:7

Simple, concise policies are usually better than long complex policies.

¹ Socony Vacuum Study



Defining the Terminology Used in this Workbook

The Scriptural Foundation

1 Peter 5:1-4 ¹I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: ² Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing[a] out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you;[b] not out of greed for money but eagerly; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (CSB)

Romans 10:14-15 ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: *How beautiful[a] are the feet of those who bring good news.* (CSB)

Ephesians 4:11-13 ¹¹And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some Senior Pastors and teachers, ¹² equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. (CSB)

The Definitions

Senior Pastor—The minister called by the church to lead the Senior Pastoral ministries of the church. As such he works with the church leadership team, deacons and church staff to: (1) lead the church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

Ministerial Staff (or Pastoral Staff)—Staff called by the church, other than the Senior Pastor, who are responsible for the spiritual ministries of the church. Typically, these are staff members who: (1) have the word minister (or Senior Pastor) in their title and (2) supervise other ministers. This classification often includes the minister of music, the minister of education, and any others the church chooses to include. (In some churches this may include the associate Senior Pastor and/or the minister(s) of age group work, such as youth, children, preschool, senior adults, etc.)

Associate Ministry Staff—Although rarely called "associate ministry staff," these are Staff members who are supervised by Ministerial Staff (or Pastoral Staff): In addition, this is any staff who: (1) do not have the word minister in their title or (2) they may have the word associate in their title. This can include the church business administrator, the associate Senior Pastor, the church weekday education director and the minister(s) and/or director(s) of age group work. (e.g., students, youth, children, preschool, and/or the associate minister of music. Churches will vary greatly on this category.

Church Support Staff—This group includes (and may be further divided into) clerical, custodial, food service, instrumentalists, media and CWE staff. Support staff may also be divided into full-time, regular (or permanent) part-time and temporary part-time.

Administrator—This person is responsible for the day-to-day business management of the church. This may be the Senior Pastor, the minister of education, the church business administrator, an administrative assistant, or a secretary.

Supervisor—Any paid staff member responsible for overseeing the work of another paid staff member.

SECTION ONE:

Philosophy and Guiding Principles

The Call for Written Policies and Procedures

I. Policies are needed:

- A. To clarify the purpose of our church, ministries, programs, services, committees and teams.
- B. To map the plan of action for our church.
- C. To implement the planned goals and objectives.
- D. To help members see church life as an opportunity to minister to people.
- E. To involve all members of the church in ministering to persons.
- F. To guide in the recruiting and organization of staff.
- G. To clearly delegate and allocate authority and responsibility.
- H. To coordinate all experiences and activities so they are supportive of each other as well as the church's mission.
- I. To guide decision-making.
- J. To motivate paid and volunteer staff.
- K. To evaluate outcome versus purpose.

II. The Benefits of Written Policies and Procedures for our church:

- A. Save time
 - 1. Avoid repeated discussions on the same issue.
 - 2. Avoid having leaders, committees and/or the church re-make the same decision.
 - 3. May be referred to without having to stop and make decisions.
 - 4. May be referred to by members without having to locate and consult decision makers.
- B. Allow anonymous queries.
- C. Reduce the need for oral instructions (which are often misunderstood).
- D. Remembered longer and more accurately.
- E. Save money by maintaining efficient use of resources.
- F. Provide guidance, stability and consistency.
- G. Increase compliance with church policy.
- H. Greatly reduce misunderstanding (since decisions are based on principles, not persons).
- I. Give personal freedom by reducing stress.
 - 1. Burden and blame are lifted from individual who must explain the policy and shifted to the congregation where it belongs.
 - 2. The minister, administrator or secretary is not the villain.
- J. Fair to all.

II. The Bible calls for it. Corinthians 14:40 "let all things be done decently and in order."

The Documents Your Church Needs

Purpose Statement/Mission Statement

1. After the Bible, this is the most important document a church has because it shapes the others.
2. It shows the biblical basis for the church's existence.
3. It defines who we are and what we are trying to accomplish as church.

Articles of Incorporation

1. Incorporation is strongly recommended for legal reasons:¹
 - 1.1. **To allow the church to hold title to property:** Stewart v. White, 128 Alabama. 202, 30 So. 526 (1901).
 - 1.2. **To allow the church to use and administer its property more effectively:** An incorporated church, through its leadership, may more effectively use and administer its property. For example, donors who understand the governing procedure of the church and who understand the legal status of their gifts are likely to respond more confidently to church appeals.
 - 1.3. **To protect the church:** Internal shifts in the personality of the church congregation should not upset the structure of the church. Churches are occasionally taken over by a small group of people who change the church's purpose and ministries at an opportune moment at a poorly attended business meeting. A church that is organized loosely may also be dissolved loosely. In such churches, petty disagreements may be the catalysts for destroying the church.
 - 1.3.1. Incorporation provides substantial protection against the "deep pocket theory" by shielding the individual members from personal financial damages when liability occurs on the part of the church.
2. Articles of Incorporation: A constitution often serves in lieu of Articles of Incorporation when a church is not incorporated. If incorporation is not established, a constitution is needed, but a constitution cannot provide the protection of incorporation. When you incorporate, blend the constitution's principles with the legal requirements for incorporation. The new document will be stronger and will offer some legal protection for members.
 - 2.1. Articles of Incorporation should be very broad in scope, addressing only major legal issues (Example: We are First Baptist Church). It is better not to give dates, names, or numbers in the Articles of Incorporation. Let the Bylaws set these.
 - 2.2. Articles of Incorporation are difficult to change. This makes the day-to-day operation of the church more stable.

Constitution: Why You Do Not Need One

It is **NOT** recommended that a church have a "Constitution." If you have one, it should be combined with, or better, replaced by the church's Articles of Incorporation. If you have both, the two documents **MUST NOT CONTRADICT** one another.

Bylaws

1. Bylaws are broad and general (Example: "The church shall have committees as established in the policy manual. Committees may be added or removed by majority vote of the church in conference").
2. Bylaws are changeable, with some effort, but changes are not often needed due to the general nature.

¹ 1 Doss and Baggett, *A Guide to Religious Corporations with Forms*, Cumberland School of Law, Birmingham

Policies and Procedures

1. What is the difference?
 - 1.1. Policies are a list of the correct things to do (What to do).
 - 1.2. Procedures are a list of the correct ways to do things (step by step; how to guidelines).
2. Are of three types:
 - 2.1. Church Operating Policies.
 - 2.2. Church Office Policies and Procedures.
 - 2.3. Personnel Policies.
3. Policies are very specific and detailed.
4. Policies are easily changed by a simple majority vote.

Job Descriptions

A list of each staff member's responsibilities.

Organization chart

A graphic representation of the organization, communication, and responsibilities within the church.

Church Administration Documents: Their Relationship and Function

Articles of Incorporation (Constitution), Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures

Churches have several operating or governing documents. They state who, what and how the church functions. They are designed to be proactive, so the church does not have to react to crises, critical events or difficult situations. There is a relationship and order to these documents that should be considered in order for the church to get the most benefit from them.

The term "**Constitution and Bylaws**" is often used to cover all the governing documents. More definition is needed since the documents, though related, can stand alone. The most important documents that need to be clarified are the Constitution and the Articles of Incorporation. The first question here is, "Is our church incorporated?" If "yes," the **Articles of Incorporation** eliminate the need for a **constitution**. If "no," the most immediate action should be to **incorporate** the church. This is supremely important! Incorporation gives the church much needed legal protection. It gives the church "legal" powers to conduct all its organizations, ministries, activities, and actions to fulfill its purpose (Code of Alabama, Section 10A-3). The Articles and the Constitution address the same topics and will conflict if both are in place. By having both, you may unknowingly force a court to choose one or even throw them both out and decide what they should say.

- I. **Church Bylaws are very different from church policies.** In fact, a church really should have at least 3, and possibly 5 or more, separate operation documents. Following is a brief explanation of the functional differences of the documents and how they relate to each other.

A. Articles of Incorporation (or in rare cases , a constitution) /– This document legally declares how the church relates to the State of Alabama. This document states in broad, general terms what it is and how it operates. Articles of Incorporation are for public consumption and should on file in the county Probate Judge's office¹ and available for anyone to read. It should be the hardest of all the

¹ In some cases, especially with older churches, the county probate office may have the only recorded copy and the Alabama Secretary of State has no copy. Another possibility is the Alabama Secretary of State may have the only recorded copy and the county probate office has no copy.

documents to change or amend, usually taking two successive church business meetings with a super majority (2/3 or 3/4) vote in each meeting (The amendment [change] process for all documents should be stated in the Bylaws).

- B. **Bylaws** – Tells how the church relates to its members, the church family. Bylaws are a more detailed than the Articles but not as detailed as the Church Policies. They are more difficult to change or amend than policies yet easier to change or amend than the Articles. In some churches, the bylaws may require the same amending process as the Articles. But usually, it requires two successive business meetings with a reading and distribution of written copies of the change at the first meeting and a second reading and vote by super majority at the second meeting. In other words, it would take two meetings and one vote to make changes or amendments.
- C. **Policies or Policies and Procedures** – Tells **in detail** how the church functions and/or how to carry out (procedures) the functions (policies). Policies can be changed in any regular business meeting by a simple majority. There may be church policies that are not mentioned in the Articles and Bylaws, but are only found in the Policies and/or Procedures, such as a *Van Usage Policy*.
- D. **Procedures** – Gives the execution process of the policies (or the other documents). Churches may have a separate "" or it may be a combined with policies in one document. Procedures can be changed in any regular business meeting by a simple majority.

The Difference between Policies and Procedures

1. Policies

- a) Define the following:
 - i) Authority.
 - ii) Boundaries.
 - iii) Responsibilities.
 - iv) Guidelines.
- b) Determine the answer to who, why, when, and under what circumstances.
- c) Allow decisions to be based on the situation, rather than the personalities. The secretary “Ima Busy” will run copies for “Mrs. U. R. Nice” but has no time for “Bea Mean”.
- d) Who sets policies?
 - i) The most policies are purely administrative, so are written by the administrator (or pastor) and never need to be voted on.
 - ii) Normally, the authority is delegated by the church as follows:
 - iii) The Church sets church-wide policies.
 - iv) The Personnel Committee sets personnel policies.
 - v) The Stewardship Committee sets financial policies.
 - vi) The Administrator writes office policies and procedures.

Policies versus Procedures

Policies define who, why and what.

Procedures suggest the method by which a task should be done.

2. Procedures

- a) Procedures tell how a task is done.
- b) Procedures provide a detailed list of actions.
- c) Procedures provide a list of supplies and equipment needed. to perform a job.

3. How a Procedure is different a Policy.

- a) Policy: “File bulletin.”
- b) Procedure: “File two copies of the bulletin in the secretary’s file cabinet and one copy in the pastor’s file cabinet.”
- c) Procedures are written by the person who does the work and reviewed by the person’s supervisor and the administrator.
- d) Procedures are extremely useful when an employee is absent.
- e) Copies of Procedures are then provided for:
 - i) Each person involved.
 - ii) Each supervisor.
 - iii) The Administrator.

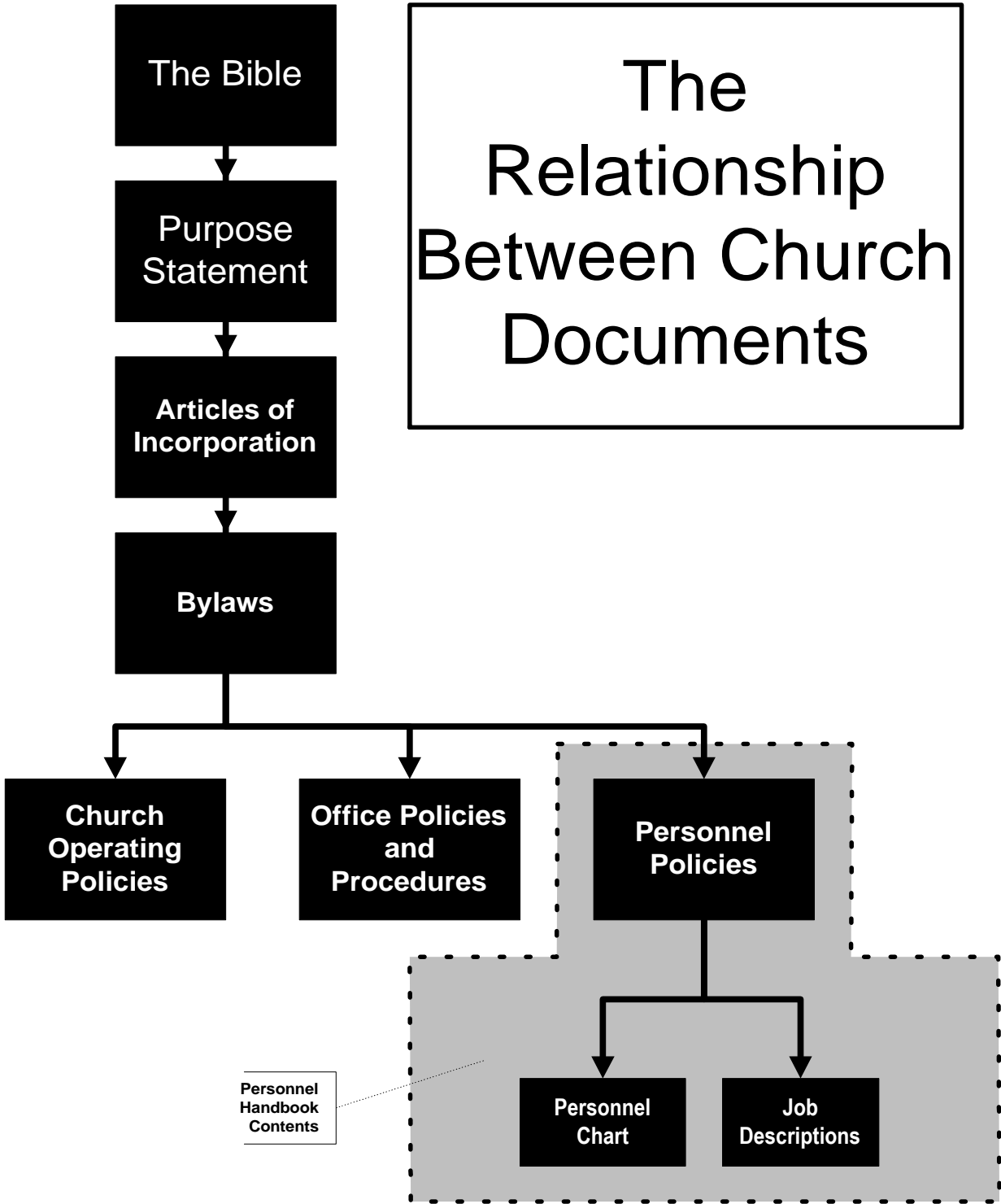
Understanding Church Policy Documents:

Document:		Controlled by:	Governs:	How to Change: *
Mission Statement/ Purpose Statement		Only the church and the Bible overrule this. It is the master document defining the biblical purpose of the church.	Every Document, All Ministries, All Programs, the Calendar, the Budget, and Membership.	Church vote as provided for amending the Constitution or Articles of Incorporation.
Articles of Incorporation		Purpose statement, and Articles of Incorporation must be on file with probate judge and Secretary of State.	Church as it relates legally to the community and those outside the membership.	Two thirds (2/3) of votes cast. It must pass at two consecutive business meetings.
Constitution {Not needed. Use Articles of Incorporation instead.}		Purpose statement and Articles of Incorporation (if incorporated).	Church as it relates to the community and those outside the membership.	Two Thirds (2/3) Must pass at 2 consecutive business meetings.
Bylaws		Articles of Incorporation (or Constitution, if the church is unincorporated).	Church as it relates to the membership, and to Policies and Procedures.	2-week notice. Simple majority. Must pass at 2 consecutive business meetings.
Policies	Church Operating Policies	Bylaws	The church as it functions.	Simple majority vote
	Office Policies and Procedures	Bylaws	The church office as it functions.	Administrator decision.
	Personnel Policies	Bylaws	Church personnel as they function.	Majority vote of Personnel Committee. ¹
Job Descriptions		Personnel policies	Ministers and employees.	Majority vote of Personnel Committee.
Personnel Chart		Personnel policies	Ministers and employees.	Majority vote of Personnel Committee.

** Your bylaws should state *how* they may be amended. Specifics may be different from the Samples provided above.

¹ When issues will govern the pastor, consider sending them to the church for approval as well.

The Relationship Between Church Documents



Example of Document Relationship and Progression of Detail

This example is provided to understand the relationship between each of the four levels of documents and how they progressively pass the authority from the articles of incorporation all the way to the procedures.

(The Deacon policy used here is only as an example, not as a recommended policy.)

As you see, there is more detail with each document level. The documents are related by the building of detail at each level relating to the governing document.

Articles of Incorporation:

“The Sample Baptist Church shall have men who serve in the office of Deacon. They shall meet regularly. Their responsibility is to be servants of the church.”

Bylaws:

“The Deacons shall meet monthly to discuss and plan the service they render to the church. The Church will set the qualifications and responsibilities expected of those who serve as Deacons.”

Policies:

“The Deacons shall set their monthly meeting at a day and time that is best suited for the church family and the work schedule of the Deacons. They are to meet the qualifications set out in Acts 6:1-4 and I Timothy 3:8-12. In addition, only men who have been a member of Sample Baptist Church for two years and are over 21 years of age can be considered. There shall be a ratio of one deacon to every ten resident church families. Deacons are elected to one three-year term with a year off the Deacon Body before they can be considered for another three-year term.”

Procedures:

“Deacon Nomination and Election shall be done each year during the month of August. The church family will be given a list of the men of the church. The members will be asked to nominate three men as deacons. After a screening process, a list of the nominated men will be given to the church and asked to vote for the three men to serve as Deacons. The three men with the highest votes will be elected as Deacons. The newly elected deacons will be announced to the church family.”

How to Use this Workbook

This workbook provides a possible way to develop policies and procedures. Use this book as a starting point only. Blend in your own creativity and allow for your unique circumstances to determine the correct policies and procedures for your church.

Do not use the Samples in this book as they are written. Revise them as you desire and then let an attorney approve them.

It is important to consult your attorney for advice on the finished product.

SECTION TWO: Create All Your Administrative Documents

How to Write all Administrative Documents as a Single Process

1. **Recognize the need**
2. **Recommend a policy study be conducted by the church.**
The recommendation may come from:
 - a) Church Leadership Team/Church Council.
 - b) The Deacons.
 - c) The appropriate committee or group.
3. **This process is time consuming, so do not try to rush!**
4. **Indicate who will be responsible for the process of writing the policies.**
5. **Gather information**
 - a) Begin by collecting existing policies or documents.
 - b) Write down the present procedure for changing policies.
 - c) Research the recommended books: (see page 89).
6. **Documents which may be helpful / needed:**
 - a) Purpose statement.
 - b) Articles of Incorporation
 - c) Church Bylaws.
 - d) Church operating policies.
 - e) Office policies and procedures.
 - f) Personnel policies.
 - g) Job Description.
7. **Secure input from involved parties:**
 - a) Determine who will be directly affected.
 - b) Make special effort to gain their insight.
8. **Determine the current policy structure**
9. **Weigh the need for change versus the effect of change:**
 - a) Watch carefully for church customs.
 - b) Respect tradition.
 - c) Pray for wisdom (James 1:5).
 - d) Watch the bottom line – **Is the benefit in efficiency worth the cost in grief/**
10. **Write or revise policies, adding any that are needed but are not currently in place:**
 - a) Write for maximum clarity.
 - b) Label the subject.
 - c) List group, committee, or title of responsible individual for administering the policy.
 - d) State the purpose of the policy in a single sentence.
11. **State the full policy:**
 - a) Use simple, easy to understand words.
 - b) Strive for brevity and completeness.
 - c) Be specific about each step in each. process you are describing.
 - d) Refer to individuals by title—**not** by name.
12. **Collate and index all the policies**
13. **Secure feedback from interested and involved parties before voting.**
14. **Revise the policies as needed.**
15. **Present the document to the church.**
 - a) Do this before you discuss or vote.
16. **Come to a consensus**
 - a) Distribute copies to all involved persons.
 - b) *Encourage* questions.
 - c) Conduct “question and answer” meetings.
 - i) If possible, conduct two meetings
 - ii) Allow plenty of time between the first reading and the vote (people need time to study the policies and form questions)
 - d) Revise if needed and have another reading.
17. **Vote on or implement the policies.**
18. **Evaluate and update the policies annually.**

SECTION THREE:

Create Your Purpose Statement

How to Develop a Purpose Statement

1. **Recognize the need.**
2. **Form a development committee.**
3. **Consider using the Church Leadership Team/ Church Council.**
 - a) Include all adult age groups (sr. adults, mature adults, median adults, young adults).
 - b) Include a Youth representative.
4. **Development committee researches the Constitution/Articles of Incorporation and bylaws for any existing purpose statement.**
5. **Conduct a background study of the relevant biblical passages:**
 - a) The purpose of the church: Matthew 28:18-20; I John 3:1; I Corinthians 12:27; I Peter 2:9; Ephesians 4:11-13; Acts 2:40-47.
 - b) The functions of the church: Acts 2:40-47.
 - c) Objectives of the church:
 - i) Worship: John 4:24.
 - ii) Commitment and prayer: Matthew 28:19-20 & Ephesians 6:18.
 - iii) Fellowship: I John 1:3.
 - iv) Stewardship: Luke 16:2.
 - v) Ministry to people: Matthew 25:35-40.
 - vi) Preaching: Romans 10:14.
 - vii) Witnessing: Luke 24:48.
 - viii) Missions' involvement: Acts 13:3.
 - ix) Bible teaching: II Timothy 2:2.
 - x) Missions' education: II Corinthians 8:1 ff.
 - xi) Training/Equipping: Ephesians 4:12.
 - xii) Facilities: Matthew 9:34 & 15:32-37.
6. **Whose church is it — Ours or God's.**
 - a) Seriously consider these thoughts:
 - i) Which question applies for your church:
 - a) What do **I** want **my** church to do? Or
 - b) What does **Christ** want for **His** church?
 - ii) God's perfect will is accomplished in the church when what **I** want and what **He** wants are the same.
 - iii) What is God already doing?
 - a) Why are our people in this church?
 - b) Why is this church in this community?
 - b) Consider reading:
 - i) Church Unique, Will Mancini.
 - ii) The Baptist Faith and Message: Revised by Herschel Hobbs,
 - iii) The Purpose Driven Church, Rick Warren,
 - iv) Being God's People: A Southern Baptist Church on Bold Mission,
 - v) Your Life & Your Church, James L. Sullivan.
7. **A development committee rewrites or revises a statement of purpose.**
 - a) Examine the Constitution/ Articles of Incorporation and/or Bylaws for its purpose statement.
 - i) Is it still relevant? Is it easily understood?
 - ii) Does it state accurately what the church practices?
 - b) Consider involving the congregation with a questionnaire that evaluates the effectiveness of the church in accomplishing the purposes as summarized in Acts 2:40-47.
 - c) After completing the background studies and questionnaire, the development committee writes a statement of purpose, unless an existing statement is adequate.
 - d) See examples of what other churches have prepared. Use the new statement of purpose to guide all future planning.

Sample Purpose Statements

Sample 1¹

The church is a local body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, who banded together to carry out the commission of Jesus Christ through these three objectives:

- Exalt the Savior (Colossians 1:18)
- Equip the Saints (Ephesians 4:12)
- Evangelize the Sinner (Matthew 28:19)

Sample 2

Brookwood Baptist Church exists to glorify God through joyful worship and faithful discipleship that results in missions, ministry, evangelism, and fellowship.

Sample 4

The church is the Body of Christ. It is united under Christ and is composed of many diversely gifted members. The church gathers for fellowship and nurture and to accomplish the mission of the church, which is threefold:

- Worship - The praise and adoration of God
- Witness - The proclamation by word and deed of the Good News
- Service - The meeting of human needs

By these activities, we testify to the world of Christ's presence in our life. We are his instruments in reconciling human beings to God

Sample 6²

First Baptist exists to experience, celebrate, and share God's grace. We affirm six main functions as the means of doing so: Christ-centered Worship, Biblical Instruction, Prayer, World Evangelization, Nurturing Fellowship, and Acts of Caring.

Sample 7³

The church is a congregation of baptized followers with Jesus Christ as Lord, whose driving force is the Great Commission as found in Matthew 28:19-20, to perform these essential functions:

- Fellowship
- Worship

- Discipleship
- Evangelism
- Ministry

Sample 8⁴

Lake City Baptist Church is a body of born again baptized Christian believers whose purpose is to fulfill the Great Commandment and to serve the Great Commission as set forth in Mark 12:30-31 and Matthew 28: 18-20.

Sample 10

We exist to lead the city of Montgomery and beyond into a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sample 11

Our vision is to intimately experience and then intentionally express the grace of Jesus Christ to our community... our country... our world. Our mission is to be a place of G.R.A.C.E.:

Gather people to Christ and His Church
Raise believers to maturity in their faith
Activate people to ministry in the church
Commission people to local and world missions
Exalt and worship Christ in everything

Sample 12

The Purpose of GBC is to praise and honor our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through the sharing of the Gospel and through the discipleship of believers to grow in Christlikeness and to reach our community and the world with His good news. - (Isaiah 54:2-3a)

Sample 13

_____ exists to glorify God by following the pattern established in the New Testament which includes:

- reaching the lost,
- equipping the believers,
- and ministering to the needy In order that we might be the salt of the earth and the light of the world!

¹ From *Total Church Life* by Robinson

• ² Tallassee First Baptist

³ From *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth* by Mims

⁴ Lake City Baptist Church, Eufaula

SECTION FOUR: Create Your Articles of Incorporation

How to Develop Articles of Incorporation:

1. **Recognize the need**
 - a) Every church should be incorporate.
 - i) Lawsuits against the church can cause personal financial obligations for your members if your church is not incorporated.
 - ii) Property ownership is not possible unless you are incorporated.
 - iii) Takeover is very easy if you are not incorporated.
 - b) Articles of Incorporation need to be reviewed every three to five years.
2. **Check with your county Probate Office clerk to see if your church is incorporated.**
 - a) Churches with Articles of Incorporations filed before 1975 (when the law changed significantly) should consider re-incorporation (Section 10A-3 Acts 1984, No. 84-290, p.502).
 - b) Be sure your articles of incorporation contain an article describing the “**transfer of assets in the event of dissolution.**” If this is not present, you should revise your Articles of Incorporation.
3. **Select an incorporation committee (*Special/Ad Hoc committee*).**
4. **Gather the pertinent information**
 - a) Charters, titles, and deeds.
 - b) Church minutes.
5. **Decide what to include:**
 - a) See Topics for Articles of Incorporation Documents.
 - b) **Consult an attorney** Some issues you should discuss with the attorney:
 - i) What will the attorney charge?
 - ii) What will the Probate Judge charge?
 - iii) What is the church’s purpose? Give both: The purpose of the church under the code of Alabama 1975 (religious, educational, and benevolent) and if desire a ministry Statement of purpose adopted by the church.
 - iv) The details of why the church needs to incorporate.
 - v) What material does the church need to collect and develop to assist in the incorporation process (*this may significantly reduce the legal cost of incorporating*)? See page 22 for a questionnaire.
 - vi) Request a list of any additional expenses not included given above.
 - vii) Verify the time frame your attorney envisions applying to church’s incorporation action.
6. **Write the document.**
7. **Present the document to the church.**
8. **Reach a consensus.**
9. **Vote.**
10. **Consult an attorney to review, revise and file the document with the Probate Judge and the Secretary of State.**
11. **Review and update every three to five years.**

**Every church
should be
incorporated**

Alabama law has changed over the years.

1. The Code of Alabama was significantly revised in 1975.

- a) Most churches which were incorporated before 1975 need to REVISE their incorporation documents.
- b) Prior to that most incorporations were “Simple Incorporations” for the primary purpose of borrowing money.
- c) If a church was incorporated before the passage of the Code of Alabama 1975, there are 4 articles which must be present in their articles of incorporation:
 - i) Transfer of assets in the event of dissolution.
 - ii) Initial Registered Agent.
 - iii) Initial trustees (of which there must always be at least three (3) Also refer to the Bylaws for the process for replacing them.
 - iv) Administration of church affairs SHOULD include “Title of property shall be vested in the name of the church” (**never** vested in the trustees).

2. The law was revised again in 1984.

- a) The Code of Alabama 1975 Section 10 et. Seq. was replaced by Section 10A et. Seq.
- b) A simple Church Corporation law was created.
 - i) Many churches have been incorporated under the *Church Corporation Law* (10A-20 et. Seq.) rather than the *Non-Profit Corporation Law* (10A-3 et. Seq.).
 - ii) This made it possible for churches to incorporate and to own property.
 - i) One shortcoming is that this *Church Corporation Law* (10A-20 et. Seq.) does NOT protect the pastor and staff from personal liability. “Limited liability” protection is not mentioned in the *Church Corporation Law* (10A-20 et. Seq.).
 - ii) Some “limited liability” may be provided to **non-compensated leaders and members** (10A-20-16.01).
- c) Most churches should “amend to replace” (or to revise) under the Code of Alabama 1975 Section 10A-3 et. Seq. The is how lawyers reference Section 10A Chapter 3 and all subparagraphs.

The Code of Alabama 1975, Section 10A-3 (Nonprofit Incorporation) versus Section 10A-20 (Church Incorporation).

Churches choose the **wrong type of incorporation** because church incorporation sounds like the correct choice. **It is not!**

3. Our legal sources **STRONGLY SUGGEST 10A-3 and NOT 10A-20** which offers few of the protections provided under 10A-3.

- a) All **uncompensated** officers, members, volunteers and workers are given some “Limited Liability” protection whether the church is incorporated or not. (*Code of Alabama 1975 Section 10A-20-16*).
- b) Churches incorporated as a *Non-Profit Corporation* receive full “**limited liability**” for all members, **compensated and non-compensated** [*Church Corporation Law* (10A-20 et. Seq)].
- c) The **Non-Profit Corporation Law (10A-3 et. Seq.)** is the best method for churches.

4. Other important updates regarding incorporation:

- a) All churches, incorporated or not, may adopt other purpose(s). (*Code of Alabama 1975 Section 10A-1-2.01*). They are authorized to do anything not prohibited by law. This is a change for the Church Corporation law which was restricted to only having the right to own real estate.
- b) There is “Limited Liability” protection for all members, compensated or not, in the **Non-Profit Corporation**. This is unique to this type of corporation for churches.

5. If you wish to know more: Why the Non-Profit Corporation is best for churches:

- a) Non-Profit Corporation offers much more legal guidance than “Church Corporations” (10A-20-2.01 – 2.07) in answering legal questions that may come up.
 - iii) An entire chapter in the Code of Alabama is given to **Non-Profit Corporation** verses only seven sections given for **Church Corporation**;
- b) The **Non-Profit Corporation** protects both **uncompensated** and **compensated** church officers and directors from liability, not the case for unincorporated churches or churches with Church Corporation.
- c) Incorporation provides for church ownership of real estate. Unincorporated churches do not have church ownership.
- d) Incorporation gives legal standing to a church as a legal entity; unincorporated churches do not have legal standing and are not legal entities.

Topics for Articles of Incorporation Documents ¹

Note: For a complete list of actions, wording and necessary forms, see *A Guide to Religious Corporations* by Dr. Chriss Doss and Mark Baggett. Consult your attorney for correct procedure.

Needed prior to filing:

1. Resolution Authorizing Incorporation.

- a) The church must pass a resolution allowing the trustees to act on behalf of the church.

2. Acknowledgment (Witnessed and signed by the clerk).

Articles of Incorporation MUST include certain Articles:

1. The legal name and location of the church.

2. Authority/Purpose/Objectives.

- a) Article declaring the purpose
- b) Include your purpose statement.

3. Existence

- a) You are declaring to the state that you are now a legal entity.

4. Qualification and admission of members.

5. Legal officers and Administration of church affairs.

- a) Board of Trustees. (In Alabama, at least three are required).
- b) Legal Officers.

- i) Do NOT include ministry (ecclesiastical) officers such as pastor, ministers, deacons, treasurer, clerk, parliamentarian, treasurer, or similar church officers. If you include them here, they are each liable for financial and fiduciary damages against the church).
- ii) Other duties and authority of the trustees as provided in bylaws. Use, preservation and care of all church property.

The congregational church polity of Baptist churches makes it easier for a group or leader to make arbitrary changes in the church's characteristics and framework. The church is better protected against quick arbitrary change if it takes two consecutive business meetings with two votes of 2/3 majority to change or amend an Article. -Chriss Doss

- c) Title of property **vested** in the name of the **church**.¹ (*see footnote*)
 - d) Designating authority reserved by the body.² (*discuss with attorney*)
- 6. Church Conference (business meeting).**
- a) Be non-specific as to schedule and frequency (The code of Alabama requires at least two per year).
 - b) Reference saying “a quorum as defined by bylaws.”
- 7. Bylaws.**
- a) Reference the existence of Bylaws.
- 8. Amendments to Articles of Incorporation.**
- a) The process to amend.
- 9. Elections.**
- 10. Church year.**
- 11. Discharge of trustees, deacons, officers and committees.**
- 12. Transfer of assets in the event of dissolution.**³
- a) This is required by the IRS of all churches and 501(c)(3) organizations. Upon church dissolution, assets must be given to **another tax-exempt organization**. No assets can go to a member.
 - b) Failure to have this could mean loss of tax-exempt status.
- 13. Number, name, position and addresses of initial trustees until the first election following incorporation.**
- 14. Initial registered agent and successors.**
- a) The Office of the Secretary of State of Alabama requires that there be an Article that states who shall be the Initial Registered Agent for the incorporated entity (church).
 - b) The Registered Agent is the person who receives official notifications, such as a notice of lawsuits. The church must approve the person who will act in this capacity. The person must be named with a current address where the person can be reached.
 - c) The initial registered agent will not always permanently, but the Article will not change. It will only list the initial registered agent. Subsequent holders of this position must always be kept current with the Secretary of State of Alabama who must be notified if the person or address is changed. This is done by a **change form** available from the Secretary of State’s Office.
 - d) Failure to have this position or not to keep it current could result in the loss of incorporation status of the church by the Secretary of State’s Office.
- 15. Initial registered office.**
- 16. Incorporators.**
- 17. Signatures of officers of trustees.**
- 18. General acknowledgment. Witnessed and notarized.**

¹ Many attorneys will attempt to put the trustees or the deacons here. Do not put any person. Only word it this way

² This is a critical phrase.

³ If this is not in your Articles of Incorporation, you are not properly incorporated under the current law as a not-for-profit organization.

Legal Commentary on Incorporation¹

By Chriss Doss

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A. Introduction.

Attorneys who advise churches to incorporate may do so without being suspected of having vested interests. Modern churches have grown so large and have assumed so many responsibilities that they act in effect as large corporations, whether or not they have formally incorporated. Even a smaller church, while it may prefer a more informal governing structure, could avoid potentially divisive situations by committing itself to a formal incorporation.

Legal experts recognize the motivations of those churches that are accustomed to the informal, almost handshake type of organization, where the association is loosely constituted and where the governing body responds mainly to the priorities of the moment. While there are certain advantages to this typical arrangement, those churches need not be intimidated by the task of incorporating. The process may actually be a relatively quick and routine assignment for the experienced attorney.

It may have once been true that the church took a risk in entrusting its authority with the state for protection under the law. Now, however, state statutes are responsive to the exigencies of the modern church organization. Legal commentators conclude that church corporations "are substantially less regulated than public benefit corporations." Fishman, *The Development of Nonprofit Corporation and an Agenda for Reform*, 34 Emory L.J. 617, 618 (1985). Incorporation should be a means of centralizing and channeling the church's authority, and of making the church entity more responsive to its members.

Incorporation offers the church at least five distinct benefits:

1. Authority to Act.

In most states only a church that is incorporated, in some form, is allowed to own property. *Stewart v. White*, 128 Alabama. 202, 30 So. 526 (1901). If the church is not incorporated, then it is necessary that a trustee or a board of trustees have ownership of the property in trust for a given congregation or agency. See *African Methodist Episcopal Church v. St. Paul Methodist Church of Selmont*, 295 Alabama. 343, 362 So. 2d 868 (Alabama. 1976).

In unincorporated church bodies, a legal uncertainty pervades church action. What seem to be practical and convenient decisions, suggested by an influential church member perhaps, may produce disastrous consequences. No one can predict the extent of liability in such a case, if several years later, a person claiming to have been harmed by the action brings suit.

Incorporation provides a consistent power to act, centered in the same governing body and in the same basic body of rules.

2. Flexibility.

An incorporated church, through its board of directors, may more effectively use and administer its property. For example, donors who understand the governing procedure of the church and who understand the legal status of their gifts are likely to respond more confidently to church appeals.

Incorporation allows the church to conduct its secular and fiscal responsibilities directly, without an additional administrative layer. With so many churches assuming a multi-faceted ministry, encompassing spiritual and social services of a charitable nature, the old trustee arrangement is generally not advisable.

Some churches are now as a single congregation in consortium with other groups, developing homes for the aging and providing social services in the community. In some situations, it may be desirable that a consortium or a committee, rather than the church, carry out a specific function that involves a tremendous capital outlay, operational costs, and many people. In such a case, the incorporation of the individual consortium, committee, or agency as an arm of the church may be desirable. It may very well be that this type of exposure could actually be mitigated by incorporating the consortium. In any case, these structural relationships can become complicated, and the church should contact an attorney to suggest the advantages and disadvantages of incorporation.

Religious organizations may articulate their own purposes in their charter and articles of incorporation. It is important to see that churches are limited primarily by their own failure to exercise the scope of their powers.

¹ Used by permission Doss and Baggett, *A Guide to Religious Corporations with Forms*, Cumberland School of Law, Birmingham, AL.

4. Continuity.

As the complexion of the church congregation changes, and as the church enrolls more transient members who nevertheless participate actively in the program for the time, the church must escape a pattern of inconsistent or contradictory decision making.

Incorporation provides at least an underlying framework for decision-making that continues without respect to the changing constituency of the church. For churches whose constituency changes little over time, incorporation allows them to maintain the governing structure and to protect against the disruption of temporary changes in church membership.

5. Durability.

Internal shifts in the personality of the church congregation should not upset the structural fabric of the church. A church that is organized loosely may also be dissolved loosely. In such churches, petty disagreements may be the catalysts for destroying the church. A formal organization may on the other hand, provide a means for church members to overcome these temporary disputes. Articles of incorporation and other formal instruments provide a measure of motivation and justification for churches to continue to exist.

6. Protection Against Liability.

Persons who possess grievances against the church look for the most available candidates to redress their grievances. They are likely to direct their grievances toward the abstract church entity, usually because the organization has the "deeper pocket," (i.e., the most money). Incorporation provides at least some protection against the "deep pocket theory" by shielding the individual members from personal liability. Remember that even where a religious entity is concerned, the object of litigation is assets in some form. Abstracts, while not always, are usually secondary.

Protection against "exposure" (a contemporary catchword that defines potential liability) should be the special concern of individual members of congregational churches, where autonomous levels of responsibility exist. Though its protection is not absolute, the *incorporated* church at least offers the initial protection of providing a convenient target for suit. If the board of trustees or directors is sued along with the corporation, the church will hopefully have provided adequate protection so that board members' private assets are not placed in jeopardy.

- a) **Litigious Trend.** In the last decade, the litigious trend in the American Society has become very much pronounced; this intensity is beginning to be felt especially within the religious community. Recently an article appeared in *The Evening Post* (Charleston, S.C.): "Growing Load of Religious Cases Confronting U.S. Supreme Court." *The Evening Post*, Aug. 7, 1987, at 8A, col. 1. Such articles are becoming common in newspapers across the country. More and more disputes within the religious community and between religious entities and secular entities are attested to by the fact that hundreds of cases are pending in various appellate courts in the United States. Some authorities suggest a small percentage of such conflicts are ever officially reported and only a very small percentage are ever adjudicated in the courts. As a phenomenon, there is probably a greater level of church-related litigation today than since the second century of the Christian era. However today, the object of fiscal assets, in the earlier period it was usually a criminal proceeding.

It should be clearly understood that the mere act of incorporation in and of itself will not necessarily preclude the church or some of its members from being sued. Furthermore, if an incorporated church is sued, being incorporated does not mean that the church will not have a judgment rendered against it. With the decline of the *de facto* "favored status" of the religious community in the litigious society, it is very doubtful that any active church can be certain of being spared litigation and lawsuits in numerous areas (i.e., torts, contracts, property, taxes, and social/religious services.)

With the present legal trends, the application of the basic laws of liability, as they relate to the principles of agency, due care, etc. within the sphere of the religious community, will definitely become more prevalent. We can witness this phenomenon in many other current spheres of society, including business. 'Tis a "sign of the times." One of the most effective steps to deal with such a sign is by incorporation. The structure and legal status of the corporation should help conserve the church's resources, enable the church to respond more effectively, and prevent wide and unnecessary liability exposures of the individual members, officials, and employees of the church. This is important because it should allow the church to concentrate on its spiritual and social roles without a greater likelihood of becoming bogged down in secondary concerns.

The breakdown of the charitable immunity concept and the current difficulty in defending religious institutions in courts point to the church's *image problem*. Those attorneys who defend churches and church-related organizations believe juries are often predisposed to find against the alleged "holier than thou" attitude of the church litigant. As James Guenther, counsel for the Executive Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, says, "[when a church finds it must go to the legal mat with someone, the church is immediately in a no-win situation." J. Guenther, Remarks at the Legal

Threat Conference of the Center for the Study of Law and the Church, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama (May 11, 1987).

- b) **Individual Member Liability.** For those local religious groups, such as the local church congregation, which are not incorporated, the individual members, officials, and staff may be bona fide defendants, individually and collectively; and under the “deep pocket theory” may be, individually and/or collectively, the source of satisfaction for any legal judgment. This would likely be true of those unincorporated congregations which are completely autonomous, it could possibly be true of members of local churches which belong to a denomination with monarchical/hierarchical or connectional polity if the local congregation acts, in some form, as a *defacto* trustee of the church’s property and enjoys all the benefits of ownership except not being the ultimate legal owner.
- c) **Ownership of Property.** There are many churches which are using property that is bound in residuary clauses in the instruments of conveyance. In some cases, the conveyance may not be valid. Remember a church group can ordinarily hold property by only two modes; 1) as a corporation (an artificial person) or 2) as a beneficiary of a trust with ownership vested in a trustee or trustees. *Trinity Presbyterian Church v. Tankersley*, 374 So. 2d 861 (Alabama. 1979); *African Methodist Episcopal Church v. St. Paul Methodist Church*, 295 Alabama. 343, 329 So. 2d 542 (1976). Therefore, only an incorporated church or religious group can accept ownership of property. Ownership of *any and all* property of an unincorporated religious group, local church or otherwise, must be conveyed and vested in a trustee. If the property is not conveyed to a trustee, it may ultimately be owned by the descendants of the grantor because there would be no valid acceptance.
- d) **Incorporation May Protect from Exposure of Liability.** By incorporating there are some definite protection and limitations of exposure to legal liability. The state of Alabama is used as an example. In the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act “the members of the corporation shall not, as such, be liable for obligations of the corporation.” Alabama. Code S 10-3A-26(b) (1984 Supp.). Also under the same act, “[t]he officers and employees of the corporation shall not, as such, be liable for obligations of the corporation.” Alabama. Code S 10-3A-41(d) (1984 Supp.). An “obligation” may be a judgment awarded against a defendant or defendants, i.e., a church and/or various individuals related to the church.
- e) **Model Nonprofit Corporation Act.** Most states, which have substantially adopted the Model Nonprofit Corporation Act in their individual nonprofit corporation acts, will probably assert that “the directors, officers, employees and members of the corporation shall not, as such, be liable on its obligation.” 5(Section 11, Model Nonprofit Corporation Act). However, please check with an attorney concerning this specific matter.

Many states have special laws under which churches and religious groups may incorporate; however, very few of these laws state affirmatively that the directors, officers, employees and members of the corporation, incorporated under their given acts “shall not, as such, be liable” for its obligations.

In corporate law as a general rule, a corporation is treated as a legal entity separate and distinct in identity from the members who compose it. *United States v. Creel*, 71 F. 2d575 (5th Cir. 1983); *Loper v. Gill*, 282 Alabama. 614, 213 So.2d 674 (1968); *Ex parte Fairfield-American National Bank*, 223 Alabama. 252, 135 So. 447 (1931). Also, the *contractual* rights and obligations of a corporation and those of its members individually are separate and distinct. *Nixon v. Lucas*, 42 F.2d 833 (2nd Cir. 1930).

Furthermore, concerning *continuous* actions of a corporation, the members of the corporation as individuals are not liable. *Geller v. TransAmerican Corp.*, 63 F. Supp.248(D. Del. 1945), *aff’d*, 151 F.2d 534 (3d Cir. 1945); *Brown v. Standard Casket Mfg.*, 234 Alabama. 512, 175 So. 358 (1937) *Ernest v. Moore*, 254 S.W.2d 347 (Ky. 1953). Concerning the legal doctrines of agency, a corporation, as such, and stockholders, as such, do not have a relation of principle and agent. *Bowles v. American Distilling Co.*, 62F. Supp. 15 (S.D.N.Y. 1945); *Kelly v. Galloway*, 156 Or. 301, 68 P.2d 474 (1937).

- f) **Alabama’s Exempting Some Not-for-Profit Corporation Officers Act.** A recent Alabama law exempts some not-for-profit corporation officers from personal liability. The legislation (Alabama Acts 1987, 87-706) (see Appendix III) does not specifically list those religious corporations formed under the Code of Alabama (1975), Sections 10-4-1 through 10-4-9 and Sections 10-4--20 through 10-4-43. Neither are state conventions or associations of churches, incorporated under the Code of Alabama (1975), Section 10-4-60, specifically listed as covered by the immunity statute.

Section 1 of Act 87-706, *supra*, does not specifically mention religious corporations, organizations, and associations; however, section 2(a) (1) is probably intended to provide coverage. But it should be noted that the said act does not provide any protection for employees of the entities covered in the Act; and protection is provided only for those “members of governing bodies (i.e., members of executive committees) of such not-for-profit entities.” (Act 87-706, section 1).

It should be noted that the term “corporation” or any of its forms is not sacred. Usually if a corporation as an instrument is employed to pursue a specific or general purpose which is outside the corporation’s stated authority, the corporation

efficacy is said matter will be null and void. A corporate form is “no better” than what is included in its articles of incorporation.

- g) **Ascending Liability.** For those churches with a connectional or hierarchical polity there may real problems of ascending liability (*respondeat superior* - a form of vicarious liability); in some situations, modified forms of congregational polity may have some liability exposure. For the hierarchical churches there has been substantial concern sing the *Bar* case (also known as the *Pacific Home* case). See discussion *supra*.

The incorporation of the local church should be of some protection in the connectional or hierarchical structure where there are several corporations. The structure and the dynamics of the inter-corporate relationships of the various entities (corporations) would be vital in ascertaining the decree and nature of distinction between two or more corporations with the same, or some of the same members. However, as a general rule, corporations retain their distinct and viable legal identities even when they have common members and officers. Their purpose and authorities in reference to each other and the factor of control should be carefully considered.

If a local congregation incorporates to function as a trustee for another corporation, which is higher up the chain of command, and the local congregation’s (trustee’s) purpose is defined, then liability claims, arising out of actions of the trustee congregation beyond the pale of its purpose, substantively or procedurally, may not take against the first congregation.

- h) **Benefits of Incorporating are Significant.** It is unclear as to the complete extent of protection from liability claims the incorporation status provides churches and depending on many aspects of the different groups and situations there will be variations. However, it is safe to assume that the benefits of incorporating far outweigh the alternatives in today’s world.

In a sense of thoroughness, it should be pointed out that there are some inconveniences and disciplines related to the incorporated church, which at times can be annoying and a little frustrating: having to often observe specifically defined procedures and policies on a uniformed and consistent basis; keeping more detailed and complete records; and filing documents related to incorporation.

Many churches are incorporated because in the past, congregations needed to borrow funds to finance a church and the lender required the congregation to incorporate. Once the needed fiscal resources were obtained the membership forgot about the incorporation. Such an attitude may not be fatal or illegal; however, the best policy for the incorporated church is to remember it is a religious corporation and act accordingly. Such is good business and good stewardship. Applying such should be one of the church’s top administration priorities.

Some Issues to Discuss with the Attorney

Note: The following material is designed to prepare you to meet with an attorney to prepare Articles of Incorporation. For SAMPLE Articles of Incorporation prepared by Chriss Doss and Mark Baggett, see their book: *A Guide to Religious Corporations with Forms.*

Never attempt to write a legal document of this nature without consulting an attorney.

Notice to Take Care

Please remember when studying the following worksheet that the procedures, requirements and other incorporating statutes will vary from state to state and time to time. The best policy and the following of caution is to consult with an attorney **familiar** with the various religious incorporation acts of the state and county in which your church is located.

*The following worksheet reflects what is ordinarily prevalent, but when a church in a specific jurisdiction (county and state) seeks to incorporate, the church representatives must promptly discuss the total ramifications and process with a qualified attorney. **There is no substitute for this!***

1. What is the church's purpose? Include your *Purpose Statement* or *Mission Statement*.
2. The details of why the church needs to incorporate.
3. What will the church need to do officially to facilitate incorporation?
4. What material does the church need to collect and develop to assist in the incorporation process (*this may save some of the cost of incorporating*)? You will certainly need all deeds and titles for church property and buildings. Copies of notes and bonds will also be helpful.
5. What fee will the Probate Judge charge?
6. What will the attorney charge??
7. Request a list of any additional expenses not included in the categories immediately given above.
8. Find out the time frame your attorney anticipates tending to church's incorporation action.

If there are any unanswered questions, raise the issues and **insist** on getting an answer.

Ask specifically about incorporating under Alabama's nonprofit corporation statutes.

An Incorporation Questionnaire to Prepare for your Attorney

1. NAME AND LOCATION

Name of Church _____

Address _____

City of _____

County _____

State _____

2. PURPOSE

List the church purpose statement and a broad phrase which will include potential future ministries – religious, charitable, benevolent, eleemosynary and educational. (Many churches do ministries they are not authorized to do.) See Code of Alabama 10A-3.

3. AUTONOMY AND AFFILIATIONS (check all that apply):

___ The church shall be autonomous and independent of any outside ecclesiastical control.

___ At the same time, by consent of members, it may cooperate and participate with various entities of:

___ The Southern Baptist Convention,

___ The Alabama Baptist State Convention,

___ The local Baptist Association,

___ Other Baptist Churches,

___ Other religious, charitable, benevolent and educational groups and individuals.

___ The church shall have all the power as defined in Code of Alabama 1975 Section 10a 3.

4. CORPORATE OFFICERS

Personal liability is attached to corporate officers, only the pastor and the trustees should be named as “officers” of the corporation. Other names should clarify that they are NOT corporate officers.

5. ADMINISTRATION OF CHURCH AFFAIRS

Businesses commonly call the Trustees the Board of Directors, but church Articles of Incorporation should specifically designate that they be called Trustees).

___ The church sitting and acting in a duly called and held conference (business meeting) shall be the final authority in all its affairs.

___ The material and business affairs of the church are to be administered by the following officers of the church under direction of the church membership (in other words, people who will sign documents on behalf of the church only after the specific approval of the church):

___ Trustees composed of , who shall make and execute all contracts, deeds, bonds, notes, negotiable instruments, mortgages, trusts and all other instruments of indebtedness or conveyance of the incorporated church upon the order thereof, by resolution by the church sitting in a duly called conference, duly adopted for such purposes; provided, however, that all such documents be signed for and on behalf of the trustees by any (number) of the (number) officers of the trustees and

attested by the clerk of the incorporated church (who shall also be secretary to the trustees).¹

___ The offices of the trustees, with the congregation's concurrence, shall be at least²

___ The president of the trustees

___ First vice president of the trustees

___ Secretary of the trustees

___ Other officer(s) of the trustees, with the congregation's concurrence.

___ The title of all property shall be vested in the name of said incorporated church.

___ The Trustees shall have such other duties and authority as provided by the bylaws of the church.

___ In the absence of availability of the requisite number of officers of the trustees, how the church will select or delegate new ones:

6. AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

The Articles of Incorporation may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3)³ vote of those present and voting when the church is sitting in duly called and held conference as provided by its Bylaws. (See footnote)

7. BYLAWS

Bylaws of the church may be adopted by a 2/3 majority vote of those present and voting when the church is sitting in duly called and held conference on two consecutive occasions. The Bylaws may be amended, altered or rescinded by the church sitting in conference as provided and allowed by the church's Bylaws.⁴

8. CHURCH CONFERENCE (BUSINESS MEETING)

Alabama law requires that the church must have at least, two meetings a year.

When they may be held: _

___ Refer to the Bylaws for schedule of regular meetings.

___ Refer to the Bylaws for special (or called) meetings.

___ Refer to the Bylaws for the provision of publication of business

___ The quorum required for the transaction of business shall be as provided in the church Bylaws.

9. DISCHARGE OF TRUSTEES, DEACONS, OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE PERSONS

Further details may be set out in the Bylaws of the church.

10. ELECTIONS

When and how (refer to the Bylaws rather than spelling out details):

¹Doss and Baggett, A Guide to Religious Corporations.

²There must be at least 3 members of the board of trustees - board of directors; and the president and secretary cannot be the same person.

³You may require two-thirds or three-quarters. A suggestion would be a two-thirds passed in two consecutive scheduled meetings.

⁴You may choose to require two-thirds or three-quarters. A suggestion would be a super majority passed in two consecutive scheduled meetings.

___ Vacancies shall be filled as provided in the Bylaws.

___ Members of the Board of Trustees and the in-service Deacon Body shall be elected for a term not to exceed three (3) years and shall be rotated as described in the Bylaws.

The qualifications of deacons and trustees shall be prescribed in the Bylaws.

___ All trustees, active deacons and committee persons shall hold office until their successors are duly elected and take office.

11. TRANSFER OF ASSETS IN THE EVENT OF DISSOLUTION (Required by IRS regulations)

The organization to receive the church's assets in the event the church ceases to exist: _____

No assets of any substantial value of said church shall be distributed to any member, officer or trustee of this church. Any non-profit corporations or organizations designated to receive assets shall be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Alabama Baptist State Convention and/or a Baptist Association.

12. QUALIFICATION OF MEMBERS AND MANNER OF ADMISSION

There are requirements for membership: _____

How members are received: _____

If there are any unanswered questions, ask for, and insist upon, getting answers.

Ask specifically about incorporating under the state's **nonprofit corporation** statutes. Remember the church's business should be pursued on a committed, enlightened, and responsible basis!

Notice to Take Care

Please remember when studying the following worksheet that the procedures, requirements and other incorporating statutes will vary from state to state and time to time. The best policy and the following of caution is to consult with an attorney **familiar** with the various religious incorporation acts of the state and county in which your church is located.

Do not copy and use this document as is! This is intended only as a sample of what a finished document might look like! The following sample reflects what is ordinarily prevalent, but when a church in a specific jurisdiction (county and state) seeks to incorporate, the church representatives must promptly discuss the total ramifications and process with a qualified attorney. There is no substitute for this!

Sample Articles of Incorporation

Article 1. Name, Location and Statement of Existence

This body shall be known as the New Covenant Baptist Church, This Corporation will be further referred to in this document as the “Church,” located at 20 Arlington Road, in the city of Arab Marshall County, Alabama.

The Church shall have full power and authority to change the registered office from one location to another. The Church shall have full power and authority to change the registered agent as needed.

Article 2. Purpose

The purpose under the Code of Alabama 1975 Article 10A, (as amended) is religious, education and Benevolence.

Article 3. The Religious Purpose of This Church

The purpose of this Church is to glorify God by obeying the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The process is designed to produce disciples of Jesus Christ which involves at least the following four categories:

- Worship – (Celebrating) “To love God with all your heart...” (Matthew 22:36-40).
- Ministry – (Caring) “Love your neighbor as yourself...” (Matthew 22:36-40).
- Evangelism – (Cultivating) “Go...and make disciples...” (Matthew 28:18-20).
- Discipleship – (Communication). “Teach them to observe...” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Article 4. Statement of Basic Beliefs

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired work of God and the basis for our beliefs. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the Church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. (See the Bylaws.)

Article 5. Church Membership (and Admission of Members)

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership. Procedures for admission, dismissal, and transfer shall be as provided by the Bylaws of the church.

Article 6. Administration of Affairs: Polity and Relationships

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership. (See the Bylaws).

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the association, the state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

- A. The corporate officers of this church under the Code of Alabama 1975 (as amended) shall be the trustees as provided by the Bylaws of the church.
 - a. Unless the Bylaws state otherwise, candidates for the office of Trustee will be nominated by the nominating committee or additional nominations may be made by order by the body. Trustees must be approved the by the majority vote of active [if desired] members of the church present and voting while sitting in a duly called conference
 - b. Trustees may serve for a period of five years. Each Trustee must be an active resident member of the Church.
 - c. Trustees are responsible for the use, preservation and care of all church property.
 - d. The trustees shall have such other duties and authority as provided by the bylaws of the church.
- B. The ecclesiastical officers shall be as provided by the Bylaws of the church.
- C. The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.
- D. The church sitting and acting in a duly called and held conference (business meeting) shall be the final authority in all of its affairs.
 - a. The material and business affairs of the corporation are to be administered by the designated corporate officers the church under direction of the church membership.
 - b. The Trustees, composed of at least three members, who shall make and execute all contracts, deeds, bonds, notes, negotiable instruments, mortgages, trusts and all other instruments of indebtedness or conveyance of the incorporated church upon the order thereof, by resolution by the church sitting in a duly called conference, duly adopted for such purposes; provided, however, that all such documents be signed for and on behalf of the board of trustees by any two of the officers of the trustees and attested by the clerk of the incorporated church. The clerk is not a voting trustee but shall be secretary to the trustees.

In the absence of availability of the requisite number of officers of the trustees, and/or the church clerk (secretary to the board of directors), the church sitting in a duly called and held conference may designate another member or members of the board of trustees and/or other officers of the church to execute and attest the instruments outlined above.

Article 7. Church Conference (Business Meeting)

The Bylaws of the church shall provide for regularly scheduled meetings, publication of the transactions of business, and for the calling of special meetings called for the transaction of special business. The quorum required for the transaction of business shall be as provided in the Bylaws of the church.

A church business meeting may be electronic at the call of the Pastor or chairman of Deacons with one week's notice.

Article 8. Bylaws

Bylaws of the church may be adopted by a majority vote of those present and voting when the church is sitting in duly called and held conference. The Bylaws may be amended or rescinded by the church sitting in conference as provided in the Bylaws.

Article 9. Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation

Changes in the Articles of Incorporation may be proposed at any regular business meeting of the church by presenting copies of the proposed amendment to each member present. No vote may be taken until the next regular business meeting.

Changes in the Articles of Incorporation must be approved at regular church conference (business meeting) of the church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at an earlier business meeting.

Article 10. Elections

The church shall hold elections at such time and in such manner as designated in the Bylaws.

All officers shall be elected or appointed in accordance with the Bylaws of the church. Vacancies shall be filled as provided in the Bylaws.

Article 11. Church Year

As set out in the Bylaws, the church year shall extend from the first day of January for a period of twelve months, and each twelve-month period thereafter.

Article 12. Discharge of Trustees and Officers

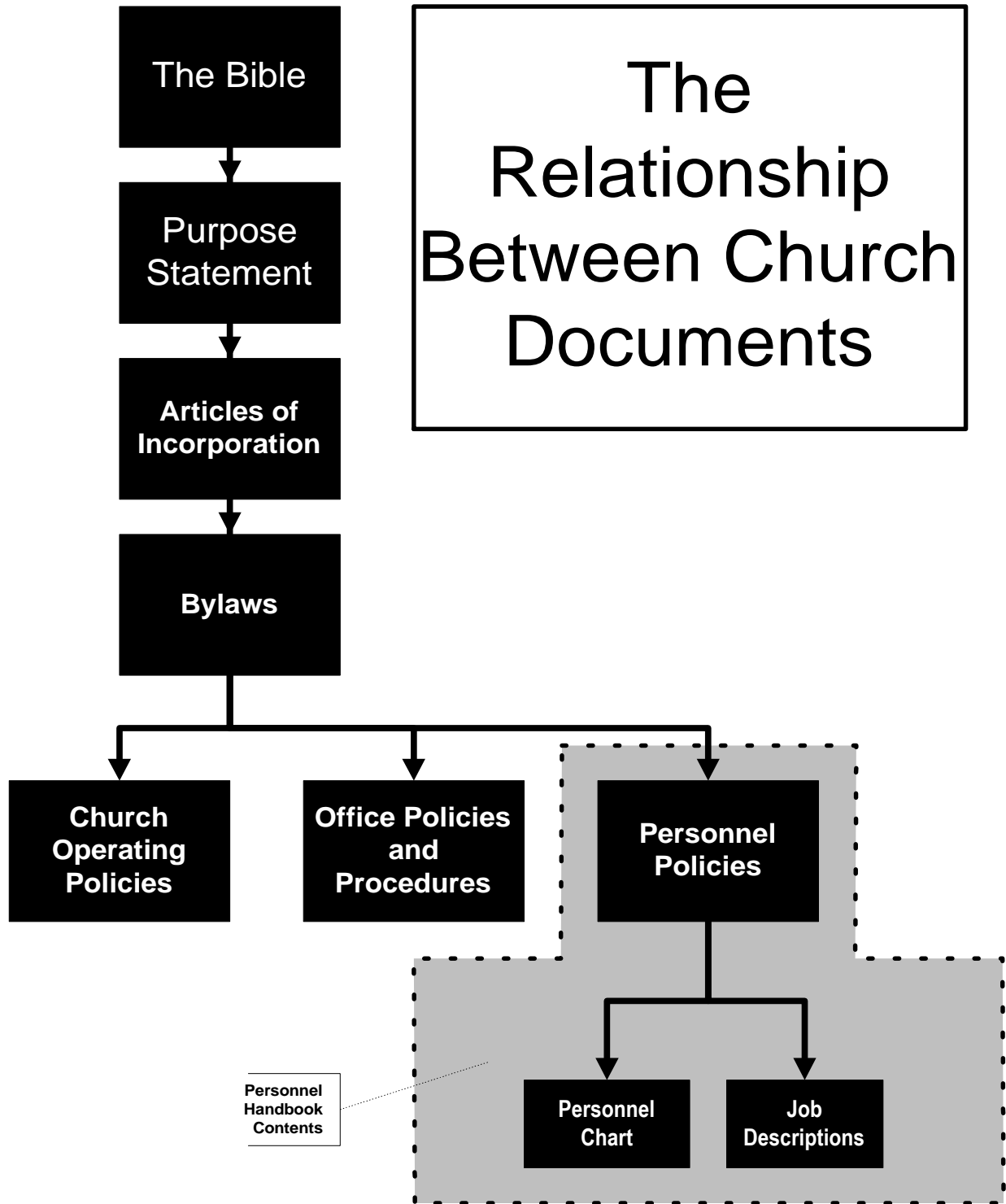
Any trustee active deacon, officer or committee person may be discharged by a majority vote of the church sitting in a duly called and held conference for any cause the church deems advisable; provided, however, any trustee, deacon, officer or committee member shall be given an opportunity to defend himself either before or during such conference. Further details may be set out in the Bylaws of the church.

Article 13. Transfer of assets in the event of dissolution.

The name of 501c3 organization to receive the church's assets in the event the church ceases to exist:

No assets of any substantial value of said church shall be distributed to any member, officer or trustee of this church. Any non-profit corporations or organizations designated to receive assets shall be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Alabama Baptist State Convention and/or a Southern Baptist Association.

The Relationship Between Church Documents



SECTION FIVE: Create Your Bylaws

How to Develop Bylaws

1. **Recognize the need.**
2. **Select a bylaws committee (special ad hoc committee).**
3. **Gather information.**
 - a) Purpose Statement.
 - b) Church Constitution or Articles of Incorporation.
 - c) Church minutes.
 - d) Secure sample bylaws from other churches.
 - e) Contact Office of Church Health at alsbom.org for additional assistance.
4. **Decide what to include**
 - a) Beginning by compiling the current bylaws and policies without revising them.
 - b) Revise policies only after you have assembled the accurate documents.
5. **Communicate openness throughout the process.**
6. **Write the document.**
 - a) Be as general as possible.
 - i) Numbers and dates belong in the policies rather than the bylaws.
 - a) Avoid specific dates.
 - b) Avoid numbers such as “there shall be 12 deacons.”
 - ii) Rather than naming committees, assign this task as follows: “the number of committees needed and the duties of said committees shall be determined by church policy as set by the church.”
 - b) Use simple, easy to understand words.
 - c) Strive for brevity and completeness.
7. **Content: Use the following subsection as a guide.**
8. **Present the document to the church:**
 - a) Discuss the proposal.
 - b) Revise as needed.
 - c) Reach a consensus.
 - d) Vote.
9. **Review and update every three to five years.**

Topics for Bylaws

1. Corporate Officers.

- a) Trustees.
 - i) Composition.
 - ii) Qualification.
 - iii) Nomination, Election, Rotation.
 - iv) Officers.
 - v) Powers and Responsibilities.
 - vi) Meetings.
- b) Call and Termination of the Pastor:
 - i) Call process.
 - ii) Resignation (2 weeks sufficient).
 - iii) Termination
 - iv) Dismissal.

2. Church Ministry Officers.

- a) Clerk
 - i) Nomination, Election, Rotation
 - ii) Responsibilities
- b) Moderator
 - i) Selection
 - ii) Duties
 - iii) Succession
- c) Parliamentarian
 - i) Nomination, Election
- d) Treasurer.
 - i) Nomination, Election, Rotation
 - ii) Responsibilities
- e) Other officers.

3. Membership:

- a) Qualifications and procedures.
- b) Candidacy for membership.
- c) Full membership/rights of members.
- d) Termination of membership.
- e) Discipline of a member.
- f) Reconciliation
 - i) Matthew 18:15-17.
 - ii) Galatians 6:1-2.
- g) Exclusion.
- h) Restoration.

4. Deacons.

- a) Composition.
- b) Qualification.
- c) Nomination, Election, Rotation.
- d) Ordination.
- e) Officers.
- f) Responsibilities.
- g) Meetings.

5. Church Staff.

- a) Purpose & Responsibility
- b) Composition:
 - i) Pastor.
 - ii) Ministerial staff.
 - iii) Associate Ministry Staff.
 - iv) Church Support Staff.
 - a) Clerical.
 - b) Custodial.
 - c) Food Service.
 - d) Weekday Education.
 - e) Instrumentalists.
 - f) Other.
- c) Call and Termination of members of the Pastoral Staff and/or Ministerial Staff:
 - i) Call.
 - ii) Resignation.
 - iii) Termination
 - a) Pastoral Staff.
 - b) Ministerial Staff.
 - iv) Notice of Dismissal.

6. Committees

- a) Regular/Standing Committees:
 - i) Administrative Committees:
 - a) Nominating Committee.
 - b) Personnel Committee.
 - c) Stewardship/Financial Committee.
 - ii) Other Regular/Standing Committees as specified in the Policy Manual.

- b) Ministry Committees as specified by church policy This may include:
 - i) Baptism Committee.
 - ii) Benevolence Committee.
 - iii) Committee on Committees.
 - iv) Flower Committee.
 - v) Food Service Committee.
 - vi) History Committee.
 - vii) Lord's Supper Committee.
 - viii) Preschool Committee.
 - ix) Property and Space Committee.
 - x) Public Relations Committee.
 - xi) Weekday Education Committee.
 - xii) Family Enrichment Committee.
 - c) Special committees (*ad hoc*) as specified by policy, such as:
 - i) Building/Construction Planning Committee.
 - ii) Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws Committee.
 - iii) Strategic (*Long Range*) Planning Committee.
 - iv) Pastor Search Committee.
 - d) Councils as specified by policy, such as:
 - i) Evangelism Council.
 - ii) Missions Development Council.
 - iii) Age-group councils.
 - iv) Others as specified.
- 7. Ministry Teams.**
 - 8. Ministry organizations as specified by church policy.**
 - 9. Church ministry services as specified by church policy.**

- 10. Church Leadership Team/Church Council (membership as specified by church policy).**
- 11. Ordinances (do not specify a frequency or a specific schedule. Simply state "as specified by church policy").**
- 12. Church worship and meetings as scheduled by church vote or as specified by church policy.**
- 13. Church Conference/Business Meeting.**
 - a) Regular (as specified by church policy, quarterly is sufficient).
 - b) Special or Called:
 - c) Quorum.
 - d) Rules of Order.
 - i) Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (or the most current edition).
 - ii) Moderator and Succession (*see church officers*).
- 14. Church finances.**
- 15. Elections/Rotations:**
 - a) Elections:
 - i) Deacons.
 - ii) Officers.
 - iii) Committees
 - iv) Organization leaders.
 - v) Others as specified.
 - b) Rotation:
- 16. Church Operating Policy Manual (specifies the existence and nature of this document).**
- 17. Amendments to the Bylaws**

I. Church Membership

Section 1. General: Qualifications and Procedures.

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

The membership of the church shall consist of those persons who profess their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, giving satisfactory proof of conversion to the Christian faith, as set forth in the New Testament, who have petitioned the said church for membership and have been accepted by the two thirds of the members of said church present and voting at the time of the reception of such members and who has enjoyed the ordinance of believers baptism and have indicated their commitment following the teachings of the Bible as their model and standard of living.

Section 2. Candidacy.

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church.

Presentation for membership may be made in any of the following ways according to the policies of this church:

1) By Baptism:

- a. For persons making a public profession of faith.
- b. For persons who have experienced salvation but have not experienced believers' baptism by immersion.

2) By Letter:

Promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church

3) By Statement of Faith:

- a. For persons who have experienced salvation followed by believer's baptism by immersion by another Baptist church (or church of like doctrine), but are either not now Baptist, or no record is now available.
- b. For restoration upon a statement of repentance and rededication of persons who have been removed from the fellowship of a Baptist church for reasons of discipline.

A two-thirds vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

If there is any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Membership Committee or Deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A two-thirds vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

Section 3. New Member Orientation

New candidates for membership of this church are expected to participate in the church's new member orientation according to the policies of this church.

Section 4. New Member Election

After successfully completing new member orientation, the candidate will be presented for election to full membership in the church at the next regularly scheduled business meeting.

Section 5. Rights of Members

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting (**Not recommended**) according to the policies of this church.

- 1) Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church according to the policies of this church.
- 2) Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church according to the policies of this church.

Section 6. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated according to the policies of this church in the following ways: (1) death of the member, (2) joining another Baptist church, (3) exclusion by action of this church, or (4) erasure upon request or (5) proof of membership in a church of another denomination.

Section 7. Conflict Resolution.

This church is committed to resolving in a Biblical manner all conflict that may arise within the body. This commitment is based on God's command that Christians should strive to live at peace with one another (see Matt. 5:9; John 17:20-23; Romans 12:18; Eph. 4:1-3) and that when disputes arise, Christians should resolve them according to the principles set forth in Scripture (see Prov. 19:11; Matt. 5:23-25; 18:15-20; I Cor. 6:1-8; Gal 6:1). We believe that these commands and principles are an obligation to every Christian and are essential to the unity, health, and witness of the church.

When a member of this church has a conflict with, or is concerned about the behavior of another member, he/she shall attempt to resolve it in the following manner.

- 1) The offended or concerned person shall prayerfully examine himself or herself, and take responsibility for their contribution to the problem (Matt. 7:3-5), and shall prayerfully seek to discern whether the offense is so serious it cannot be overlooked (Prov. 19:11; 15:18; 17:14; 20:3; Eph4:2; Col. 3:13; I Pet. 4:8).
- 2) If the offense is too serious to be overlooked, the offended party shall go, several times if necessary, and attempt to resolve the matter personally and privately. In this interaction the offended party shall quickly confess his/her own wrongdoing and seek forgiveness.
- 3) If the offender will not listen and if the problem is too serious to overlook, the offended person shall return with one or two mature Christian people to help in the resolution of the differences. These other people are to serve more as mediators than as champions of a side. These other people should preferably be recognized leaders in the church or trained Christian mediators from the associational or denomination.
- 4) At the request of either party to the dispute, the church leadership shall make every effort to assist in resolving the differences and affecting reconciliation.

- 5) Before the matter is taken to the congregation according to the directed procedure of Matt. 18:15-17, the congregational leaders should seek counsel and mediation assistance from the association, the state convention (*Church Health*), or a recognized ministry of Christian conciliation such as Peacemakers Ministries.

Section 8. Discipline.

- 1) **Reconciliation**—It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment (Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1-2).
- 2) **Exclusion**—Should some serious condition exist, which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. A spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance shall pervade all such proceedings.
- 3) **Restoration**—The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and upon established evidence set forth by church policy of the excluded person's repentance and reformation. Such restoration shall be by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting.

II. Church Corporate Officers

The Corporate Officers of this church shall be the Pastor and Trustees. All who serve as officers of the church shall be members of this church.

Section 1. Trustees.

The church shall elect three or more Trustees to serve as legal officers on behalf the church. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of Trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

Trustees shall serve on a rotation basis, with at least one new trustee being elected every three years.

Section 2. Pastor.

Call and Termination of the Pastor:

A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

A Pastor Search Committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. Any church member may have the privilege of making other nominations according to the policy established by the church. The Committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of two-thirds (*3/4 or set percentage*) of those present and voting being necessary for a call. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the Church's request. He shall preside at meetings of this church, and if so designated, may serve as moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized in these bylaws.

The Pastor may relinquish the office as Pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church at the time of resignation.

The Church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's written notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the Deacons or by written petition (**NOT recommended**) signed by not less than one fourth of the resident church members as numbered in the most recent associational minutes. The moderator for this meeting shall be an outside person (the Director of Missions or a representative of the Office of LeaderCare and Church Administration of the State Board of Missions) or failing that, a person designated by the members present by majority vote, and he shall be someone other than the Pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by ballot; an affirmative vote of a 2/3 majority of the members present and voting being necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the Pastor, the church will compensate the Pastor with not less than one fourth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate, and the compensation shall be rendered in three equal installments. The first installment shall be rendered in not more than thirty days. The second installment shall be rendered in not more than sixty days. The third installment shall be rendered in not more than and ninety days.

The Pastor and Church may, by mutual agreement, forgo the requirement for notice. Such agreement shall be in writing and shall be signed by the Pastor, and the Chairman of Deacons.

III. Church Ministry Officers

The Ministry Officers of this church shall be a Moderator, a Clerk, and a Treasurer. All who serve as officers of the church shall be members of this church. Ministry officers are not considered to be corporate officers. A Person holding a ministry office may also serve as a corporate officer if not prohibited by these Bylaws as long as the individual is properly elected for both positions.

Section 1. Moderator

The church shall annually elect a Moderator as its presiding officer for church business meetings. In the absence of the Moderator, the Chairman of Deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.

Section 2. Clerk

The church shall elect annually a Clerk as its clerical officer. The Clerk shall be responsible for supervising the keeping of a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk shall be responsible for the keeping of a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The Clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual profile of the church to the local association.

The Church may delegate some or all of the clerical responsibilities to a secretary who will assist the elected clerk. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained.

Section 3. Parliamentarian (Optional)

The church may select annually a parliamentarian. In the absence of the parliamentarian, the Chairman of Deacons shall serve; or in the absence of all, the moderator shall call the church to order and preside for the selection of an acting parliamentarian.

Section 4. Church Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a Church Treasurer as its financial officer. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, as well as account for things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The Treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant. The treasurer shall be bonded, the church paying the bond.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the Treasurer to the Church Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

IV. Deacons

Section 1. Composition:

There shall be one deacon elected for assigned service for every assigned group of church families, the number of which is determined by church policy.

Section 2. Qualifications:

I Timothy 3:8-13.

Section 3. Nomination, Election, Rotation:

Deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Each year the assigned term of office of one third of the number of deacons shall expire, and election shall be held to fill vacancies and to add to the deacons such numbers as the church size warrants. In case of death, removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term. After serving a term of three years, a deacon shall be eligible for reelection only after the lapse of at least one year. There shall be no obligation to constitute as an in-service (*active*) deacon one who has been a deacon in another church; but in such instances as one might be chosen by this church for assignment as a deacon, his previous ordination by another church of like faith and order shall suffice for this church.

The nomination and election process shall be as specified in church policy.

Section 4. Ordination:

[Include here the customs and practices of your church. For more information, contact the CHURCH and ask for Deacon Ministry]

Section 5. Officers:

The Deacons shall elect a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and others, as they shall deem necessary. The election shall be conducted at a meeting prior to the election of new deacons. Officers shall be deacons who are completing their first or second year of service and will be serving as active deacons for the coming year.

Section 6. Responsibilities:

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. Their task is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing the pastoral ministry tasks of (1) leading the church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) caring for the church's members and other persons in the community.

Section 7. Meetings:

The Deacons shall hold regular deacons' meetings as designated by church policy.

V. Church Staff

Section 1. Purpose and Responsibility:

The Church Staff is responsible for supporting the church to function as a New Testament church. The Pastor is responsible for leading the congregation, the ministry organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

Section 2. Composition:

The Church Staff shall consist of the Pastor and other staff as designated by church policy.

- (1) The Pastor is leader of the pastoral ministries in the church. As such he works with the Deacons and Church Staff to: (1) lead the church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) care for the church's members and other persons in the community. The church shall provide a job description to aid in the understanding of these tasks.
- (2) Other Ministerial Staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Those staff members of whom the church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister shall be recommended to the church by the Personnel Committee and called by church action.
- (3) Associate Ministry Staff shall be called and employed to assist the pastoral staff as the church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Those staff members of whom the church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and called by church action.
- (4) Church Support Staff (non-ministerial staff) members shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The Church Personnel Committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the church.

Section 3. Call and Termination of the Pastor:

See Church Corporate Officers: Pastor

Section 4. Call and Termination of Ministerial Staff and Support Staff:

The Ministerial Staff and support staff shall be called or employed as the church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a Ministerial Staff or support staff member is determined. All Ministerial Staff and support staff members shall be recommended to the church by the Personnel Committee and called by church action.

At the time of resignation at least two weeks' notice shall be given to the church. The church may vote to vacate such positions upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee, such termination being immediate and the compensation conditions being the same as for the Pastor, except that the amount shall relate to the individual's compensation. The staff member and church may, by mutual agreement, forgo the requirement for notice. Such agreement shall be in writing and shall be signed by the staff member, the Pastor, the Chairman of Deacons and the Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

VI. Church Leadership Team/Church Council

The Church Leadership Team (or Church Council) shall serve the church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church and its organizations.

The primary functions of the church leadership team (or church council) shall be to recommend to the church suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate ministry and program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to ministry priorities; and to evaluate achievement in terms of church objectives and goals.

Regular members of the Church Leadership Team (or Church Council) shall be the pastor, other church staff members, directors of church ministry (program) organizations, church ministry (program) services, chairman of deacons, church officers, and chairpersons of church administrative committees (or teams).

Ex-officio members of the Church Leadership Team (or Church Council) shall be the chairpersons of church regular committees and special committees, teams and task forces.

All matters agreed upon by the Team/Council which call for action not already approved shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

VII. Church Committees and Teams

All who serve on church committees shall be members of this church. All church committee members shall be recommended by the church nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these bylaws.

Section 1. Standing/Permanent Committees and/or Teams:

The Standing/Permanent (*administrative*) Committees of this church shall include a Nominating Committee, a Personnel Committee, a church Property and Space Committee, a Stewardship (*financial*) Committee and such other Standing/Permanent (administrative) Committees as the church shall authorize. Additional administrative committees may be added by the amendment procedure prescribed within these bylaws. Members of these committees shall serve on a three-year rotation basis with one third to be elected each year. If a vacancy occurs before a member's term expires, a new member may be elected at any regular business meeting to fill the remainder of the term.

(1) The church Nominating Committee coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions filled by volunteer workers, unless otherwise specified herein. Persons considered for any such positions shall be approved by the Nominating Committee before they are approached for recruitment. The Nominating Committee shall present to the church for election all that accept the invitation to serve.

(2) The church Personnel Committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration, including those called by church action. Their work includes such areas as determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, other compensation, policies, job descriptions, and personnel services.

(3) The church Property and Space Committee assists the church in matters related to property administration. Its work includes such areas as maintaining all church properties for ready use, recommending policies regarding use of properties, consulting with the Personnel Committee and the Ministerial Staff regarding the needs for, and the employment of maintenance personnel, and regarding the assignment of supervisory responsibility to appropriate personnel.

(4) The church Stewardship Committee develops and recommends an overall stewardship development plan, a unified church budget, and budget subscription plans. It advises and recommends in the administration of the gifts of church members and others, using sound principles of financial management. It works with the

Treasurer in the preparation and presentation to the church of required reports regarding the financial affairs of the church.

Section 2. Ministry Committees and/or Teams:

The Ministry Committees of this church shall include such other committees as the church shall authorize. Additional Ministry Committees may be added by the amendment to church policy. Members of these committees shall serve on a three-year rotation basis with one third to be elected each year. If a vacancy occurs before a member's term expires, a new member may be elected at any regular business meeting to fill the remainder of the term.

Section 3. Special (Ad Hoc) Committees [Project Teams or Task Forces]:

The Special (*ad hoc*) Committees of this church shall include such other committees as the church shall authorize. Additional Special (*ad hoc*) Committees may be added by the amendment to church policy or by appointment of the pastor or moderator. Members of Special (*ad hoc*) Committees shall on a non-rotation basis until the task assigned is complete. Special (*ad hoc*) Committees may be disbanded by majority vote of the church in church conference/ business meeting or by mutual consent upon completion of the project.

Section 4. Councils or Teams:

The church shall maintain councils as specified by church policy. These councils may include, such as, evangelism council, missions' development council, age-group councils, and any others as specified by church policy. All councils related to the church ministries (*or programs*) shall be under church control, with all members serving by virtue of offices to which they are elected by the church, reporting regularly to the church, and all program activities subject to church coordination and approval. Additional councils may be added by the amendment procedure prescribed within these bylaws. Members of councils shall serve by virtue of the office they hold as specified by church policy.

VIII. Church Ministry Organizations

The church shall maintain ministry organizations as specified by church policy. These ministry organizations may include such things as Bible teaching, church member training, church leader training, new member orientation, mission education, mission action, mission support, music education, music training, and music performance. All organizations related to the church ministries shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all ministry activities subject to church coordination and approval. The church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these ministries.¹

IX. Church Emphasis Ministries

The church may provide emphasis ministries for the purpose of enriching the extending the ministries and plans of the church. These shall be established as specified by church policy. All organizations related to the church emphasis ministries shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all emphasis activities subject to church coordination and approval.

¹ Include in your church policies (1) Sunday School (2) Discipleship Training (3) Woman's Missionary Union (4) Men's Ministry and (5) Church Music.

X. Church Ordinances

Section 1. Baptism:

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

(1) Baptism shall be by immersion in water.¹

(2) The Pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The Deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and the observance of baptism.

(3) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church. Baptism may be administered as an act of worship in the home, hospital, correctional facility or nursing home when circumstances prevent the candidate from attending a regular worship service.

(4) A person who professes faith in Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the Pastor, Ministerial Staff or Deacons. If negative response is ascertained on the part of the candidate, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper:

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper regularly during normal or special worship times as specified by church policy. The Pastor and Deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper, the Deacons being responsible for the physical preparations.

XI. Church Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services:

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday and Wednesday evening for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The Pastor or a person of his designation shall direct the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

Section 2. Special Services:

Special services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar by the church leadership team/church council.

XII. Church Conference/Business Meeting

Section 1. Regular Church Conference/Business Meeting:

The church shall hold regular church conference/business meeting as designated by church policy.

Section 2. Special Church Conference/Called Business Meeting:

The church may conduct called church conferences /called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. Notice must be given in accordance with church policy for the specially called church conference /business meeting, unless extreme urgency, determined by the Pastor and Deacon Chairman, renders such notice impractical in which case a meeting may be called by (1) agreement of a majority of the

¹ You may wish to make an exception for certain medical reasons such as a terminally ill invalid.

in-service (*active*) deacons; (2) the Chairman of the Deacons, the Pastor and the Chairman of the applicable committee; or (3) agreement of a majority of the Church Council/Leadership Team.

The notice shall include the subject, the date, and time and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting.

Section 2. Remote Meetings:

The Church may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural (spoken and heard) communication. Notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

A remote meeting may be called by agreement of the Pastor and Deacon Chairman, if circumstance renders this impractical a meeting may be called by any of the following: (1) agreement of a majority of the in-service (*active*) deacons; (2) the Chairman of the Deacons, the Pastor and the Chairman of the applicable committee; or (3) agreement of a majority of the Church Council/Leadership Team.

The Church Council and all committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication. Notice of all meetings may be provided electronically. Council or committee meetings may be called by decision of the chairperson.

If any member calls for a secret ballot or for division of the house, or if the bylaws require a written ballot for certain kinds of votes (such as calling a pastor), the clerk shall make a sign-in list of those present at the meeting, then allow a certain period of time for people to come to the church to drop off their ballot.

[NOTE: If you are in an area where travel is being restricted, or if there are voting members who are on lockdown, you may have to look at other options such as mail.]

Section 3. Quorum:

The quorum consists of those members who attend the church conference/ business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 4. Parliamentary Rules:

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all church conferences (business meetings) of the church.

Section 5. Moderator and Succession:

See Article II, A, Officers”, Section 2 “Moderator.”

XIII. Church Finances

Section 1. Budget:

The Stewardship Committee, in consultation with the Church Leadership Team/Church Council, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for members' use.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Annually there may be opportunity provided to secure worthy commitments of financial support from the church members.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures:

All funds received for all purposes shall pass through the possession of the Church Treasurer, or financial secretary, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. Those who have responsibility that involves actual handling of funds shall be bonded, the church paying the bond.

Section 3. Fiscal Year:

The church fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

XIV. Elections and Rotations

The church shall hold elections at such time and in such manner as designated by church policy.

All officers shall be elected or appointed in accordance with church policy. Vacancies shall be filled as provided by church policy.

XV. Church Policies and Procedures Manual

The church shall develop and maintain a Church Policies and Procedures Manual to include church policies and procedures and organization charts depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the church. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available for use there by any member of the church. The church secretary shall maintain the manual. The Church Leadership Team/Church Council or a special committee established for this purpose shall review the manual at least annually, with authority to recommend changes for the church to consider. Any church member or church organization may recommend such changes to the Church Leadership Team/Church Council or a special committee.

Revision may be by one of the following methods:

Policies or procedures may be added, revised, or deleted by: (1) recommendation of the church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the procedures relate, (2) approval by the church Leadership Team/Church Council) and (3) the Pastor or church Leadership Team/Church Council if they deem it necessary or advisable. All revisions must be approved by the church.

Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual by presenting a motion in any regularly scheduled church conference/business meeting. Policies or procedures may then be added, revised, or deleted by a majority vote of the church in church conference/business meeting.

XVI. Amendments

Changes in the Bylaws may be made at any regular church conference/business meeting of the church provided each amendment has been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment has been furnished to each member present and read aloud at the earlier meeting and made available to any member requesting one at the church office. Amendments to the bylaws shall be by two thirds (2/3) of votes cast of church members present and voting at a regular church conferences/business meeting.

SECTION SIX:

Create Your Church Covenant

Sample Church Covenant

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, and the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and the spread of pornography; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

(Contact the Office of Church Health at alsbom.org for other samples.)

Responsive Reading Church Covenant

“And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, God of their father with all their hearts and their soul.”

MINISTER: What common experience leads us to spiritual fellowship and covenant relations with God and one another?

CONGREGATION: Having been led, as we believe by The Spirit of God, to receive The Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in The Name of The Father, and of The Son, and of The Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

MINISTER: What are some of our privileges and duties in this, our own Church?

CONGREGATION: We engage, therefore, by the aid of The Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines.

MINISTER: What vows do we gladly make as stewards of that which God has entrusted to us?

CONGREGATION: To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

MINISTER: For the sake of our homes, loved ones, what task do we humbly assume?

CONGREGATION: We engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

MINISTER: For the sake of the unsaved for whom Christ died, to what manner of life and conversations are solemnly pledges?

CONGREGATION: To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in dealings faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from sale and use of, intoxicating liquors as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

MINISTER: Since on is our master, even Christ and all we are brethren, by what fraternal ministries are we to strengthen each other and adorn the teachings of our Savior?

CONGREGATION: We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offence, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

MINISTER: For the good of our spiritual development, AND FOR THE BEST INTEREST OF THE Masters kingdom what do we promise to do if we move beyond the reach of this church?

CONGREGATION: We moreover engage that, when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church of this faith, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and principles of God's Word. ALL: Humbly confessing our past sins, we pray for grace and strength to keep these our holy vows, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

SECTION SEVEN: Create Your Church Operating Policies Manual

How to Develop a Church Operating Policies Manual

1. **Recognize the need**
2. **Recommend that the church conduct a study of a Church Operating Policies Manual:**
 - a) The recommendation may come from:
 - i) The Church Leadership Team/ Church Council.
 - ii) The Deacons (if required).
 - iii) Others as required.
 - b) Vote to develop an operating policy manual.
3. **Determine who will be responsible for the process of writing the policies:**
 - a) While the content of the policies will be determined by church vote as recommended by various committees, organizations and others, one person must be responsible for the actual writing to provide a **uniform** style and content.
 - b) In most churches this is the Church Administrator or the Pastor.
 - c) It may be anyone designated by the Church Leadership Team/Church Council
4. **Gather information:**
 - a) Begin by collecting any existing policies
 - b) Write down the current procedure for changing policies
 - c) Research the following books:
 - i) Being God's People: A Southern Baptist Church on Bold Mission.
 - ii) The Baptist Faith and Message.
 - iii) Total Church Life.
 - iv) Kingdom Principles of Church Growth.
 - v) Your Life & Your Church.
 - d) Secure sample policies from other churches.
 - e) Contact the Office of Church Health at alsbom.org, for additional assistance.
5. **Have each staff member write down what they do (include their present job description if one exists):¹**
 - a) Keep a journal for one month.
 - b) List any quarterly or annual duties.
 - c) List also any irregular or nonscheduled duties (e.g. Death of a member).
6. **Determine current structure**
 - a) Identify structure in four areas: (1) Spiritual, (2) Educational, (3) Financial, and (4) Legal.

¹Note: This may be done at the same time that you are revising Job Descriptions, Office Procedures, and/or Personnel Policies.

- b) Chart these current relationships (showing all ministries, programs, and groups).
 - c) Create a revised chart to show the desired arrangement.
- 7. Weigh the need for change versus the effect:**
- a) Communicate openness throughout the process.
 - b) Watch carefully for unspoken customs.
 - c) Respect tradition.
 - d) Pray for wisdom (James 1:5).
 - e) Be aware that the process is time consuming.
 - f) Watch the bottom-line benefit in efficiency versus cost in grief.
- 8. Give the policies identified to the appropriate groups for review (e.g., financial policies to the Stewardship Committee).**
- 9. Write and/or revise needed policies:**
- a) Schedule your work:
 - i) Write one or two policies a week.
 - ii) Put it on your weekly "to do" list.
 - iii) Take your time. Do not rush the process.
 - b) Include the following:
 - i) Label the subject.
 - ii) List the group, committee, or title of the individual responsible for administering the policy.
 - iii) State a summary of the policy in one sentence.
 - iv) State the full policy.
 - c) Say what you really mean:
 - i) Use simple, easy to understand words
 - ii) Strive for brevity and completeness.
 - iii) Be specific about each step in each process.
 - iv) Refer to individuals by title and not by name.
- 10. Communicate openness throughout the process.**
- 11. Receive suggestions with enthusiasm.**
- 12. Come to a consensus:**
- a) Distribute copies to all members.
 - b) Encourage questions.
 - c) Conduct at least two question and answer meetings.
 - d) Revise, if needed.
- 13. Vote on the policies.**
- 14. Compile the policies in a binder or e-file.**
- a) Group the policies by subject.
 - b) Index and cross-reference.

- c) Add policies as needed:
 - i) Include the date each policy is adopted by the following.
 - a) Sponsoring committee or council.
 - b) Church Leadership Team/Church Council.
 - c) Church.
 - ii) Revise the index as policies are added.

15. The Church Leadership Team/Church Council can authorize revisions or add policies (followed by church approval):

- a) As needs dictate.
- b) When requested by a committee or organization through the Church Leadership Team/Church Council.
- c) When requested by the Deacon Body through the Church Leadership Team/Church Council.
- d) When requested by a staff member through the Church Leadership Team/Church council
- e) When requested by the Pastor.

16. Evaluate and update annually.

Possible Topics for Church Operating Policies

1. Staff Organization

- a) Titles.
- b) Organization chart (see page 90).

2. Officers:

- a) Moderator.
- b) Clerk.
- c) Treasurer.
- d) Trustees.
- e) Parliamentarians.
- f) Other officers.

3. Deacons.

4. Ministry Organizations:

- a) Sunday School:
 - i) Weekly workers' meeting.
 - ii) Sunday School council.
- b) Discipleship:
 - i) Discipleship Training.
 - ii) Discipleship groups.
- c) Men's Ministries.
- d) WMU:
 - i) Adult: Women; Young Women; Coed.
 - ii) Grades 7-12; Girls; Boys; Coed.
 - iii) Grades 1-6: Girls; Boys; Coed.
 - iv) Preschool.
- e) Church Music:

i) Choirs:

- a) Adult Choir(s).
- b) Youth choir(s).
- c) Children's choirs.
- d) Preschool choirs.

ii) Other:

- a) Accompanists.
- b) Soloists.
- c) Praise team.
- d) Ensembles.
- e) Handbells.
- f) Praise band.
- g) Orchestra.

5. Ministry Services:

- a) Media Center/Library.
- b) Church recreation.

6. Worship:

- a) A.M. Sunday.
- b) P.M. Sunday.
- c) P.M. Wednesday meetings.
- d) Other scheduled services.
- e) Special occasions.

7. Church Leadership Team/Church Council.

8. Committees/Teams:

- a) Committee Policies:

- i) Committee Classification:
 - a) Permanent/Standing (*Regular*):
 - (1)Administrative.
 - (2)Ministry.
 - b) Special (*ad hoc*).
- ii) Committee Organization:
 - a) Chairperson.
 - b) Vice chairperson.
 - c) Secretary.
 - d) Number of members.
- iii) Committee Selection and Election.
- iv) Committee Rotation:
 - a) 1/3 per year.
 - b) 3-year term.
 - c) 1 year off between terms.
- v) Vacancies.
- vi) Committee Meeting frequency.
- vii) Committee Budgeting.
- viii) Committee Purchasing/spending.
- ix) Committee Reports.
- x) Committee Minutes.
- b) Committee Duties (Job Descriptions).
- c) Standing Committees (*Regular*):
 - i) Nominating Committee.
 - ii) Property and Space Committee.
 - iii) Personnel Committee.
 - iv) Stewardship Committee.
- d) Ministry Committees/Teams:
 - i) Baptism.
 - ii) Benevolence.
 - iii) Flower/Decorations.
 - iv) Food Service.
 - v) History.
 - vi) Lord's Supper.
 - vii) Preschool (Nursery).
 - viii) Public Relations.

- ix) Church Weekday Education.
- x) Usher.
- xi) Family Enrichment.
- xii) Committee on Committees. ¹

9. Special Committees (*ad hoc*):

- i) Building/Construction Committee.
- ii) Constitution and Bylaws Committee.
- iii) Strategic Planning (Long Range).
- iv) Pastor Search Committee.
- b) Councils
 - i) Evangelism Council
 - ii) Missions Development Council
 - iii) Age-group councils
 - iv) Others

10. Church Finances

- a) Designated gifts.
- b) Fund raising.
- c) Estate giving.

11. Operations:

- a) Building use:²
 - i) Members only is the best practice.
 - ii) Family of members (define family).
 - iii) Non-members not permitted.
- iv) Weddings:
 - a) Fellowship hall.
 - b) Kitchen.
 - c) Sanctuary.
 - d) Chapel.
 - e) Dressing rooms.
 - f) Bride's room
- v) Organist/pianist
- vi) Minister
- vii) Funerals
- viii) In-Church groups
- ix) Denominational groups
- x) Only church groups permitted

¹ This committee is not generally recommended, but if included it should be a Ministry Committee.

² NOTE: To determine fair reimbursement for the

use of your building, you may check with motels in your area.

- b) Kitchen
 - i) Meals
 - ii) Tables, Chairs & Equipment
 - a) Renting Tables, Chairs & Equipment (Loans to individuals for private use is a ***private benefit*** and is not allowed)
 - b) Deposits
 - c) Charges (tax issues)

12. Electronics

- a) Video Equipment
- b) Sound Equipment
- c) Computer Equipment

13. Transportation/Vehicle Policies

- a) Drivers

- b) CDL
- c) Chaperons
- d) Gas & oil
- e) Maintenance
- f) Auto Insurance
- g) Report forms

14. Property

- a) Property Insurance
- b) Keys/Key Card

15. Security:

- a) Preschool and Minors
- b) Parking
- c) Building
- d) Tellers Committee

SECTION EIGHT:

Create Your Office Policies and Procedures Manual

How to Develop an Office Policies and Procedures Manual

1. **Recognize the need**
 - a) Procedures save time.
 - b) Procedures assure uniform work.
 - c) Procedures assure completeness.
 - d) Procedures are vital when an employee is absent.
2. **Recommend to the church the establishment of an Office Policies and Procedures Manual:**
 - a) A recommendation may come from:
 - i) The Pastor.
 - ii) The Church Administrator (if other than the Pastor).
 - iii) The Personnel Committee.
 - b) Vote to allow the staff to proceed.
3. **Determine who is responsible for development of the policies (*This may be the Church Administrator if there is one*).**
4. **Gather information:**
 - a) Begin by collecting existing policies and procedures.
 - b) Secure sample policies from other churches.
 - c) Contact the Office of Church Health at alsbom.org for additional assistance.
 - d) Have each staff member write down what they do (include a current job description if one exists):
 - i) Keep a journal for one month.
 - ii) List any quarterly and annual jobs.
 - iii) List irregular and/or unscheduled tasks.
 - iv) Encourage staff to give thorough and detailed information. Later in the writing of the actual procedures you will strive for brevity and completeness.
5. **Determine the current structure**
 - a) Identify structure in four areas:
 - i) Legal
 - ii) Financial
 - iii) Educational
 - iv) Spiritual
 - b) Chart these relationships (show all ministries, programs, and groups, e.g., every choir, all music councils, etc.)
6. **Weigh the need for change versus the effect**
 - a) Watch carefully for customs
 - b) Respect tradition
 - c) Pray for wisdom (*James 1:5*)
 - d) Be aware that the process can be time consuming
 - e) Watch the bottom-line benefit versus cost in grief
7. **Give the policies identified to appropriate employee so that they may review them**
 - a) Communicate openness
 - b) Receive suggestions
8. **Write and/or revise needed policies and procedures**
 - a) Procedures are written by the person who does the work and reviewed by that person's supervisor and the Administrator
 - b) Write one or two a week
 - c) Put it on your weekly "to do" list
 - d) Do not hurry / Take your time
 - e) Use simple, easy to understand words
 - f) Strive for brevity and completeness
 - g) Be specific about each step in each process
 - h) Refer to individuals by title and not by name

- 9. Each employee gives his/her procedures to his/her supervisor:**
 - a) Review each procedure.
 - b) Decide together what changes are needed.
 - c) Each employee will rewrite procedures as needed.
- 10. Each supervisor gives his/her policies to the Administrator or the designated staff person.**
- 11. The Administrator/responsible staff person rewrites procedures to achieve a uniform style.**

- 12. The supervisor distributes copies to each staff member**
 - a) Encourage questions
 - b) Meet with each employee privately to answer questions
 - c) Revise if needed
- 13. Review procedures at employee's request and revise when change is needed**
- 14. Evaluate and update procedures annually**

Topics for Office Policies and Procedures

General:

1. Office hours.
2. Holidays.
3. Emergency phone numbers.
4. List of staff with phone numbers, addresses, families, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.
5. List of volunteers:
 - a) Office volunteers.
 - b) Drivers.
 - c) Preschool (nursery).
 - d) Youth chaperons.
 - e) Others.

Communications

1. Telephone:
 - a) Incoming calls.
 - b) Messages.
 - c) Phone log/ Long distance log.
 - d) Making long distance phone calls.
 - e) Voice mail.
 - f) Email.
 - g) Text Messages.
 - h) Prayer line.
2. Social Media.
3. Website.
4. Correspondence:
 - a) Mail – incoming and outgoing.
 - b) First class.
 - c) Permit mail.
 - d) Bulk Mail.
5. Interoffice communication.
6. Office/Church Relations.
7. Computer:
 - a) Passwords.
 - b) Backups.
 - c) E-mail, business.
 - d) E-mail, personal.
 - e) Social media.
 - f) Internet use.

8. Other
 - a) Newsletter
 - b) Bulletin
 - c) Wednesday night bulletin

Routine Tasks and Schedules

1. Calendar
 - a) Maintained by one person
 - b) Prominently displayed
 - c) Requests approved by the Church Leadership Team/Church Council or the staff
2. Newsletter
 - a) Articles due
 - b) Attendance records due
 - c) Contributions records due
 - d) Special events schedule
 - e) Accepting announcements
 - i) Deadline
 - ii) Acceptable announcements
 - f) Who makes editorial decision regarding?
 - i) Cover
 - ii) Contents
 - iii) Other:
 - g) Does the editor need final copy typed or handwritten?
 - h) When does the printer need final layout?
 - i) When does the printer return the proof copy?
 - j) When does the printer return the finished newsletter?
 - k) When does the newsletter go out?
 - l) Is the newsletter a priority?
3. Address list policy
4. Sunday bulletin due
 - a) Order of worship
 - i) Sermon title
 - ii) Music
 - iii) Announcements
 - a) Deadline
 - b) Acceptable announcements

- b) Sermon outline (see # 8)
- c) Media to worship team:
 - i) Sermon outline.
 - ii) Music.
 - iii) Announcements.
- 5. Wednesday night bulletin.
- 6. Email or Letters to visitors.
- 7. Sunday School & other ministry records/ corrections (*see membership, records*).
- 8. Sermon outline typed.
- 9. Quarterly and Annual:
 - a) Annual Church Profile (ACP).
 - b) VBS report.
 - c) Literature order.
 - d) Annual class promotion.
 - e) Tax reports and payments.
- 10. Other.

Staff Meeting: ¹

- 1. Set length of meetings.
- 2. Plan the meeting.
- 3. Use an agenda.
- 4. Distribute the agenda in advance.
- 5. Meet at or tables in a circle if possible.
- 6. Meet in a conference room or classroom rather than the pastor's office.
- 7. Begin with all personnel and dismiss non-office staff when appropriate.
- 8. Notify members if reports are expected.
- 9. Use visuals for better understanding.
- 10. Seek divine wisdom for guidance.
- 11. Evaluate ways to improve staff meetings.
- 12. Provide refreshments.
- 13. Appoint a recorder/secretary to take minutes, print minutes and distribute to each staff member.
- 14. Agree on time for next meeting.
- 15. Determine if you are making the best use of your resources to accomplish your objectives.

Files and Records

- 1. Maintain good records
(The #1 reason businesses fail: poor records)
- 2. Filing procedures
- 3. Weeding and rotating files
- 4. Forms used
- 5. Files
 - a) Business contracts
 - b) Business Meeting minutes
 - c) Correspondence files
 - d) Historical files
 - e) Prospect files
 - f) Inventory of equipment
 - g) Insurance Policies
 - h) Personnel employment
 - i) Hospital and sick list
 - j) Purchasing records
 - k) Financial records
 - l) Organization records
 - m) Membership records
 - n) Legal records
 - o) Personnel records
 - p) Leadership lists
 - q) Inventory / Maintenance files
 - r) Mailing lists
 - s) Contribution records
 - t) Staff biographies
 - i) Current staff
 - ii) Former staff
- 6. Computer files
 - a) Computer security
 - b) Passwords
 - c) One person enters records
 - d) Backup policy
 - e) Archiving hard drive

¹Myers, Managing the Business Affairs of the

Church, Convention Press, Nashville

Supplies

1. Supply Request Form
2. Inventory
3. Authorized Suppliers List
4. Purchase
 - a) Purchase Order
 - b) One person does all ordering
 - c) Inventory

Equipment:

1. Purchasing.
2. Policies for the use of:
 - a) Computers.
 - b) Copiers.
 - c) Calculators.
 - d) Video equipment.
3. Operating manuals.
4. Maintenance and service schedules.

Custodial Needs

1. Communications:
 - a) Furniture and equipment set-up requests.
 - b) Special meetings.
 - c) Other special requests.
2. Supervision.

Calling Meetings

1. Preparing agendas
2. Do not meet when an email or card will do
3. Mailing of reminders and agenda.
4. Calling members
5. Mailing minutes

Other

1. Confidentiality
2. Accepting work from non-staff
 - a) Members
 - b) Others
3. Members and other individuals' crises
4. Benevolence
5. Special events
 - a) Bereavement
 - b) Birth
 - c) Homebound
 - d) Hospitalization
 - e) Nursing home
 - f) Illness

SECTION NINE: Create your Personnel Policy Manual

How to Develop a Personnel Policy Manual

- 1. Why a church needs a Personnel Policy Manual:**
 - a) More than one staff member.
 - 2. If you have more than one staff member you need written policies to provide clear communication.**
 - a) Employees want to know about:
 - i) Salary rates and pay procedures.
 - ii) Hours and holidays.
 - iii) Working conditions.
 - b) Many staff members have spouses who work for employers who provide excellent policies and expect the church to do at least as well.
 - 3. How to develop an effective Personnel Policy Manual:**
 - a) Determine the need.
 - b) Recommend the development of a Personnel Manual:
 - i) A recommendation may come from:
 - a) The Pastor.
 - b) The Church Administrator (if other than the pastor).
 - c) The Personnel Committee.
 - ii) Vote to proceed.
 - c) Determine who is responsible for development of the policies.
 - d) Gather information:
 - i) Write down the current procedure for changing policies.
 - ii) Collect all present Personnel Policies from church minutes or other sources.
 - iii) Research the following books:
 - a) Church Unique, Will Mancini
 - b) The Baptist Faith and Message
 - c) Your Life & Your Church
 - iv) Secure sample Personnel Policies from other churches.
 - v) Contact the Office of Church Health at alsbom.org
 - e) Draft policies (or review and revise copies of those in place)
 - f) The Ministerial staff reviews the policy draft
 - g) The Personnel Committee approves the policies drafted
 - h) The Personnel Committee recommends the policies to the church Leadership Team/Church Council
 - i) The Personnel Committee and the church Leadership Team/Church Council recommend the policies to the church.
 - j) Come to a consensus
 - i) Distribute copies to all members
 - ii) Encourage questions
 - iii) Conduct question and answer meetings
 - iv) Revise if needed
 - k) The church adopts the policies
- 4. Tips**
 - a) Avoid slanting policies toward individuals
 - b) Do not include job descriptions / Simply state: "each employee shall be furnished a job description"
 - a) Avoid any specific salaries or wage increase schedules (*consider a salary administration plan*)
 - b) Do not include retirement contribution rates unless all in a classification are covered.
 - c) Use titles rather than names.
 - d) Save and distribute it as a pdf.
 - e) Make the printed size small (5 ½" x 8 ½" or 3"x 6"). This allows employees to put the policies in their pocket or purse for ease of use.
 - f) Give the policies out the first day a new

employee is on the job.

- i) Explain the policies.
- ii) Have the employee sign a release

stating that they have read the policy and understood it.

18. Review and revise the policies annually

Topics for Personnel Policies

General Introduction

1. Welcome by the Pastor
2. Authority of the policy
3. Administration of the policy
4. Statement of conduct and appearance
5. Classification of employees
 - a) Pastor
 - b) Ministerial Staff
 - c) Associate Ministry Staff
 - d) Church Support Staff
 - e) Full-time
 - f) Permanent Part-Time
 - i) Basis of pay
 - ii) Benefits
 - g) Temporary Part-Time
 - i) When
 - ii) How long
 - iii) Basis of pay
 - iv) Benefits (if any)

Employment Practices

1. Employment process
 - a) Ministerial Staff
 - b) Ministry and Church Support Staff
 - c) Initiating requests for personnel
 - d) Approving requests for personnel
 - e) Employment Screening
 - i) Publicizing an available position
 - ii) Receiving applications
 - iii) Conducting interviews
 - iv) Checking references (*resume & others*)
 - v) Background Checks
 - f) Terms of Employment
 - g) Employment of more than one member of the same family
 - h) Re-employment

- i) Former employees
 - j) Retirees
 2. Qualifications
 - a) Age (May only be used as a criterion for ordained)
 - b) Education
 - c) Experience
 - d) Physical requirements
 - e) Church membership
 3. Hours of Work
 - a) Regular work hours for the Church Office
 - b) The FLSA provides that the church must define a work week. This is not the same as the pay period. The work week is a seven-day period used to calculate hours worked for FLSA calculations (*Wednesday–Thursday is suggested*).
 - c) Lunch and Breaks
 - i) One or two?
 - ii) How long?
 - iii) Paid?
 - d) Overtime work
 - i) Support staff shall not be permitted to work overtime without the expressed, written consent of either the Pastor or the Personnel Committee.
 - ii) If overtime is approved as noted above, no “comp time” is allowed (FLSA).
 - iii) All overtime will be paid at one-and-a-half (1.5) times the employee’s regular hourly rate.
 - e) Days off
 4. Pay
 - a) Pay period (this is different from the workweek)
 - b) Pay policies
 - i) Payroll deductions
 - ii) Salary Administration Plan
 - (a) Cost of living (Raise)

- (b) Merit/Performance (Raise or Bonus)
- (c) Tenure
- iii) Garnishments (consult an attorney)
- iv) Salary advance
- v) Miscellaneous
- c) Computation of terminal pay
- d) Permanent Part-Time Employees:
- e) Basis of pay (dollars per hour usually)
- f) Benefits
- 5. Job-related Injury
- 6. Employee Absences
 - a) Sick leave defined
 - b) Sick leave may be used for
 - i) Personal illness
 - ii) Medical appointment
 - iii) Hospitalization
 - iv) Illness in family (spouse, parent, child).
 - v) Extended period illness
 - a) With Pay (Sick leave will be paid until it is used up)
 - b) No Pay (When sick leave is not available, unpaid leave will be given for up to 90 days)
 - c) Short-Term Disability insurance will be provided by the church for after 90 days.
 - vi) Part-time employee sick leave
 - c) Other Absences
 - i) Marriage
 - ii) Death in immediate family
 - iii) Death of other relatives
 - iv) Funeral of a friend
 - v) Serving as a pallbearer
 - vi) Jury duty
 - vii) Voting
 - viii) Personal leave
 - d) Leave of absence
 - i) Types
 - a) Pregnancy
 - b) Military leave (ERISA)
 - c) Family leave
 - d) Study leave
 - e) Temporary disability

- f) Other emergencies
- ii) How long?
- iii) What benefits?
- iv) Employee contribution to continue benefits
- e) Salary and Benefits
 - i) Eligibility
 - ii) Basis
 - iii) Pay
 - iv) Duration
 - v) Benefits continued
- 7. Vacations
 - a) Eligibility
 - b) Quantity
 - c) Units (days or weeks)
 - d) Accumulation
 - e) Scheduling
 - f) Approval.
 - g) Vacation pay
 - i) Full-time
 - ii) Part-time
- 8. Vacation Policy for Ministerial Staff
- 9. Holidays
 - a) Observed
 - b) Pay
 - c) Holidays falling on a weekend
- 10. Ministerial Staff Revivals and Conferences
 - a) Number of weeks
 - b) Who is eligible?
 - c) Scheduling
- 11. Employee Training
 - a) Time off
 - b) Registration paid
- 12. Discipline and Counseling
- 13. Demotion
- 14. Termination
 - a) Resignation
 - i) Notice
 - ii) Vacation
 - b) Retirement
 - i) Notice
 - ii) Vacation

- c) Forced Termination
 - i) Notice and/or Terminal pay.
 - ii) Vacation

Service Recognition

1. When to recognize
2. Form of recognition

Benefits

1. Social Security
2. Insurance
 - a) Hospitalization
 - b) Life
 - c) Disability
 - d) Non-owned vehicle insurance
 - e) Malpractice
3. Annual Physical
 - a) Required?
 - b) Employer provided?
4. Retirement pension or annuity
5. Workman's Compensation
6. Unemployment
7. Uniforms

Wage and Salary Administration

1. Wage review based on performance
2. Administration

- a) Classifications
- b) Merit
- c) Longevity

Reimbursement for Job-related Expenses

1. Travel expense
2. Moving expense
 - a) Who arranges?
 - b) Who pays?
 - c) Reimbursement.
3. Membership in professional and/or civic organizations
4. Parking
5. Personnel records
6. Other
 - a) Travel Insurance
 - b) Housing Allowance
 - c) Membership dues
 - d) Books

Miscellaneous

1. Pulpit Supply
 - i) How many Sundays?
 - ii) How frequent?
 - iii) Who pays?
2. Other

Sample Personnel Policies

WELCOME

Welcome!

On behalf of your colleagues, I welcome you to Sample Baptist Church and wish you every success.

We believe that each employee contributes directly to Sample Baptist Church's growth and success, and we hope you will take pride in being a member of our team.

This handbook was developed to describe some of the expectations of our employees and to outline the policies, programs, and benefits available to eligible employees. Employees should familiarize themselves with the contents of the employee handbook as soon as possible, for it will answer many questions about employment with Sample Baptist Church.

We hope that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding. Again, welcome!

Sincerely,
Pastor

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with Sample Baptist Church and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting your employment. You should read, understand, and comply with all provisions of the handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by Sample Baptist Church to benefit employees. One of our objectives is to provide a work environment that is conducive to personal, professional and spiritual growth.

AUTHORITY OF THE POLICY

This policy was adopted by Sample Baptist Church on (Date of Adoption). It supersedes all previous church personnel policies.

The terms and conditions of this policy shall be administered by the Pastor, who shall in turn be supervised by the congregation working with the Personnel Committee.

NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT

This handbook is intended to provide employees with a general understanding of our personnel policies. Employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the contents of this handbook, for it will answer many common questions concerning employment with Sample Baptist Church.

However, this handbook cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question about employment. It is not an employment contract and is not intended to create contractual obligations of any kind. Neither the employee nor Sample Baptist Church is bound to continue the employment relationship if either party chooses, at will, to end the relationship at any time.

Employment with Sample Baptist Church is at will.

In other words, employment with Sample Baptist Church is at the mutual consent of Sample Baptist Church and the employee, and either party may terminate that relationship at any time, with or without cause, and with or without advance notice.

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES

It is the intent of Sample Baptist Church to clarify the definitions of employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Accordingly, the right to terminate the employment relationship at will at any time is retained by both the employee and Sample Baptist Church.

Each Employee Will Have Three Employment Categories

Category One - Fair Labor Standards Act status

Each employee is designated as either NONEXEMPT or EXEMPT from Federal and State wage and hour laws. NONEXEMPT employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of Federal and State laws. EXEMPT employees are excluded from specific provisions of Federal and State wage and hour laws. An employee's EXEMPT or NONEXEMPT classification is a status determination and NOT a choice. If this determination is changed you and the Personnel Committee will receive written notification.

Category Two - Work status

REGULAR FULL-TIME employees are those who are not in a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work at Sample Baptist Church on a full-time schedule. They are eligible for Sample Baptist Church's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

PART-TIME employees are those who are not assigned to a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week. While they do receive all legally mandated benefits (*such as Social Security and Workers' Compensation Insurance*), they are ineligible for all of Sample Baptist Church's other benefit programs.

TEMPORARY employees are those who are hired as interim replacements, to temporarily supplement the work force, or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Temporary employees retain that status unless and until notified of a change. While temporary employees receive all legally mandated benefits (*such as Workers' Compensation Insurance and Social Security*), they are ineligible for all of Sample Baptist Church's other benefit programs.

CASUAL employees are those who have established an employment relationship with Sample Baptist Church but who are assigned to work on an intermittent and/or unpredictable basis. While they receive all legally mandated benefits (*such as Workers' Compensation Insurance and Social Security*), they are ineligible for all of Sample Baptist Church's other benefit programs.

Category Three - Ministry status

PASTOR — I Peter 5:1-14

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYEES — This category includes called staff, other than the Pastor, who are responsible for one or more of the ministries of the church. This classification includes the Minister of Music and Children as well as the Minister of Education and Youth.

SUPPORT EMPLOYEES — This includes and may be further divided into:

- CLERICAL SUPPORT EMPLOYEES
- CUSTODIAL SUPPORT EMPLOYEES
- **NOTE:** Add other categories of support as needed.

About Our Church

1. Ministry Goals
2. Facilities and Location
3. Sample Baptist Church's History
4. Organizational Structure

Employment Practices

EMPLOYMENT PROCESS

Pastor—See the Bylaws

Ministerial EMPLOYEES—See the Bylaws

Support EMPLOYEES

EMPLOYMENT PROCESS FOR NON-MINISTERIAL PERSONNEL

All requests shall be submitted to the Personnel Committee for consideration. If approved, the Committee will prepare a Job Description and designate the supervisor to hire the employee.

EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE CHECKS

The Pastor will respond in writing only to those reference check inquiries that are submitted in writing. Responses to such inquiries will confirm only dates of employment, wage rates, and position(s) held. No employment data will be released without a written authorization and release signed by the individual who is the subject of the inquiry.

EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

New employees may be required to sign an employment agreement as a condition of employment. Any employee who violates the terms of their employment agreement will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, even if he or she does not actually benefit from the violation.

PERSONNEL DATA CHANGES

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify Sample Baptist Church of any changes in personnel data. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency; educational accomplishments, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. If any personnel data has changed notify the Pastor.

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS

Sample Baptist Church relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in Sample Baptist Church's exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Supervisors and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, day-to-day basis. Additional formal performance evaluations are conducted to provide both supervisors and

employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals.

The performance of all employees is evaluated according to an ongoing 12-month cycle, beginning in July.

EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS

The Personnel Committee determines appropriate qualifications for any vacant position at Sample Baptist Church. Such qualifications are the minimum requirements for the given position. Areas of qualification will include:

- Education
- Experience
- Physical requirements of the job
- Church membership

IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE

Sample Baptist Church is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

Alabama law requires that each employee have their work eligibility checked through e-verify, the federal website. In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, as subsequently amended, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with Sample Baptist Church within the past three years, or if their previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

A Support Employee may hold a job with another organization as long as he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities with Sample Baptist Church. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to Sample Baptist Church's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

A Ministerial Employee may hold a job with another organization as long as the job serves to enhance or support the ministry of Sample Baptist Church; and he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities with Sample Baptist Church. All ministerial employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to Sample Baptist Church's scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

The Pastor may not hold a job with another organization.

If Sample Baptist Church determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of Sample Baptist Church as they are modified from time to time, the employee will be required to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain with Sample Baptist Church.

HIRING OF RELATIVES

The employment of relatives in the same area of an organization may cause serious conflicts and problems with favoritism and employee morale. In addition to claims of partiality in treatment at work, personal conflicts from outside the work environment can be carried into day-to-day working relationships.

Relatives of persons currently employed by Sample Baptist Church may be hired only if they will not be working directly for or supervising a relative or will not occupy a position in the same line of authority within

the organization. This policy applies to any relative, higher or lower in the organization, who has the authority to review employment decisions. Sample Baptist Church employees cannot be transferred into such a reporting relationship. The senior pastor has authority and supervision over all aspects of church employees and therefore no relative of the senior pastor may be employed by Sample church.

If the relative relationship is established after employment, the individuals concerned will decide who will leave. If that decision is not made within 30 calendar days, management will decide.

In other cases where a conflict or the potential for conflict arises, even if there is no supervisory relationship involved, the parties may be separated by reassignment or terminated from employment.

WORK HOURS

WORK HOURS AND WORK SCHEDULES

Normal church office hours are from _____ AM until _____ PM, Monday through Friday. Reasonable effort will be made to keep the office staffed during normal church office hours

FULL-TIME SUPPORT EMPLOYEES

The normal work schedule for all full-time support employees is eight hours a day, five days a week.

FULL-TIME MINISTERIAL EMPLOYEES

The normal work schedule for the pastor and ministerial employees cannot be expected to conform to a particular fixed time frame. Each pastoral and ministerial employee's area of work is often outside the church office. In spite of these time demands, each shall establish a regular schedule that includes time they are generally in the office.

When away from the office during regular work hours, employees shall keep the Church Secretary informed where they can be reached.

The normal work schedule for the Pastor and Ministerial employees is a full day on Sunday plus eight hours a day, four days a week. Days off will be Saturday and one weekday. An exception to this is special church activities or special needs of the church family that fall on these days in which case an alternate day off shall be approved by the Pastor. There will also be times when the Pastor and Ministerial employees will need to adjust hours or days in order to carry out planned church activities. Alterations in work schedules shall be approved by, and coordinated with, the Pastor.

ALL EMPLOYEES

Supervisors will advise employees of the times their schedules will normally begin and end. Staffing needs and operational demands may necessitate variations in starting and ending times, as well as variations in the total hours that may be scheduled each day and week.

Flextime scheduling is available in some cases to allow employees to vary their starting and ending times each day within established limits. Employees should consult their supervisor for the details of this program.

REST AND MEAL PERIODS

Each workday, full-time nonexempt employees are provided with two rest periods of ___ minutes in length. To the extent possible, rest periods will be provided in the middle of work periods. Since this time is counted and paid as time worked, employees must not be absent from their workstations beyond the allotted rest period time.

All full-time ministerial employees are provided with unspecified meal periods as needed each workday.

All full-time support employees will have one meal period of ___ minutes in length each workday.

Supervisors will schedule meal periods to accommodate operating requirements. Employees will be relieved of all active responsibilities and restrictions during meal periods and will not be compensated for that time.

OVERTIME

When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours, employees may be scheduled to work overtime hours. When possible, advance notification of these mandatory assignments will be provided. All overtime work must receive prior written authorization of the Pastor, the Personnel Committee or the supervisor.

Overtime compensation is paid to all nonexempt employees in accordance with Federal and State wage and hour restrictions. Overtime pay is based on actual hours worked. Time off on sick leave, vacation leave, or any leave of absence will not be considered hours worked for purposes of performing overtime calculations.

Employees who work overtime without receiving prior written authorization of the Pastor, the Personnel Committee or the supervisor may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

In the event that overtime is approved as noted above, no “comp time” shall be allowed.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Sample Baptist Church expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on Sample Baptist Church. In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Either may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

WORK WEEK

The work week is a seven-day period used to calculate hours worked for overtime calculations. The work week is Wednesday through Tuesday. **Non-exempt employees** shall complete a weekly time sheet and sign it. It shall be submitted to and signed by the supervisor. Employees will not be paid until time sheets are completed and signed.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE CHURCH

Since it is necessary to contact staff personnel in the event of an emergency or crisis in the church family, the following guidelines are to be followed:

- When ministerial employees will be out of town, they shall inform the Pastor in advance.
- When the Pastor will be out of town, he shall inform the Secretary and Chairman of Deacons in advance.

PAY POLICIES

TIMEKEEPING

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every nonexempt employee. Federal and State laws require Sample Baptist Church to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. "Time worked" is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Nonexempt employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work, as well as the beginning and ending time of each meal period. They should also record the beginning and ending time of any split shift or departure from work for personal reasons. Overtime work must always be approved before it is performed.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Nonexempt employees should report to work no more than seven minutes prior to their scheduled starting time nor stay more than seven minutes after their scheduled stop time without expressed, prior authorization from their supervisor.

It is the employee's responsibility to sign his or her time record to certify the accuracy of all time recorded. The supervisor will review and then initial the time record before submitting it for payroll processing. In addition, if corrections or modifications are made to the time record, both the employee and the supervisor must verify the accuracy of the changes by initialing the time record.

PAYDAYS

All employees are paid weekly every Thursday. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period.

In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a day off such as a weekend or holiday, employees will receive pay on the last day of work before the regularly scheduled payday.

If a regular payday falls during an employee's vacation, the employee may receive his or her earned wages before departing for vacation if a written request is submitted at least one week prior to departing for vacation.

PAY ADVANCES

Sample Baptist Church does not provide pay advances on unearned wages to employees.

Employees may have pay directly deposited into their bank accounts if they provide advance written authorization to Sample Baptist Church. Employees will receive an itemized statement of wages when Sample Baptist Church makes direct deposits.

ADMINISTRATIVE PAY CORRECTIONS

Sample Baptist Church takes all reasonable steps to ensure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday.

In the unlikely event that there is an error in the amount of pay, the employee should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of the Pastor so that corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

PAY DEDUCTIONS AND SETOFFS

The law requires that Sample Baptist Church make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state, and local income taxes. Sample Baptist Church also must deduct Social Security taxes on each support staff employee's earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security "wage base." Sample Baptist Church matches the amount of Social Security taxes paid by each employee.

Pay setoffs are pay deductions taken by Sample Baptist Church, usually to help pay off a debt or obligation to Sample Baptist Church or others.

If you have questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, your supervisor can assist in having your questions answered.

SEVERANCE PAY

Sample Baptist Church provides severance pay to eligible employees whose employment is terminated for reasons that are not prejudicial to Sample Baptist Church, as determined by Sample Baptist Church in its sole discretion. Severance pay will be provided to all employee classifications. This severance pay will be the equivalent of two weeks of earnings of simple pay and no benefits.

Specifically excluded from benefits under this provision are employees who were hired as temporary employees for a specified period of time; were offered but refused to accept another suitable position with Sample Baptist Church; were provided the opportunity to be retained for any length of time by a successor employer.

GIFTS, HONORARIUMS, GRATUITIES, AND OTHER COMPENSATION

When a staff member performs a service for an individual, family, group or organization, he may receive whatever gratuity is offered. This refers to weddings, funerals, and the like.

Here is where you should insert your SALARY ADMINISTRATION PLAN:

Cost of living

Performance (*merit*)

Raise

Bonus

Tenure

Benefits

Eligible employees at Sample Baptist Church are provided a wide range of benefits. A number of the programs (*such as Social Security, Workers' compensation, State disability, and Unemployment Insurance*) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law.

Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. Your supervisor can identify the programs for which you are eligible. Details of many of these programs can be found elsewhere in the employee handbook.

The following benefit programs are available to eligible employees.

(Some benefit programs require contributions from the employee, but most are fully paid by Sample Baptist Church.)

WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE

Sample Baptist Church provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if the employee is hospitalized, immediately.

Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses should inform their supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it be reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible.

Neither Sample Baptist Church nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by Sample Baptist Church.

BENEFITS CONTINUATION (COBRA)

Sample Baptist Church is exempt from COBRA.

SICK LEAVE BENEFITS

Sample Baptist Church provides paid sick leave benefits to all eligible employees for periods of temporary absence due to illnesses or injuries. Eligible employee classification(s): regular full-time employees

Eligible employees will accrue sick leave benefits at the rate of 12 days per year (1 day for every full month of service). Sick leave benefits are calculated on the basis of a "benefit year," the 12-month period that begins when the employee starts to earn sick leave benefits.

Paid sick leave can be used in minimum increments of one hour for medical appointment. Eligible employees may use sick leave benefits for an absence due to their own illness or injury or that of a family member who resides in the employee's household.

Employees who are unable to report to work due to illness or injury should notify their direct supervisor before the scheduled start of their workday if possible. The direct supervisor must also be contacted on each additional day of absence.

Sick leave benefits will be calculated based on the employee's base pay rate at the time of absence and will not include any special forms of compensation.

As an additional condition of eligibility for sick leave benefits, an employee on an extended absence must apply for any other available compensation and benefits, such as workers' compensation. Sick leave benefits will be used to supplement any payments that an employee is eligible to receive from state disability insurance, workers' compensation or Sample Baptist Church-provided disability insurance programs. The combination of any such disability payments and sick leave benefits cannot exceed the employee's normal weekly earnings.

Unused sick leave benefits will be allowed to accumulate until the employee has accrued a total of 90 calendar days' worth of sick leave benefits. If the employee's benefits reach this maximum, further accrual of sick leave benefits will be suspended until the employee has reduced the balance below the limit. When sick leave is not available, unpaid leave will be given for the lesser of (1) remainder of the illness or (2) to complete the initial 90 days.

Sick leave benefits are intended solely to provide income protection in the event of illness or injury and may not be used for any other absence. Unused sick leave benefits will not be paid to employees while they are employed or upon termination of employment.

PREGNANCY-RELATED ABSENCES

Sample Baptist Church will not discriminate against any employee who requests an excused absence for medical disabilities associated with a pregnancy. Such leave requests will be made and evaluated in accordance with the medical leave policy provisions outlined in this handbook.

Requests for time off associated with pregnancy and/or childbirth (*apart from medical disabilities associated with these conditions*) will be considered in the same manner as any other request for an unpaid personal leave.

MARRIAGE

Employees may have up to two weeks of unpaid leave for their own wedding. Vacation may be used instead of unpaid leave.

Requests for time off for marriage will be considered in the same manner as any other request for an unpaid personal leave.

TIME OFF TO VOTE

Sample Baptist Church encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by participating in elections. Most employees are able to find time to vote either before or after their regular work schedule. If employees are unable to vote in an election during their non-working hours, **Sample** Baptist Church will grant up to two hours of paid time off to vote.

Employees should request time off to vote from their supervisor at least two working days prior to the Election Day. Advance notice is required so that the necessary time off can be scheduled at the beginning or end of the workday, whichever provides the least disruption to the normal work schedule.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

If an employee wishes to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member, the employee should notify his or her supervisor immediately.

Up to five days of paid bereavement leave will be provided to eligible regular full-time employees.

Bereavement pay is calculated based on the base pay rate at the time of absence and will not include any special forms of compensation.

Approval of bereavement leave will occur in the absence of unusual operating requirements. Any employee may, with the supervisor's approval, use any available paid leave for additional time off as necessary.

Sample Baptist Church defines "immediate family" as the employee's spouse, parent, child, sibling; the employee's spouse's parent, child, or sibling; the employee's child's spouse; grandparents or grandchildren. Special consideration will also be given to any other person whose association with the employee was similar to any of the above relationships. Up to three days will be provided for an aunt, uncle, first cousin, niece or nephew.

If an employee wishes to take time off to serve as a pallbearer. Unpaid leave will be given if possible. Meal break may be used.

JURY DUTY

Sample Baptist Church encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. Employees in an eligible classification may request up to two weeks of paid jury duty leave over any two-year period.

Jury duty pay will be calculated on the employee's base pay rate times the number of hours the employee would otherwise have worked on the day of absence. Only regular full-time employees qualify for paid jury duty leave.

If employees are required to serve jury duty beyond the period of paid jury duty leave, they may use any available paid time off (*for example, vacation benefits*) or may request an unpaid jury duty leave of absence.

Employees must show the jury duty summons to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate their absence. Of course, employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.

Either Sample Baptist Church or the employee may request an excuse from jury duty if, in Sample Baptist Church's judgment, the employee's absence would create serious operational difficulties.

Sample Baptist Church will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full term of the jury duty absence.

Vacation, sick leave, and holiday benefits will continue to accrue during unpaid jury duty leave.

WITNESS DUTY

Sample Baptist Church encourages employees to appear in court for witness duty when subpoenaed to do so.

If employees have been subpoenaed or otherwise requested to testify as witnesses by Sample Baptist Church, they will receive paid time off for the entire period of witness duty.

Employees will be granted a maximum of eight hours of paid time off to appear in court as a witness at the request of a party other than Sample Baptist Church. Employees will be paid at their base rate and are free to use any remaining paid leave benefits (e.g., vacation leave) to receive compensation for any period of witness duty absence that would otherwise be unpaid.

The subpoena should be shown to the employee's supervisor immediately after it is received so that operating requirements can be adjusted, where necessary, to accommodate the employee's absence. The employee is expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Sample Baptist Church provides leaves of absence without pay to eligible employees who wish to take time off from work duties to fulfill personal obligations. Regular full-time employees are eligible to request personal leave as described in this policy:

As soon as eligible employees become aware of the need for a personal leave of absence, they should request a leave from their supervisor.

Personal leave may be granted for a period of up to 12 calendar days every year. If this initial period of absence proves insufficient, consideration will be given to a written request for a single extension of no more than one calendar day. With the supervisor's approval, an employee may take any available sick leave or vacation leave as part of the approved period of leave.

Requests for personal leave will be evaluated based on a number of factors, including anticipated workload requirements and staffing considerations during the proposed period of absence.

Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans, health insurance benefits will be provided by Sample Baptist Church until the end of the month in which the approved personal leave begins. At that time, employees will become responsible for the full costs of these benefits if they wish coverage to continue. When the employee returns from personal leave, benefits will again be provided by Sample Baptist Church according to the applicable plans.

Benefit accruals, such as vacation, sick leave, or holiday benefits, will be suspended during the leave and will resume upon return to active employment.

When a personal leave ends, every reasonable effort will be made to return the employee to the same position, if it is available, or to a similar available position for which the employee is qualified. However, Sample Baptist Church cannot guarantee reinstatement in all cases.

If an employee fails to report to work promptly at the expiration of the approved leave period, Sample Baptist Church will assume the employee has resigned.

EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

Sample Baptist Church provides educational leaves of absence without pay to eligible employees who wish to take time off from work duties to pursue course work that is applicable to their job duties with Sample Baptist Church. Employees in the following employment classification(s) are eligible to request educational leave as described in this policy:

- Regular full-time, Pastor
- Regular full-time, Ministerial

Eligible employees who have completed five years of service may request educational leave for a period of up to one month every five years. Requests will be evaluated based on a number of factors, including anticipated workload requirements and staffing considerations during the proposed period of absence.

Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of the applicable plans, Sample Baptist Church will continue to provide health insurance benefits for the full period of the approved educational leave.

Vacation, sick leave, and holiday benefits will continue to accrue during the approved educational leave.

When an educational leave ends, every reasonable effort will be made to return the employee to the same position, if it is available, or to a similar available position for which the employee is qualified. However, Sample Baptist Church cannot guarantee reinstatement in all cases.

If an employee fails to report to work at the end of the approved leave period, Sample Baptist Church will assume that the employee has resigned.

VACATION BENEFITS

Vacation time off with pay is available to eligible employees to provide opportunities for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. Regular full-time employees are eligible to earn and use vacation time as described in this policy:

The amount of paid vacation time employees receive each year increases with the length of their employment as shown in the following schedule.

YEARS OF ELIGIBLE SERVICE	VACATION HOURS ACCRUED	
	MONTHLY	EACH YEAR
First year	3.25 hours	As accrued
After 1 year	7 hours	84
After 5 years	10 hours	120
After 10 years	12 hours	144
After 20 years	15 hours	180
After 30 years	17 hours	204

The length of eligible service is calculated on the basis of a “benefit year.” This is the 12-month period that begins when the employee starts to earn vacation time. An employee's benefit year may be extended for any significant leave of absence except military leave of absence. Military leave has no effect on this calculation. *(See individual leave of absence policies for more information.)*

Once employees enter an eligible employment classification, they begin to earn paid vacation time according to the schedule. They can request use of vacation time after it is earned.

Paid vacation time can be used in minimum increments of one-half day. To take vacation, employees should request advance approval from their supervisors. Requests will be reviewed based on a number of factors, including ministry needs and staffing requirements.

Vacation time off is paid at the employee's base pay rate at the time of vacation. It does not include overtime or any special forms of compensation.

As stated above, employees are encouraged to use available paid vacation time for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. In the event that available vacation is not used by the end of the benefit year, employees will forfeit the unused time.

Upon termination of employment, employees will be paid for unused vacation time that has been earned through the last day of work. However, if Sample Baptist Church, in its sole discretion, terminates employment for cause, forfeiture of unused vacation time may result.

HOLIDAYS

Sample Baptist Church will grant holiday time off to all employees on the holidays listed below.

- New Year's Day (*January 1*)
- Martin Luther King junior day (*third Monday of January*)
- Good Friday (Friday before Easter)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Independence Day (*July 4*)
- Labor Day (first Monday in September)
- Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November)
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve (December 24)
- Christmas (December 25)
- New Year's Eve (*December 31*)

Sample Baptist Church will grant paid holiday time off to all eligible employees immediately upon assignment to an eligible employment classification. Holiday pay will be calculated based on the employee's straight time pay rate (*as of the date of the holiday*) times the number of hours the employee would otherwise have worked on that day. Eligible employee classification(s):

- Regular full-time employees
- Regular part-time employees

To be eligible for holiday pay, employees must work the last scheduled day immediately preceding and the first scheduled day immediately following the holiday.

A recognized holiday that falls on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. A recognized holiday that falls on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.

If a recognized holiday falls during an eligible employee's paid absence (*e.g., vacation, sick leave*), the employee will be ineligible for holiday pay, but the paid absence on that day will not count towards the total benefit (*e.g., vacation, sick leave*).

If upon supervisor request to do so, an eligible nonexempt employee works on a recognized holiday, he or she will receive holiday pay plus wages at one and one-half times his or her straight-time rate for the hours worked on the holiday.

Paid time off for holidays will not be counted as hours worked for the purposes of determining overtime.

BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPENSES

Sample Baptist Church will reimburse employees for reasonable business travel expenses incurred while on assignments away from the normal work location. All business travel must be approved in advance by the immediate supervisor.

Employees whose travel plans have been approved are responsible for making their own travel arrangements.

When approved, the actual costs of travel, meals, lodging, and other expenses directly related to accomplishing business travel objectives will be reimbursed by Sample Baptist Church. Employees are expected to limit expenses to reasonable amounts.

Employees who are involved in an accident while traveling on business must promptly report the incident to their immediate supervisor. Vehicles owned, leased, or rented by Sample Baptist Church may not be used for personal use without prior approval.

Cash advances to cover reasonable anticipated expenses may be made to employees, after travel has been approved. Employees should submit a written request to their supervisor when travel advances are needed.

When travel is completed, employees should submit completed travel expense reports within 60 days. Reports should be accompanied by receipts for all individual expenses.

Employees should contact their supervisor for guidance and assistance on procedures related to travel arrangements, travel advances, expense reports, reimbursement for specific expenses, or any other business travel issues.

Abuse of this business travel expenses policy, including falsifying expense reports to reflect costs not incurred by the employee, can be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

REVIVAL AND/OR CONFERENCE TIME

Revival and/or conference time off with pay is available to Pastor and Ministerial employees.

Qualified employees may conduct, assist in, lead or attend two one-week revivals, conferences, Shocco or Ridgecrest events outside the church each year.

Time spent away from the church on youth retreats, mission trips, church sponsored trips and similar activities is not considered vacation or conference time.

WORKPLACE POLICIES

STATEMENT OF EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND APPEARANCE

Each employee shall be Christ-like in behavior and appearance following the standards set forth in the Bible.

NON-DISCLOSURE

The protection of confidential information is vital to the ministry of Sample Baptist Church. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Compensation data
- Membership lists
- Financial information
- Counseling information
- Medical information

Employees who are exposed to confidential information may be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement as a condition of employment. Any employee who improperly uses or discloses confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, even if he or she does not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILES

Sample Baptist Church maintains a personnel file on each employee. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's job application, resume, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals and salary increases, and other employment records.

Personnel files are the property of Sample Baptist Church, and access to the information they contain is restricted. Only supervisors and management personnel of Sample Baptist Church who have a legitimate reason to review information in a file are allowed to do so.

Employees who wish to review their own file should contact the Pastor. With reasonable advance notice, employees may review their own personnel files in Sample Baptist Church's offices and in the presence of an individual appointed by Sample Baptist Church to maintain the files.

SAFETY

To assist in providing a safe and healthful work environment for employees, members, and visitors, Sample Baptist Church has established a workplace safety program. This program is a top priority for Sample Baptist Church. The Pastor has responsibility for implementing, administering, monitoring, and evaluating the safety program. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

Sample Baptist Church provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, memos, or other written communications.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, who fail to report, or remedy such situations, where appropriate, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should immediately notify the Pastor or the appropriate supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefits procedures.

USE OF PHONE AND MAIL SYSTEMS

Personal use of church telephones for long-distance and toll calls is not permitted. Employees should practice discretion in using company telephones when making local personal calls and may be required to reimburse Sample Baptist Church for any charges resulting from their personal use of the telephone.

The use of Sample Baptist Church-paid postage for personal correspondence is not permitted.

To ensure effective telephone communications, employees should always use the approved greeting and speak in a courteous and professional manner. Please confirm information received from the caller and hang up only after the caller has done so.

SMOKING

Smoking is prohibited throughout the workplace. This policy applies equally to all employees, members, and visitors.

USE OF EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES

Equipment and vehicles essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Please notify the supervisor if any equipment, machines, tools, or vehicles are damaged, defective, or need repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and injury to employees or others. The supervisor can answer any questions about an employee's responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment or vehicles used on the job.

The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment or vehicles, as well as traffic and parking violations, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

SEXUAL AND OTHER UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT

Sample Baptist Church is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. As an example, sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of employee misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, and is strictly prohibited.

Any employee who wants to report an incident of sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly report the matter to his or her supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should immediately contact the Director, the Pastor or any member of personnel committee. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Any supervisor or manager who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly advise the Pastor or Personnel Committee Chairman or any member of management who will handle the matter in a timely and confidential manner.

Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

RETURN OF PROPERTY

Employees are responsible for all property, materials, or written information issued to them or in their possession or control. Employees must return all Sample Baptist Church property immediately upon request or upon termination of employment.

EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated:

- RESIGNATION - voluntary employment termination initiated by an employee.
- DISCHARGE - involuntary employment termination initiated by the organization.
- LAYOFF - involuntary employment termination initiated by the organization for non-disciplinary reasons.
- RETIREMENT - voluntary employment termination initiated by the employee meeting age, length of service, and any other criteria for retirement from the organization.

Since employment with Sample Baptist Church is based on mutual consent, both the employee and Sample Baptist Church have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause, at any time. Employee benefits will be affected by employment termination in the following manner. All accrued, vested benefits that are due and payable at termination will be paid. Some benefits may be continued at the employee's expense if the employee so chooses. The employee will be notified in writing of the benefits that may be continued and of the terms, conditions, and limitations of such continuance.

RESIGNATION

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with Sample Baptist Church. Although advance notice is not required, Sample Baptist Church requests at least two weeks' written resignation notice from all employees.

Prior to an employee's departure, an exit interview will be scheduled to discuss the reasons for resignation and the effect of the resignation on benefits.

If an employee does not provide advance notice as requested, the employee will be considered ineligible for rehire and all benefits are immediately forfeited.

SECURITY INSPECTIONS

Sample Baptist Church wishes to maintain a work environment that is free of illegal drugs, alcohol, firearms, explosives, or other improper materials. To this end, Sample Baptist Church prohibits the possession, transfer, sale, or use of such materials on its premises. Sample Baptist Church requires the cooperation of all employees in administering this policy.

Desks, lockers, and other storage devices may be provided for the convenience of employees, but they remain the sole property of Sample Baptist Church. Accordingly, they, as well as any articles found within them, can be inspected by any agent or representative of Sample Baptist Church at any time, either with or without prior notice.

SOLICITATION

In an effort to assure a productive and harmonious work environment, persons not employed by Sample Baptist Church may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose.

Sample Baptist Church recognizes that employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace. However, employees may not solicit or distribute literature concerning these activities during working time. (*Working time does not include lunch periods, work breaks, or any other periods in which employees are not on duty.*)

In addition, the posting of written solicitations on company bulletin boards is restricted. These bulletin boards display important information, and employees should consult them frequently for:

- Workers' compensation insurance information
- State disability insurance/unemployment insurance information

If employees have a message of interest to the workplace, they may submit it to the Pastor for approval. All approved messages will be posted by the Pastor.

DRUG TESTING

Sample Baptist Church is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive work environment for all employees. Using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on the job may pose serious safety and health risks. To help ensure a safe and healthful working environment, job applicants and employees may be asked to provide body substance samples (*such as urine and/or blood*) to determine the illicit or illegal use of drugs and alcohol. Refusal to submit to drug testing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Copies of the drug testing policy will be provided to all employees. Questions concerning this policy, or its administration should be directed to the Pastor.

SECTION TEN: Job Descriptions

How to Develop Job Descriptions

- I. Determine who is responsible
 - A. The Pastor and Personnel Committee
 - B. A Subcommittee of 3 or 5 members formed including:
 1. The Pastor
 2. One or two Personnel Committee members
 3. One or two additional staff members (*consider one minister and one secretary*)
 - II. The Subcommittee performs the following
 - A. Prepare a questionnaire for the staff to complete
 - B. Conduct a conference with the staff as a group
 1. Larger churches may meet separately with each classification of employees
 - a) Ministerial
 - b) Clerical
 - c) Maintenance
 - d) Childcare
 - e) Instrumentalists
 - f) Others
 2. Explain the purpose of the project to the group
 3. Distribute questionnaires to each staff member
 4. Read each question aloud and explain to the group
 5. Encourage questions
 6. Instruct each staff member to answer the questions on the form and return the form to his/her supervisor¹
 - C. Gather information
 1. Write down the current procedure for changing job descriptions
 2. Secure sample job descriptions from other churches
 3. Contact the Office of Church Health at alsbom.org at alsbom.org for additional assistance
 4. Allow each staff member to fill out a questionnaire, including the following
 - a) Keep a time study for one month
 - b) Answer questions on the form
 - c) List any quarterly or annual duties
 - d) List any irregular or nonscheduled duties (e.g., Request for letter, baptism, bereavement, etc.)
 - D. The Committee or the Pastor then interviews each staff member to gain additional insight
 - E. Each staff member's questionnaire is reviewed by their supervisor and forwarded to the Subcommittee
 - F. The Subcommittee determines the current staff structure as follows
 1. Create a chart showing all staff relationships (*see pages 77-80 for examples*)
 2. Create a second chart showing all relationships (show all ministries, programs, committees and groups)
 3. Revise this chart to show the desired arrangement
 - G. The Subcommittee summarizes the duties of each position

¹ [Note: This may be done at the same time that you are revising Church Operating Policies, Office

Procedures, and/or Personnel Policies.]

- H. Summarize skills and requirements of each position
- I. Write the Job Descriptions
 - 1. List the position title
 - 2. List supervisor
 - 3. Summarize responsibilities
 - 4. List duties
 - a) Be direct-Be specific- Be terse
 - b) Convey definite meaning
 - c) Use specific action verbs (e.g., operate, create, maintain, supervise, etc.)
 - d) Use the present tense
 - e) Do not include dedication, relationship, credit rating, or morals statements
 - f) Refer to individuals by title and not by name
 - g) Avoid slanting policies toward individuals
 - h) Do not include any specific salaries or wage increases
 - i) Do not include retirement contribution rates
- J. Present the proposed Job Descriptions to the entire Personnel Committee
 - 1. Review each Job Description
 - 2. Revise as needed
- K. The Subcommittee meets with each staff member individually to discuss the new Job Description (*especially any revisions*) noting any needed changes
- L. Present the proposed Job Descriptions to the entire Personnel Committee
 - 1. Review any changes needed after the interview
 - 2. Revise as needed
- M. The full Personnel Committee presents the Job Descriptions to the Church Leadership Team/Church Council for approval.
- N. The Personnel Committee and the Church Leadership Team/Church Council present the Job Descriptions to the church for approval.
- O. Come to a consensus
 - 1. Distribute copies to all members
 - 2. Encourage questions
 - 3. Conduct at least question and answer meetings prior to the vote (*people need time to study the policies and form questions*)
 - 4. Revise if needed
- P. Vote on the Job Descriptions
- III. The Pastor and the Personnel Committee each maintain a file of Job Descriptions
- IV. The Personnel Committee conducts a review of all Job Descriptions at least annually and recommends changes as needed.
- V. Reviews of individual Job Descriptions are also conducted by the Personnel Committee as follows
 - A. When a staff member leaves the employ of the church
 - B. When a new staff member enters the employ of the church
 - C. When requested by
 - 1. Any staff member
 - 2. Any supervisor
 - 3. The Administrator (if other than the Pastor)
 - 4. The Pastor
 - 5. The Personnel Committee.

List position title → **Minister of Education**

Summarize responsibilities → **Principal Function:** The minister of education is responsible to the pastor for assisting the church program organizations, except the church music program, in planning, conducting and evaluating comprehensive educational programs.

List supervisor →

List duties → **Responsibilities:**

Use the present tense →

Use specific action verbs →

Refer to individuals by title and not by name →

1. Lead the church in planning, conducting and evaluating a comprehensive program of Christian education.
2. Serve as educational resource person and advisor to the leaders of the following church program and service organizations; Sunday School, Discipleship Training, W.M.U., Brotherhood, and Church Library Services. Coordinate and unify the various organizations to avoid conflict, duplications and overlapping.
3. Develop special education and training projects such as camps, retreats, and study seminars for various age groups within the congregation.
4. Lead the church to be aware of the educational and curriculum materials available and lead the church to choose the most suitable.
5. Guide in the selection, enlistment, training of workers.
6. Recommend suitable educational building space and equipment.
7. Develop and administer a Sunday School visitation program.
8. Maintain an adequate system of records.
9. Direct and promote the weekly workers' meetings.
10. Formulate an annual budget in consultation with the leaders of the church program and service organizations to be recommended to the Stewardship Committee.
11. Perform other duties as assigned by the pastor.

SECTION ELEVEN: Organization Chart

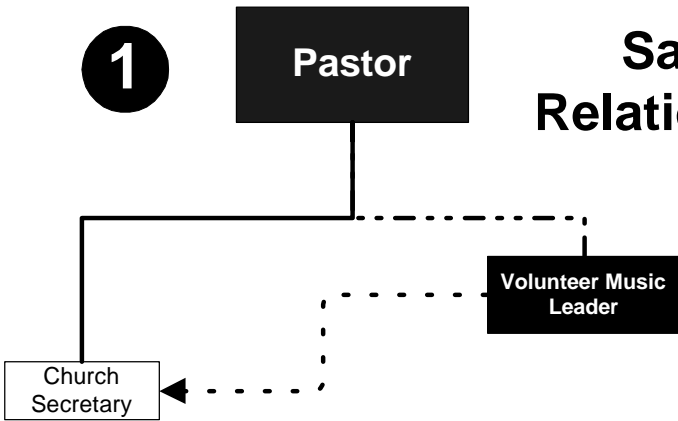
How to Prepare an Organization Chart

1. Recognize the need
2. Recommend it to the church
3. The recommendation may come from
 - a) The Church Leadership Team/Church Council
 - b) The Deacons
 - c) The appropriate committee or group
4. Determine who will be responsible for the process of drawing the chart
5. Gather information
 - a) Begin by collecting existing policies or documents
 - b) Write down the present procedure for changing policies
 - c) Research the following books
 - i) Church Unique by Will Mancini
 - ii) The Baptist Faith and Message.
 - iii) Your Life & Your Church
 - d) Secure samples from other churches.
 - e) Contact the Office of Church Health at alsbom.org for additional assistance
6. Secure input from involved parties
 - a) Determine the people who will be directly affected
 - b) Make special effort to gain their insight
7. Determine the current structure
 - a) Cover a wall of the meeting room with butcher paper
 - i) Identify structure in four areas
 - a) Legal
 - b) Financial
 - c) Educational
 - d) Spiritual
 - b) Chart these relationships (show all ministries, programs, and groups, e.g., every choir, all music groups, etc.)
8. Weigh the need for change versus the effect of change
 - a) Be aware that this process is time consuming
 - b) Watch carefully for church customs
 - c) Respect tradition
 - d) Pray for wisdom (*James 1:5*)
 - e) Watch the bottom line - benefit in efficiency versus cost in grief
9. Write and/or revise the chart, adding any relationships that are needed but are not currently in place

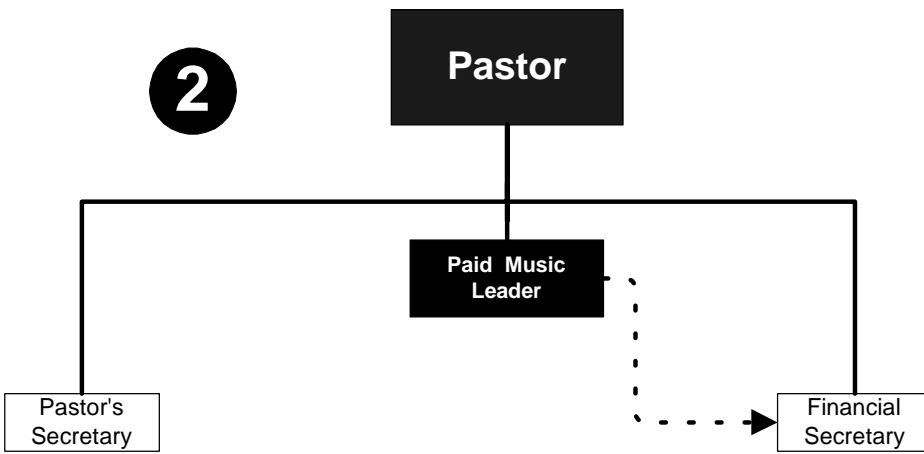
- 10.Refer to individuals by title and not by name
- 11.Secure feedback from interested and involved parties
- 12.Revise the policies as needed
- 13.Present the document to the church
- 14.Come to a consensus
 - a) Distribute copies to all involved persons
 - b) Encourage questions
 - c) Conduct question and answer meetings
 - i) If possible, conduct two meetings
 - ii) Allow plenty of time between the first reading and the vote (people need time to study the policies and form questions)
 - iii) Revise repeatedly if needed between readings
- 15.Vote on or implement the policies
- 16.Evaluate and update the policies annually

Sample Staff Relationship Charts

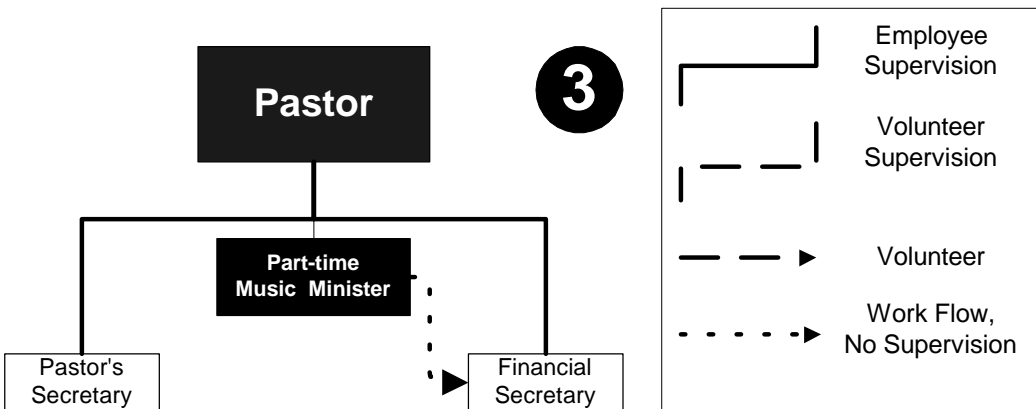
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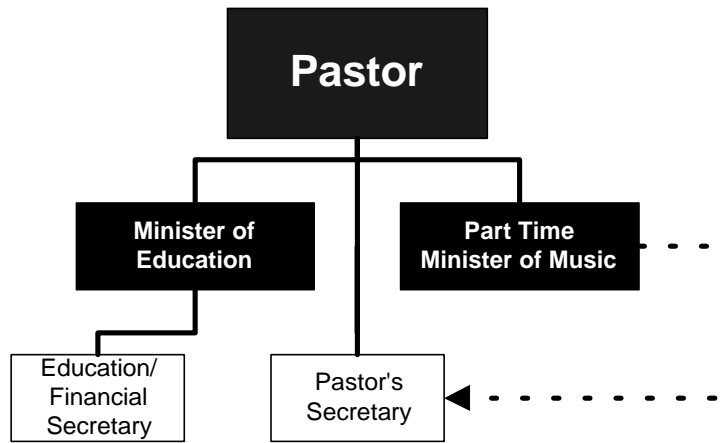
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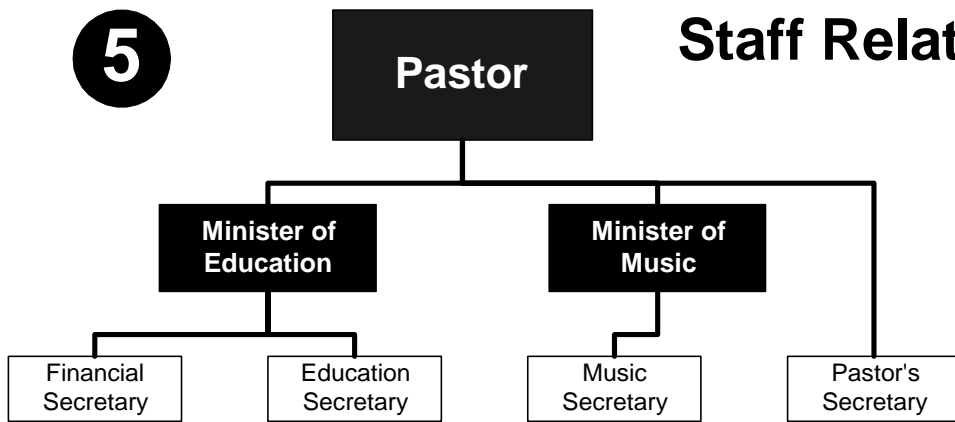


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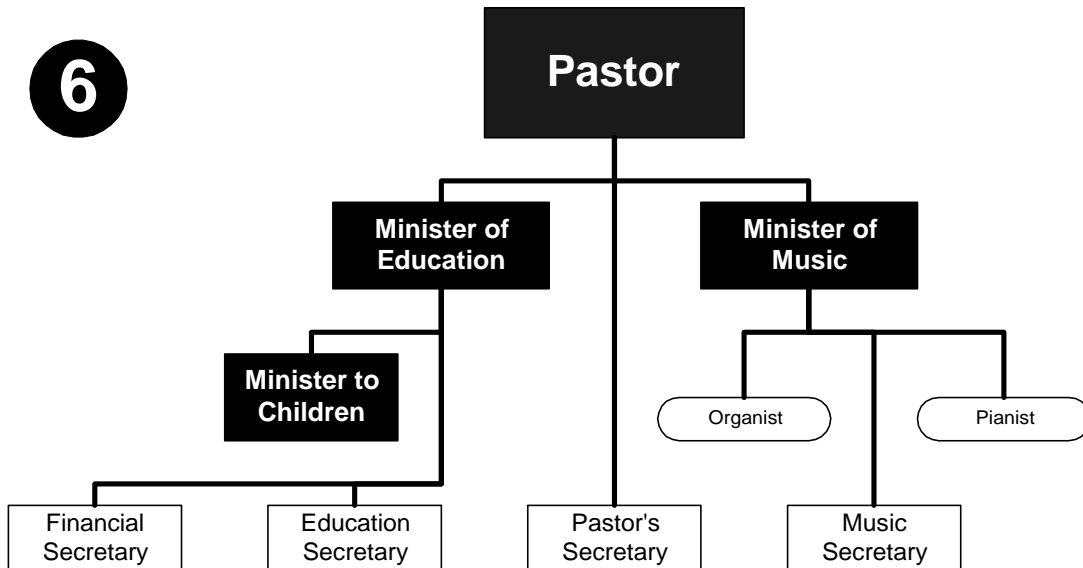


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Staff Relationships

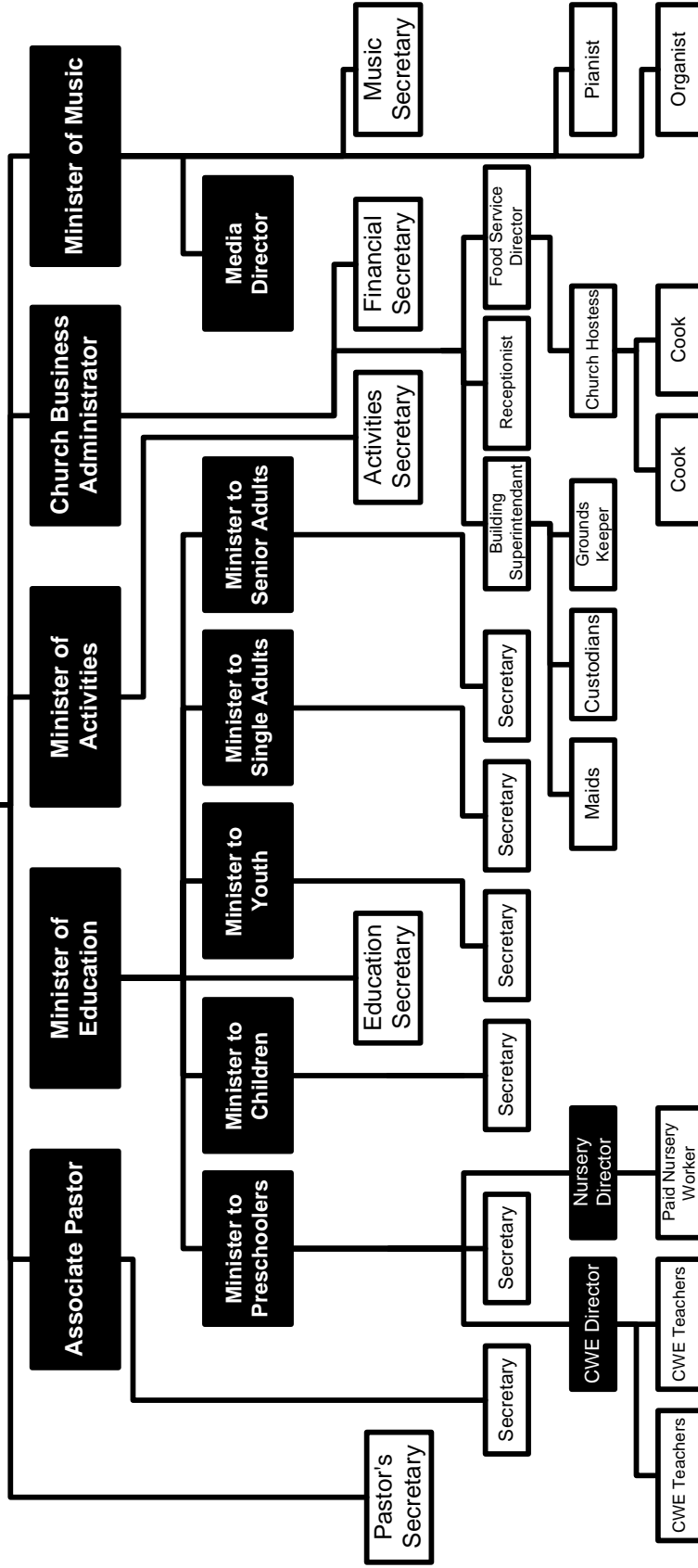


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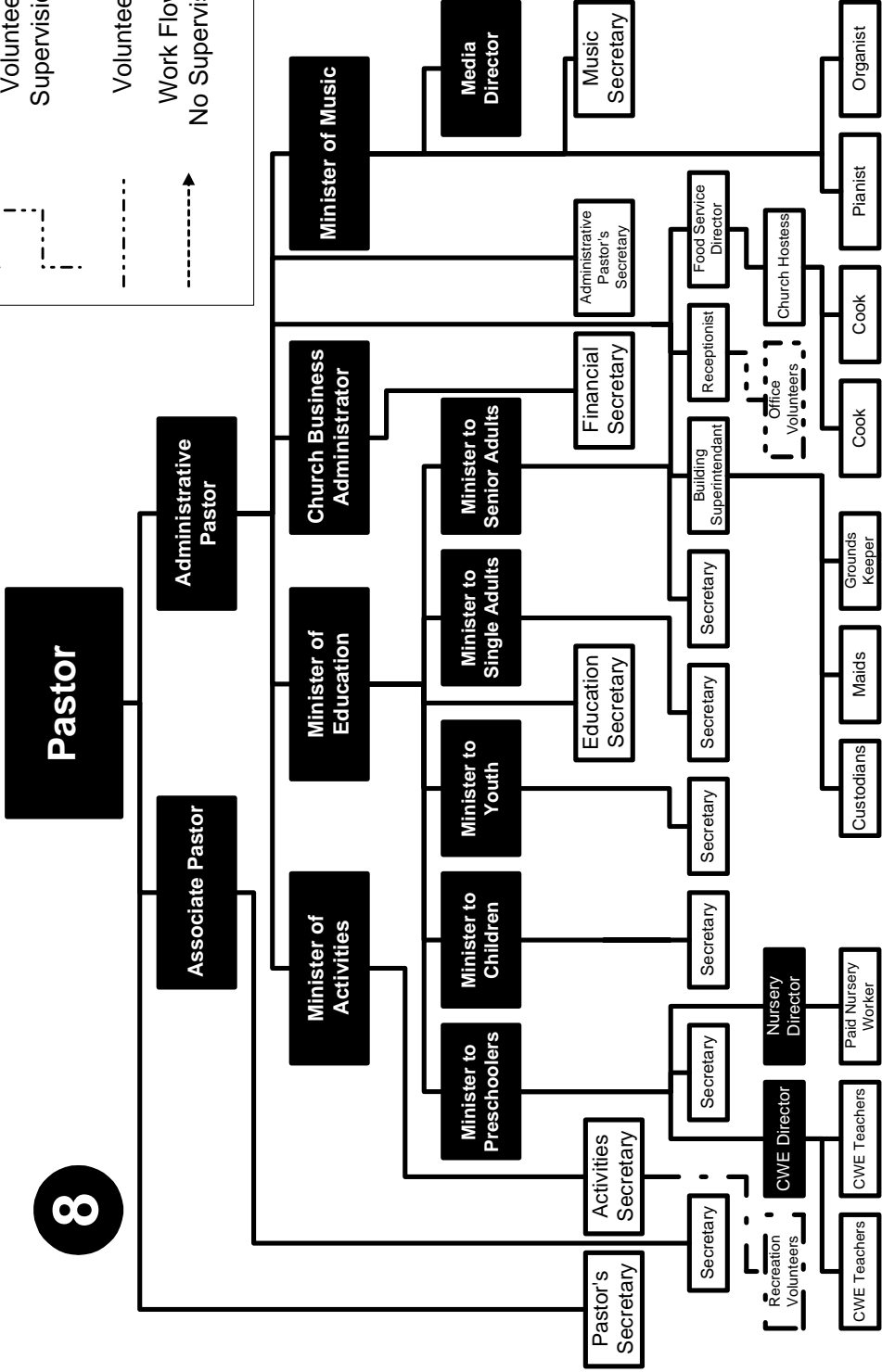
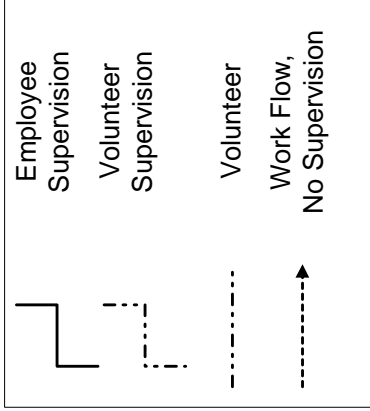
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Pastor



Staff Relationships: Very Large Church

8



Staff Relationships: Very Large Church

SECTION TWELVE:

Appendix

Recommended Reading

- Church Unique - by Will Mancini
- The Baptist Faith and Message: Revised by Herschel Hobbs,
- The Purpose Driven Church by Rick Warren,
- Being God's People: A Southern Baptist Church on Bold Mission, Robert A Orr.
- Your Life & Your Church, by James L. Sullivan.
- Ministry Nuts & Bolts, Aubrey Malphurs.
- Toolbox for Busy Pastors, Barry Campbell
- Read both for a balanced perspective:
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- Letters to Timothy by John R. Bisagno.
- Advanced Strategic Planning, Aubrey Malphurs.
- The Advantage, Patrick Lencioni.
- Bold Moves by Craig Etheredge
- I am a church member, Tom Rainer.
- I will, Rainer.
- Autopsy of a deceased church, Tom Rainer.
- Unstuck Church , Tony Morgan.
- Lasting Chang, Carey Neiuwhof.

Sample Policy Format

Subject: Vacation

Date written: March 4, 2009

Date(s) approved by:

Policy Study Committee: March 4, 2009

Personnel Committee: March 9, 2009

Church Leadership Team: March 15, 2009

Deacons: March 22, 2009

Church: April 1, 2009

Responsible for Administering the Policy: Administrator

Purpose of the Policy: To establish who is eligible for vacation and when they may take it.

Pastor, Ministerial Staff, and Support Staff

1. First calendar year of employment
2. Ministers with less than five continuous years in ministry (any combination of church, association, state convention, or Southern Baptist Convention agency)
 - a) Ministers who began service January 1 through June 30 shall receive one week (*5 days*) of vacation to be taken between July 1 and December 31
 - b) Ministers who began service July 1 through September 30 shall receive two days of vacation to be taken between October 1 and December 31
 - c) Ministers who began service October 1 through December 1 shall receive no vacation until January 1 of the following year
3. Ministers with at least five years but less than ten continuous years in ministry (any combination of church, association, state convention, or Southern Baptist Convention agency)
 - a) Ministers who began service January 1 through June 30 shall receive two weeks (*10 days*) of vacation to be taken between July 1 and December 31
 - b) Ministers who began service July 1 through September 30 shall receive one week (*5 days*) of vacation to be taken between October 1 and December 31
 - c) Ministers who began service October 1 through December 1 shall receive two days of vacation to be taken between November 15 and December 31
4. Ministers with at least ten years but less than fifteen continuous years in ministry (any combination of church, association, state convention, or Southern Baptist Convention agency)
 - a) Ministers who began service January 1 through June 30 shall receive three weeks (*15 days*) of vacation to be taken between July 1 and December 31
 - b) Ministers who began service July 1 through September 30 shall receive two weeks (*10 days*) of vacation to be taken between October 1 and December 31
 - c) Ministers who began service October 1 through December 1 shall receive one week (*5 days*) of vacation to be taken between November 15 and December 31
5. Ministers with at least fifteen years but less than twenty continuous years in ministry (any combination of church, association, state convention, or Southern Baptist Convention agency)
 - a) Ministers who began service January 1 through June 30 shall receive four weeks (*20 days*) of vacation to be taken between July 1 and December 31

- b) Ministers who began service July 1 through September 30 shall receive two weeks (10 days) of vacation to be taken between October 1 and December 31
 - c) Ministers who began service October 1 through December 1 shall receive one week (5 days) of vacation to be taken between November 15 and December 31
6. Ministers with at least twenty years continuous years in ministry (any combination of church, association, state convention, or Southern Baptist Convention agency)
- a) Ministers who began service January 1 through June 30 shall receive four weeks (20 days) of vacation to be taken between July 1 and December 31
 - b) Ministers who began service July 1 through September 30 shall receive one week (10 days) of vacation to be taken between October 1 and December 31
 - c) Ministers who began service October 1 through December 1 shall receive one week (5 days) of vacation to be taken between November 15 and December 31
7. Any ministers who began service called on or before December 31 of the prior year shall be entitled to full paid vacation during the ensuing year as follows
- a) Less than 5 years of continuous ministry an employee shall be eligible for two weeks
 - b) Upon completion of 5 years of continuous ministry (*any combination of church, association, state convention, or Southern Baptist Convention agency*), an employee shall be eligible for three weeks (15 days) of vacation
 - c) Upon completion of 10 years of continuous ministry (*any church, association, state convention, or Southern Baptist Convention agency*), an employee shall be eligible for four weeks (20 days) of vacation
 - d) Upon completion of 15 years of continuous ministry (*any church, association, state convention, or Southern Baptist Convention agency*), an employee shall be eligible for five weeks (25 days) of vacation.
 - e) Upon completion of 20 years of continuous ministry (*any church, association, state convention, or Southern Baptist Convention agency*), an employee shall be eligible for six weeks (30 days) of vacation
8. Vacation may not be accumulated beyond the current year

Full Time Clerical, Full Time Custodial,

- 1. First calendar year of employment:
 - a) Employees hired January 1 through June 30 shall receive one week (5 days) of vacation to be taken between July 1 and December 31
 - b) Employees hired July 1 through September 30 shall receive two days of vacation to be taken between October 1 and December 31
 - c) Employees hired October 1 through December 1 shall receive no vacation until January 1 of the following year
- 2. Any employee who was employed on or before December 31 of the prior year shall be entitled to two weeks (10 days) of paid vacation during the ensuing year
- 3. Upon completion of 10 years of continuous service, an employee shall be eligible for three weeks (15 days) of vacation
- 4. Vacation may not be accumulated beyond the current year

Part-time: No Paid vacation

Other Sample Personnel Policies

Benefits

1. Non-ministerial only
 - a) Social security
 - b) Workman's Compensation
2. Paid Vacation
 - a) First calendar year of employment
 - i) Employees hired January 1 through June 30 all receive one week (5 days) of vacation to be taken between July 1 and December 31
 - ii) Employees hired July 1 through September 30 shall receive two days of vacation to be taken between October 1 and December 31
 - iii) Employees hired October 1 through December 1 shall receive no vacation until January 1 of the following year
 - b) Any employee who was employed on or before December 31 of the prior year shall be entitled to two weeks (10 days) of paid vacation during the ensuing year
 - c) Upon completion of 10 years of continuous service, an employee shall be eligible for three weeks (15 days) of vacation
 - d) Vacation may not be accumulated beyond the current year

Holidays

1. Days Observed
 - a) New Year's Day
 - b) Good Friday
 - c) Thanksgiving
 - d) Memorial Day
 - e) Labor Day
 - f) Friday after Thanksgiving
 - g) Independence Day
 - h) Christmas Eve
 - i) Labor Day
 - j) Christmas Day
2. When any of these holidays occurs on a weekend, each employee shall select a contiguous weekday to observe the holiday

Retirement

1. The church shall pay the equivalent of 10% of the employee's base salary to the church retirement fund of GuideStone.
2. The employee shall be fully vested from the first day of employment.
3. Accrued rights shall be derived from the contributions.

Leave

1. The definition of week is five working days within one seven-day period
2. Bereavement
 - a) Immediate family (*parent, child, brother, sister*) - 3 days with pay, additional time without pay as approved by supervisor or administrator.
 - b) Other family (*By blood or marriage*) 1 day with pay, additional time without pay as approved by supervisor or administrator
 - c) Other (*Friends, acquaintances, associates*) 2 hours with pay, additional time without pay as approved by supervisor or administrator.
 - d) Exceptions as approved by the administrator
3. Vacation (See benefits)
4. Special considerations
 - a) Salary shall be deducted when leave is exhausted
 - b) Leave is not cumulative
 - c) Employees may not be paid for unused leave
5. Ministerial Considerations
 - a) Ministerial Staff shall be granted one day off per week (*in addition to Saturday*) on a fixed schedule as approved by the supervisor.
 - b) Ministerial Staff shall be granted two weeks with pay for revivals, conferences, or education meetings as guest leader or clinician. This may be taken in increments of one or more whole days.
 - c) Ministerial Staff shall be granted two weeks with pay for self-enrichment conferences such as Shocco, Ridgecrest or Glorieta.

This may be taken in increments of one or more whole days

- d) Ministerial Staff shall be allowed to be away from the church on Sundays only as specified by the above policies.
 - i) Total Sundays away shall be limited to a total of four Sundays per year for conferences or revivals

- ii) Vacation shall be in addition to this (Example: Four Sunday conferences plus two vacation Sundays for a total of six Sundays).

- iii) No more than two Sundays away shall be taken consecutively.

Sample Building Policy

Policy Subject:	Building Use
Responsible for Administering the Policy:	Administration
Purpose of the Policy:	The purpose herein is to establish broad church policy to be followed whenever a request is made for the use of Sample Baptist Church buildings.
Date written:	March 4, 1995, Revised September 21, 2003, Revised August 9, 2009 Revised August 17, 2021
Written By:	Administrator
Date(s) approved by Church Leadership Team:	March 15, 1995. Revised September 24, 2003. Revised August 9, 2009 Revised August 17, 2021
Date(s) approved by Deacons:	March 22, 1995. Revised September 28, 2003. Revised August 9, 2009 Revised August 17, 2021
Date(s) approved by Church:	April 1, 1995. Revised September 29, 2003. Revised August 9, 2009 Revised August 17, 2021

POLICY ON THE USE OF CHURCH BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

PURPOSE: The purpose herein is to establish broad church policy to be followed whenever a request is made for the use of Sample Baptist Church buildings.

ADMINISTRATOR OF POLICY: Minister of Education

SCOPE: The policy or policies contained herein will apply to all persons, groups and/or organizations requesting use of Sample Baptist Church buildings and facilities. These requests fall into six categories:

- 1) Use of facilities by church organizations.
- 2) Use of facilities by church members.
- 3) Use of facilities by denominational organizations.
- 4) Use of facilities by civic organizations.
- 5) Use of facilities by non-members.
- 6) Civil Emergencies.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY:

I) GENERAL

- A) The membership of Sample Baptist Church places first priority on the use of the buildings of this church for the functions of the church. No other meetings, events, etc., can take precedence over the functions of Sample Baptist Church.
- B) The church reserves the right to refuse the use of its buildings and facilities to any group, agency, or individual. Groups and organizations with a purpose, mission, agenda or activities which are incompatible with the Bible, the teachings of Jesus Christ and the purpose of Sample Baptist Church shall not be allowed to use these facilities.

II) Expenses.

- A) Any time church facilities are used, expenses to the church result. These include, but are not limited to, utilities, cleaning, wear and tear, and administration. The individuals or groups using church facilities are responsible for reimbursing the church for these expenses. The following policies govern the amounts and any exceptions.

III) Policies concerning the use of buildings and facilities.

- A) **Church Organizations** - Church organizations may use the facilities of Sample Baptist Church without reimbursing the church. Church-wide activities shall have priority. After this, scheduling shall be on a first come, first served basis. All dates must be approved by the church staff and/or church council prior to being placed on the church calendar.
- B) **Church Members** - Members of Sample Baptist Church may use the facilities of Sample Baptist Church for activities such as: showers, teas, receptions, recitals, and other similar activities provided an open invitation is extended to all church members. Church related activities shall have priority. After this, activities of church members may be scheduled on a first come, first served basis. No activities in this category may be scheduled more than six months in advance. All dates must be approved by the church staff and/or church council prior to being placed on the church calendar. Reimbursements are as follows:
 - 1) Custodians are available to open, close, and supervise the use of the buildings and equipment.
 - 2) Reimbursement shall be made for any goods used (E.G., cups, plates, forks, etc.).
- C) **Denominational Organizations** - Denominational organizations of the (insert name) Baptist Association, Alabama Baptist State Convention and/or the SBC may use the facilities of Sample Baptist Church without reimbursing the church. Church related activities shall have priority. After this, scheduling shall be on a first come, first served basis. All dates must be approved by the church staff and/or church council prior to being placed on the church calendar. Reimbursement is as follows:
 - 1) Custodians will open, close, and supervise the use of the buildings and equipment. This shall be without charge to the Denominational organization.
 - 2) Reimbursement shall be made for any goods used (E.G... cups, plates, forks, etc.).
- D) **Civic Organizations** - Civic organizations may use the facilities of Sample Baptist Church without reimbursing the church. Groups and organizations with a purpose, mission, agenda or activities which are incompatible with the Bible, the teachings of Jesus Christ and the purpose of Sample Baptist Church shall not be allowed to use these facilities. Activities A through C shall have priority. After this, scheduling shall be on a first come, first served basis. No activities in this category may be scheduled more than six months in advance. All dates must be approved by the church staff and/or church council prior to being placed on the church calendar. Reimbursement is as follows:
 - 1) Custodians will open, close, and supervise the use of the buildings and equipment. Custodians will also clean the used areas. This shall be \$15.00 per hour a two-hour minimum.
 - 2) Reimbursement shall be made for any goods used (such as cups, plates, forks, etc.).
- E) **Non-Church Members** and/or Organizations may not use the facilities of Sample Baptist Church.
- F) **Disaster or Civil Emergency** - The facilities of Sample Baptist Church shall be made available to civil defense, red cross, Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief, and community leaders in times of disaster or civil emergency as far as practical.

IV) RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A) It shall be the responsibility of the requesting individual, group or organization to contact the education secretary of Sample Baptist Church, either in person or by letter, at least one month prior to the date when the church building will be required, setting forth the purpose for which the church building, and facilities will be used.
- B) The requesting individual, group or organization shall designate one person who will be responsible for the use and care of the church building and facilities.

- C) The requesting individual, group or organization must agree in writing to abide by the provisions of this church policy. Failure to do so shall mean that the individual, group or organization will not be allowed to use the facilities.
- D) The requesting group or organization must complete a *Facilities Use Agreement Form*.
- E) The requesting group or organization must agree to pay for any expenses incurred as a result of their use of the building or facilities. This shall include, but not be limited to, any damage resulting from the use of the buildings or facilities.
- F) The group or organization agrees to restore chairs, tables, and furnishings to the condition in which they were found. This includes the washing of any dishes, utensils, etc.
- G) Exceptions must be approved by the Property and Space Committee.
- H) The step-by-step procedure for reserving the church buildings or facilities is summarized as follows:
- 1) Submit request to education secretary.
 - 2) Approval by staff and/or church council (usually within one week). The church reserves the right to refuse the use of its buildings and facilities to any group, agency, or individual.
 - 3) Payment of expenses to financial secretary as outlined in policy above.
 - 4) Completion of reservation form due.
 - 5) Only after the completion of steps 1-5, the event or activity will be placed on the church calendar as outlined in policy above.

Set Up and Cleaning: Charges for these services are taxable income and the church must report to the IRS on a Form 990T						Utilities: Charges for these services are taxable income to the church and must reported to the IRS on a Form 990T		
Room	Includes the following hours of custodial supervision, set-up, and cleaning			Total Hours and Reimbursement Due		Room	Charge	Total Charge
	Before	During	After	Total Hours	Amount Due			
Sanctuary	1	1	3	5	\$75.00	Sanctuary	\$100.00	\$175.00
Chapel	1	1	2	4	\$60.00	Chapel	\$75.00	\$135.00
Gym (reception)	1	1	2	5	\$75.00	Gym (reception)	\$75.00	\$150.00
Gym (seating)	2	1	5	7	\$105.00	Gym (seating)	\$75.00	\$180.00
Fellowship Hall	1	1	2	3	\$45.00	Fellowship Hall	\$50.00	\$95.00
Fireside Room	1	1	2	5	\$75.00	Fireside Room	\$37.50	\$112.50
Choir Room	N/A*	1	1	1	\$15.00	Choir Room	\$37.50	\$52.50
Bride's Room	N/A*	1	1	1	\$15.00	Bride's Room	\$25.00	\$40.00
Classroom	1	1	1	3	\$45.00	Classroom	\$25.00	\$70.00
Main Kitchen	N/A*	1	4	4	\$60.00	Main Kitchen	\$37.50	\$97.50
Small Kitchen	N/A*	1	3	3	\$45.00	Small Kitchen	\$25.00	\$70.00
Additional hours					\$0.00			
Total						Total		

Recommended Reading for Purpose Statements

- *Church Unique* - by Will Mancini
- *The Baptist Faith and Message: Revised* by Herschel Hobbs,
- *The Purpose Driven Church* by Rick Warren,
- *Being God's People: A Southern Baptist Church on Bold Mission*, Robert A Orr.
- *Your Life & Your Church*, by James L. Sullivan.
- *Ministry Nuts & Bolts*, Aubrey Malphurs.
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- *Advanced Strategic Planning*, Aubrey Malphurs.
- *The Advantage*, Patrick Lencioni.
- *Bold Moves* by Craig Etheredge
- *I am a church member*, by Tom Rainer.
- *I will*, Rainer.
- *Autopsy of a deceased church*, Tom Rainer.
- *Unstuck Church* , Tony Morgan.
- *Lasting Chang*, Carey Neiuwhof.

Lending Your Church Facilities

The key issue with loaning or renting church buildings to outside organizations is that your church can be held liable for accidents or injuries, even if your ministry is not the event sponsor. A secondary issue is security. Ministry items could be damaged or stolen while the building is open for other groups' events. If you haven't taken steps to secure valuables, your ministry may bear the cost of replacing missing items.

	Yes	Needs Attention
1. Is the other organization's reputation well established and accepted by your community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you have a signed <i>Use of Facility</i> written agreement with the outside organization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the agreement contain a "hold harmless," indemnity, and defense clause for any liability claims resulting from the borrower's activities on your premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. If you have a <i>Use of Facility</i> agreement, did your attorney review it to make sure it complies with your state laws?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Does the agreement require that the borrower have a public liability insurance policy with at least a \$1 million limit of liability coverage and a \$5,000 limit of medical payments coverage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Does the agreement require that your organization be named as an "additional insured" on the borrower's policy for liability damages resulting from its activities on your premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Does the agreement require the borrowers to furnish you with a certificate of insurance that proves coverage and shows your organization as an additional insured?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Will the group's activities cause undue wear and tear on your facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are the group's activities of a high-risk nature in which people might be easily injured?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Continued on back)

This is a sample document only. Your organization is responsible for compliance with all applicable laws. Accordingly, this form should not be used or adopted by your organization without first being reviewed and approved by an attorney. Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company assumes no liability in the preparation and distribution of this sample form.

Needs

Yes

Attention

10. Will the group be confined to one specific area of your building, or will multiple rooms be required?

0. If the group using your facility works with children or youth, will there be adequate adult supervision?

Notes:

Sample Wedding Policy

Sample Wedding Policy

Subject: Weddings

Responsible for Administering the Policy: Senior Pastor

Purpose of the Policy: The purpose herein is to establish broad church policy to be followed when a request is made for the scheduling of a wedding at Sample Baptist Church.

Date written: August 17, 2021,

Written by: Administrator

Approved Church Leadership Team: _____

Approved by Deacons: _____

Approved by Church: _____

Sample Wedding Policy

PURPOSE: The purpose herein is to establish church policy to be followed whenever a request is made for the use of Sample Baptist Church buildings for a wedding.

ADMINISTRATOR OF POLICY: Senior Pastor

SCOPE: The policy or policies contained herein will apply to all persons, requesting the scheduling of a wedding as a worship service of Sample Baptist Church. These requests fall into two categories:

- A) Weddings of church members.
- B) Weddings of nonmembers who have met with the Senior Pastor for couples counseling and have successfully completed such counseling on Biblical marriage.

No other weddings are permitted at Sample Baptist Church.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY: The membership of Sample Baptist Church places priority on the use of the buildings of this church for the functions of the church. No other meetings, events, etc. can take precedence over the functions of Sample Baptist Church. Weddings of members of Sample Baptist Church will have priority over weddings of nonmembers. Weddings where the couple's beliefs and/or teaching conflict with the Word of God, as determined by the Senior Pastor after counseling with the couple, shall not be permitted at Sample Baptist Church. The church reserves the right to refuse the use of its buildings and facilities to any individual.

Due to our belief in the biblical teachings about marriage, same sex couples will not be married in any facilities or on any properties owned by the church.

Ministers of Sample Baptist Church will not perform any same sex marriages or civil unions whether on or off church owned properties. Doing so would be grounds for termination of that minister.

Legal Notice: If you charge for Set Up, Cleaning, Custodial Services, Sound or lighting technicians, Utilities, etc. the IRS deems that any charges for these services are taxable income to the church and the church must report these amounts to the IRS on a Form 990T. You should consult a tax professional for guidance.

The IRS requires that amounts paid to church employees are to be reported as taxable income on the employees W-2 and must be processed as payroll and FICA. These extra hours worked are subject to overtime rules under the FLSA administered by the U S Department of Labor.

WEDDING POLICIES

I. GENERAL POLICIES

A. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY:

- We believe that marriage is a union between one man and one woman, following biblical principles (Gen. 2:19-24, Lev. 18:22, Matt. 19:4-6, Rom. 1:18-27, Eph. 5:22-33, Heb. 13:4). We believe that God sanctions only the union in marriage of a man to a woman. Therefore, this church recognizes only a wedding compatible with those standards.
- Policies
 - a) Due to our belief in the biblical teachings about marriage, same sex couples will not be married in any facilities or on any properties owned by the church.
 - b) Ministers of Sample Baptist Church will not perform any same sex marriages whether on or off church-owned properties. Doing so would be grounds for termination.
- The membership of First Baptist Church places first priority on the use of the buildings of this church for the functions of the church. No other meetings, events, etc. can take precedence over the functions of First Baptist Church. Weddings of members of First Baptist Church will have priority over weddings of nonmembers. The church reserves the right to refuse the use of its buildings and facilities to any individual.

B. The Wedding is a Worship Service

- Any wedding taking place at Sample Baptist Church is a **worship service**. It is a celebration of love, which portrays the love of Christ for His Church. As such, it is to be performed with dignity.

C. Scheduling:

- Your wedding (*insert date and time*) and rehearsal (*insert date and time*) must be approved regarding the Senior Pastor's schedule as well as the schedule of church ministries and programs. **Wedding invitations should not be printed until this date has been confirmed in writing by the Senior Pastor.**
- Church related activities shall have priority. After this, wedding activities of church members may be scheduled on a first come, first served basis.
- Weddings are not permitted on Wednesday nights or on Sundays.
- No weddings may be scheduled more than six months in advance.
- A conference with the Senior Pastor is required for any couple wishing to be married at Sample Baptist Church. You are not required to have the Senior Pastor perform the ceremony, but approval by the Senior Pastor is necessary **before** the date will be placed on the church calendar.
- After the date has been requested and approved by the Senior Pastor, it must then be approved by the church staff and/or Church Leadership Team/Church Council prior to being placed on the church calendar. Arrangements must also be made at this time for the sanctuary, chapel, kitchen, fellowship hall, bride's room and/or any other facilities needed.
- **Approval of the date does not ensure that all arrangements are complete.** You must also meet with the Minister of Music and/or the organist/pianist.

II. Expenses

- #### A.
- Any time church facilities are used, expenses to the church result. These include, but are not limited to, utilities, cleaning, wear and tear, and administration. The individuals or families using church facilities are responsible for reimbursing the church for these expenses. The following policies govern the amounts and any exceptions.

B. Church Members - When the bride or groom is a member of Sample Baptist Church (or if either the bride or groom is the child or grandchild of a living church member), the couple may use the facilities of Sample Baptist Church for their wedding. Reimbursements are required as follows:

- Custodian - Custodians are **required** to open, close, and supervise the use of the buildings and equipment. Their salary or compensation will be paid by you to the church which will in turn pay the custodian as described below.
- Set up and cleaning - The Sanctuary and fellowship hall will be set up before the wedding and cleaned after by a maid or custodian. They are there to move furniture as pre-arranged. They will not help decorate. Their salary or compensation will be paid by you to the church which will in turn pay the custodian described below.
- Materials—Reimbursement will be made for any goods used (*e.g., cups, plates, forks, etc.*).

C. Reimbursement Amounts

- Custodians will open, close, and supervise the use of the buildings and equipment. A custodian must always be present while the wedding party is in the building. The list below gives the number of hours the custodian will be present. You will pay for any additional hours a custodian is needed. This will be \$15.00 per hour with a \$30.00 minimum. This must be arranged in advance through the receptionist and must be prepaid.
- Set up and cleaning—The sanctuary and fellowship hall will be set up before the wedding and cleaned after by a maid or custodian. (**Amounts may differ depending on location**)



Includes the following hours of custodial supervision and cleaning time.

Charges for these services are taxable income and the church must report to the IRS on a Form 990T.

Room	Charge	Rate per hour	Minimum hours for which the church will charge you. If you or any of your representatives (including caterer and florist, etc.) exceed these hours, you will be charged by the hour for additional time.					
			Before Rehearsal	During Rehearsal	After Rehearsal	Before Wedding	During Wedding	After Wedding
Sanctuary	\$150.00	\$15.00	1	1	0	5	1	2
Chapel	\$105.00	\$15.00	1	1	0	2	1	2
Gym (Fellowship Hall)	\$75.00	\$15.00				0	1	4
Small Fellowship Hall	\$45.00	\$15.00				0	1	3
Fireside Room	\$75.00	\$15.00	0	1	0	1	1	2
Choir Room	\$ 60.00	\$15.00				2	1	1
Bride's Room	\$ 15.00	\$15.00				N/A*	N/A*	1
Classroom	\$ 15.00	\$15.00				N/A*	N/A*	1
Main Kitchen	\$ 60.00	\$15.00				N/A*	N/A*	4
Small Kitchen	\$ 45.00	\$15.00				N/A*	N/A*	3

- Reimbursement will be made for any goods used (*e.g., cups, plates, forks, etc.*).
- All EXPENSE CHECKS are due in the Church office 10 days prior to the wedding.
 - a) Make the check for the custodial supervision and cleaning time: Sample Baptist Church.
 - b) Make any other checks to Sample Baptist Church.

III. OTHER EXPENSES

- A. Honoraria for the minister, soloists, organist, wedding director, or others you enlist to lead in your wedding are not set. They are to be negotiated with each person involved.

IV. POLICIES

- A. The wedding party is responsible for communicating these rules to the florist, the caterer, wedding director, etc. Please remind them to take every precaution to prevent damage to the church facilities. You are personally responsible for damages resulting from failure to follow this policy.
- B. Do not remove planters, pulpit and/or pulpit furniture from the platform or choir loft. These items may be moved only under supervision of the church custodian.
- C. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to advise florists and decorators:
- Candles are not to be used as a candle lighter in the lighting of candle standards. An actual wax free candle lighter is required.
 - Only mechanical (drip free) candles may be used at weddings.
 - You, and not the florist, are personally responsible to Sample Baptist Church for damages resulting from failure to follow this policy.
- D. The Bride and Groom and their parents are responsible for advising members of the wedding party to wear appropriate Christian dress for the rehearsal (*Business casual is suggested*). Shorts are forbidden.
- E. Persons wishing to use candles and candelabras are required to furnish them. Our church has none. See above details.
- F. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to arrange for a wedding director for the rehearsal and the wedding.
- G. No rice, confetti, or other material may be thrown inside the building. Outside, Birdseed may be used outside in the place of rice. When birdseed is thrown outside the birds gladly assist in the cleanup. Use of rice will result in forfeiture of your entire cleaning deposit.
- H. Intoxicants and/or persons or persons using intoxicants are not permitted in any part of the building. To avoid embarrassment, you must inform the wedding party of this rule.
- I. Flash photography is **NOT** permitted during the ceremony. One flash picture is allowed as the bride enters the sanctuary and one flash picture as the bride and groom exit the ceremony.
- J. Photographers are **not** to stand on the pews to take pictures.
- K. Smoking is not permitted in any part of the church building or grounds.

V. USE AND SELECTION OF MUSIC

- A. The minister of music must approve the music for your wedding, both vocal and instrumental. For this reason, a conference with him is required to coordinate your music.
- B. Secular music should not be used in a Christian wedding unless it is in keeping with the message of Jesus Christ.
- C. A wedding is a worship service—a Christian testimony of two Christians being united in Christ. Secular love songs should be used at the reception, not in the ceremony.
- D. The Minister of Music and the organist will be happy make suggestions to the bride as to acceptable music for the wedding.
- E. The Minister of Music must approve arrangements for the use of church musical instruments at least three weeks prior to the wedding.
- F. If you wish to use an organist/pianist other than the church organist/pianist, that individual must meet with the Minister of Music, prior to the use of the instruments in the Sanctuary.

- G. If you wish to use the sound system in the sanctuary, you must clear this with the Minister of Music. The equipment must be operated by a church sound technician. Their salary or compensation will be pre-paid by you to the church. The church will in turn pay the technician and comply with IRS rules.

VI. STEP BY STEP PROCEDURES

- A. The step-by-step procedure for reserving the church buildings or facilities is summarized as follows:
- Submit request to church secretary.
 - Meet with the Senior Pastor.
 - Complete a reservation form requesting date and facilities.
 - Approval by staff and/or Church Leadership Team/Church Council (*usually within one week*). The church reserves the right to refuse the use of its buildings and facilities to any group, agency, or individual.
 - At this point the event or activity will be placed on the church calendar as outlined in policy above.
 - Meet with the Minister of Music.
- Payment of expenses to financial secretary as outlined in policy above. Completed reservation form due.

VII. REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS

- A. **Custodians will open, close, and supervise the use of the buildings and equipment.** A custodian must always be present the wedding party is in the building. The list below gives the number of hours the custodian will be present. You will pay for any additional hours a custodian is needed. This will be \$15.00 per hour with a \$30.00 minimum. This must be arranged in advance through the receptionist and must be prepaid.

Set Up and Cleaning plus usage - The Sanctuary and fellowship hall will be set up before the wedding and cleaned after by a maid or custodian.

Set Up and Cleaning: Charges for these services are taxable income and the church must report to the IRS on a Form 990T									Utilities: Charges for these services are taxable income to the church and must reported to the IRS on a Form 990T	
Room	Includes the following hours of custodial supervision and cleaning						Total Hours and Reimbursement Due		Room	Charge
	Rehearsal			Wedding			Total Hours	Amount Due		
	Before	During	After	Before	During	After				
Sanctuary	1	1	0	4	1	3	10	\$150.00	Sanctuary	\$100.00
Chapel	1	1	0	2	1	2	7	\$105.00	Chapel	\$75.00
Gym (reception)				2	1	2	5	\$75.00	Gym (reception)	\$75.00
Gym (seating)	5	1	0	5	1	5	17	\$255.00	Gym (seating)	\$75.00
Fellowship Hall				1	1	2	3	\$45.00	Fellowship Hall	\$50.00
Fireside Room	0	1	0	1	1	2	5	\$75.00	Fireside Room	\$ 37.50
Choir Room				N/A*	N/A*	1	4	\$60.00	Choir Room	\$37.50
Bride's Room				N/A*	N/A*	1	1	\$15.00	Bride's Room	\$ 25.00
Classroom				N/A*	N/A*	1	1	\$15.00	Classroom	\$25.00
Main Kitchen				N/A*	N/A*	4	4	\$60.00	Main Kitchen	\$37.50
Small Kitchen				N/A*	N/A*	3	3	\$45.00	Small Kitchen	\$ 25.00
Additional hours								\$15.00		
Total									Total	

* Included in sanctuary or chapel

- B. **PAPER GOODS:** Reimbursement will be made for any goods used (e.g., cups, plates, forks, etc.).
- C. **ALL EXPENSE CHECKS** are due in the church office ten days prior to the wedding.
- Make the check for the janitorial fee to: Sample Baptist Church.
 - Make any other checks to Sample Baptist Church.
- D. **OTHER EXPENSES**
- Honoraria for the minister, soloists, organist, wedding director, etc. are not set but should be negotiated with each person involved.

Legal Notice: *If you charge for use of the facility, you must charge members the same as you charge non-members. Allowing members free use of a facility when you charge non-members for the use is an inurement or private benefit. This is not legal and will cost you your tax-exempt status.*

The IRS deems that any charges for the use of the facility are taxable income to the church and the church must report these amounts to the IRS on a Form 990T. You should consult a tax professional for guidance.

Sample Conflict Resolution Policy

A Church Policy Concerning Conflict Resolution

This church is committed to resolving in a biblical manner all conflict that may arise within the body. This commitment is based on God's command that Christians should strive to live at peace with one another (see Matt. 5:9; John 17:20-23; Romans 12:18; Eph. 4:1-3) and that when disputes arise, Christians should resolve them according to the principles set forth in Scripture (see Prov. 19:11; Matt. 5:23-25; 18:15-20; I Cor. 6:1-8; Gal 6:1). We believe that these commands and principles are an obligation to every Christian and are essential to the unity, health, and witness of the church.

When a member of this church has a conflict with, or is concerned about the behavior of another member, he/she shall attempt to resolve it in the following manner.

- 1) The offended or concerned person shall prayerfully examine himself, herself, and take responsibility for their contribution to the problem (Matt. 7:3-5) and shall prayerfully seek to discern whether the offense is so serious it cannot be overlooked (Prov. 19:11; 15:18; 17:14; 20:3; Eph4:2; Col. 3:13; I Pet. 4:8).
- 2) If the offense is too serious to be overlooked, the offended party shall go, several times if necessary, and attempt to resolve the matter personally and privately. In this interaction the offended party shall quickly confess his/her own wrongdoing and seek forgiveness.
- 3) If the offender will not listen and if the problem is too serious to overlook, the offended person shall return with one or two mature Christian people to help in the resolution of the differences. These other people are to serve more as mediators than as champions of a side. These other people should preferably be recognized leaders in the church or trained Christian mediators from the associational or denominational structure.

At the request of either party to the dispute, the church leadership shall make every effort to assist in resolving the differences and affecting reconciliation.

- 4) Before the matter is taken to the congregation according to the directed procedure of Matt. 18:15-17, the congregational leaders should seek counsel and mediation assistance from the local Baptist association, the office of Church Health at alsbom.org, or a recognized ministry of Christian conciliation such as Peacemakers Ministries.

Legal Issues Confronting Preschool Ministries

Hundreds of churches have been sued during past decade for injuries to children or for improper selection and supervision of workers. Our society has become increasingly litigious, with over 93 million suits filed in state courts in one recent year.¹ In addition, most states no longer recognize the doctrine of “charitable immunity,” and churches now face the same liability as private businesses.

The courts have ruled that churches are not “insurers” of the safety of children and are not automatically legally liable when a child suffers injury at church.² However, the courts have found churches liable and awarded damages when church workers have been **negligent**.³

In fact, churches and other organizations entrusted with the care of children are held to a “higher standard of care.” Diligence in loving and teaching young children has been a longtime hallmark of churches. Today's churches, however, must **define** and **document** their diligence on behalf of children. In today's legal climate, carefully formulated and implemented policies are needed to meet the legal duty of a “higher standard of care.”

Establishing Appropriate Policies

In providing and implementing appropriate policies a church should:

- Research recommended standards of care. Request information from the state day care licensing agency (*DHR*); the state child protective services (for child abuse reporting procedures); and other agencies governing fire, electrical, and building codes.
- Review Federal and State laws applying to employed teachers who work in childcare or weekday programs. The book *The Church Guide to Employment Law*⁴ provides help in this area.
- Review policies from other churches. The kit, *Effective Church Committee Work (#5291-27)*⁵ provides suggestions on preschool and weekday education committees and policy formation.
- Consult your insurance agent and a competent attorney for their legal advice.
- With church approval, implement policies. Diligent care should be exercised in the following areas: screening and supervising teachers, implementing security procedures, and providing a safe environment.

¹Richard Hammar, presenter of the Baptist Sunday School Board Seminar, “Legal Issues in the Church,” held on April 26, 1994, in Nashville, TN.

²Kenneth Snyder, “Legal Liability of Daycare and Nursery School Facilities,” Church administration magazine (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, March, 1993), p. 41.

³Negligence means a breach of *duty* or failure to exercise reasonable care.

⁴Julie Bloss, *The Church Guide to Employment Law* (Matthews, NC: Christian Ministry Resources, 1993).

⁵James Ryan and Linda Barr, compilers, *Effective Church Committee Work* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1993).

Screening and Supervising Teachers

All teachers, volunteer and employed, must be properly screened. Recommended steps for this process are outlined in the book *When Child Abuse Comes to Church*,¹ and the kit *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church*.² These steps include screening forms, personal interviews, and background checks.

Screening forms should ask for information such as name and address; prior church membership and volunteer work; photo ID and driver's *license number*; *two or more references*; and a statement of any prior conviction for abuse, molestation, or crimes against minors.

You also will need a signed release for conducting reference and background checks. Churches should document their contacts with references.³ In discussing the screening form with prospective teachers, church leaders also should document information received during the personal interview. All of this information must be kept confidential and filed in a secure area

Forms for these various procedures may be found in the kit *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church*. The authors discuss the need to ask the question, "Were you a victim of abuse or molestation while a minor?" They also suggest ways to approach this in a confidential, non-intrusive manner. The kit video and other materials provide help for building church awareness and support for these procedures.

Richard Hammar suggests a less complicated screening approach for "occasional" workers. However, the following qualifications are essential for all teachers, even occasional workers: a committed Christian; at least 18 years old; a church member for six or more months; good physical, mental, and emotional health; and a pleasant manner with children.

Also needed for appropriate Supervision are two or more teachers with each group of preschoolers, a small window in classroom doors, and protective procedures for changing diapers and assisting in rest rooms. Supervision of teachers should be ongoing, with designated staff members or division directors available to teachers, as needed.

Churches should *provide periodic training* for all teachers and specify procedures for immediate reporting of any suspected child abuse. Check with your state's child protective services or other appropriate agency for the legal requirements on reporting procedures.

¹Bill Anderson, *When Child Abuse Comes to Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1992).

²Richard Hammar and others, *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church* (prevention kit) (Mathews, NC: Church Ministry Resources, 1993).

³In Addition, some churches are taking steps to fingerprint individuals based on the National Child Care Act of 1993. The new law, signed by the president on December 20, 1993, asks states to adopt laws requiring background checks for child-care providers through the FBI "national criminal history record system." These FBI records are accessed through fingerprints. States are to specify which childcare positions require criminal history checks and to develop background check procedures; thus, application of the law may vary from state to state. For further information, consult: Richard Hammar, ed., *Church Law & Tax Report*, vol. VIII, no. 2, March/April, 1994, 1-10.

Implementing Security Procedures

Consider which security procedures to outline in your preschool policies, including those for *hygiene, infectious diseases, release of children to adults, and permission forms.*

Policies should specify procedures for changing diapers, washing hands, laundering linens, disinfecting toys and equipment, and cleaning rooms and floors. Use of disposable latex gloves and disinfecting procedures are a part of the “universal precautions” to protect children and teachers. Consult local and state health officials for recommended hygiene guidelines.

Policies regarding communicable diseases such as active tuberculosis, AIDS, and hepatitis B also are needed. These policies need to be determined with the aid of legal counsel since confidentiality of medical records may be an issue.

In releasing children at the end of sessions, all churches, regardless of size, should have a clear policy. Children should be released only to authorized adults. Security procedures to ensure this might include child information sheets, sign-in sheets, presentation of an ID card or a claim check by adults picking up children, and name labels for children.

Parental permission forms are needed anytime children participate in an activity away from the church. Provide parents with details of the specific activities and require their signature of consent for their child to participate. A signed emergency medical treatment release form also is needed. When you serve food to preschoolers at church, inform parents so they can alert you to allergy concern.

Providing a Safe Environment

Rooms at church for preschoolers must be safe. Review the building, electrical, and fire codes in your area. Post in each room fire-escape routes and disaster procedures. Consult your insurance agent and local fire officials in implementing effective practices.

Provide a first-aid kit and maintain a list of individuals in your church who are trained in first aid and CPR. Inform teachers of the location of the first-aid kit, telephone and emergency phone numbers and emergency procedures.

Furnish preschool rooms with the age-appropriate equipment and supplies recommended in LifeWay curriculum materials and in the *Teaching in Church Weekday Education*¹. Outdoor playground equipment should be age-appropriate and firmly mounted. Care should be given to the space between equipment, use of recessed bolts, cushioning material under equipment, and fencing.

Check with your day-care licensing agency (*DHR*) or insurance agent for an evaluation of your playground. In addition, make sure your policies indicate the number of adults needed outdoors to supervise children. Consult the book *Church Weekday Early Education Administrative Guide*² for other safety suggestion.

When appropriate policies are consistently followed for all preschool programs, your church is in the best position to protect preschoolers, safeguard teachers, and reduce the legal liability of your church. Moral, spiritual, and legal responsibilities require that churches continue to meet the needs of preschoolers with loving, informed diligence.

SAMPLE

This article prepared by Kay Henry, preschool consultant, LifeWay Christian Resources (**May be Reproduced**)

¹Geraldine Carey and Kay Henry, *Teaching in Church Weekday Education* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1988), 113-140.

²Bob Couch, *Church Weekday Early Education Administrative Guide* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1990), 41-46.

Preschool Safety Guides

Preschool teachers have many important responsibilities. One of those is to provide an environment in which preschooler, may learn. The preschool room must be both safe and clean, in addition to providing a positive learning environment. This article will focus on the safety aspect.

It is possible that the room in which you teach is used by several organizations. You may wish to involve people from each of those organizations in a "safety check" of the room or of the entire preschool area, including the playground. This important action should be taken on a regular basis. Following are some questions and/or suggestions about making your preschool room or area safer for preschoolers,

- Do you have a system of child identification so a child may be picked up by an approved person? These systems have been simplified and are easy to use.
- Do you keep information cards available for parents or guardians to leave emergency information (including allergies) on each child'?

First Aid and Emergencies

- Is a first-aid kit available to the preschool area?
- Is a telephone in or near the preschool area?
- Are emergency telephone numbers (police, fire, hospital, and poison control) posted nearby? A list of medical personnel within the church who may be called in an emergency is helpful.
- List teachers who have been trained in first aid and CPR.
- Are fire escape routes posted in each room in the Preschool Division?
- Have preschool workers been instructed in the use of fire extinguishers and evacuation procedures for fires, tornadoes, or other disasters?

The Class/Care Room

- Is the room too cluttered? Are there too many tables and chairs?
- Avoid rocking chairs in rooms where younger preschoolers are on the floor.
- Crib slats should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart with mattress fitting snugly.
- Caution workers never to leave a side of the crib down (*with a child*) in the crib.
- Place safety covers on all electrical outlets not in use.
- Toys should be in good repair or removed from the room. Check for sharp edges, missing or loose wheels, cracks in plastic, and splinters in wooden toys.
- Avoid stuffed animals and other stuffed toys, especially animals with beads or button eyes.
- See that all first aid and cleaning supplies, sharp objects, and other teacher tools are out of reach of young children.
- Check all activity area materials in rooms for middle and older preschoolers. Remove cracked plastic pans, plates, and so forth; provide blunt tip scissors; check wooden block and puzzles for splinters.
- Toys for younger preschoolers should be large enough to be safe from swallowing and have no sharp edges or loose parts.
- Avoid bringing coffee and other hot drinks into rooms with preschoolers.
- Heating bottles in a microwave oven is a dangerous practice. The liquid will heat from the inside, and a baby can be badly burned. Consider using a slow cooker that can warm more than one bottle at a time.
- There should be at least two teachers in a room with preschoolers at all times.
- It is advisable to set an age limit on persons allowed to pick up a preschooler (*even if the child is a brother or sister*).

Resources and/or Storage Room

- See that the door is locked except when in use.
- Request that children not be allowed in the resource room.
- Keep out of reach disinfecting solutions, cleaning materials, soaps, and so forth.
- Keep out of reach sharp objects, such as pencils, pens, scissors, knives, and staples.

Rest Rooms

- Check the temperature of the hot water and adjust to avoid burns.
- If a restroom is on the hall, a teacher should accompany preschoolers. More than one child at a time may be taken so the task can be accomplished in a few trips.
- Avoid storing items in bathrooms connected to preschool rooms. Store cleaning and disinfecting materials in another place or on a high shelf.

Playground

- Playground equipment should be six feet away from fences and buildings.
- Gates should have a safety latch.
- Keep fence in good repair.
- Check daily, removing poisonous plants; litter; and insect nests, hives, or beds.
- Check playground equipment for sharp edges; missing or loose parts; lead-based paint, or deteriorated, splintered wood.
- Cover sand bed when not in use.
- Place shock-and water-absorbent material under equipment and extending six feet beyond.
- At least two teachers should be on the playground with a group of children.
- If there are "blind spots" on the playground, ask one teacher to stand where the space can be seen.
- Take the children to and from the playground in an orderly manner.
- A safe method is to have one teacher lead the way and one walk behind the group.

The value of our ministry is enhanced even further when we provide (to the best of our abilities) safe learning environments of our children. Play it safe-regularly check your department or division area to make it a safe and happy place for preschoolers.

Prepared by Zudabeth Uland, Preschool Field Consultant, LifeWay Christian Resources

This article may be reproduced.

Sample Job Questionnaire Form

Sample Baptist Church

Present Job Title _____ Date _____

Name of Supervisor ___ Prepared by _____

1. **Principle Function:** (Summarize briefly the main purpose of your position).

2. **Description of Regular Duties:** (List the major duties in which your work requires you to engage).

3. **Description of Monthly, Quarterly, and/or Annual Duties:** (List the major duties you regularly engage in but not on a weekly basis).

4. **Description of Occasional Duties:** (List the major duties you sometimes engage in but not on a regular basis).

5. **What kind of equipment does this job require you to use?**

Type of Equipment	Frequency of Use
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. What specialized knowledge does this position require (such as typing shorthand, bookkeeping, proofreading, cataloging, filling, posting, etc.)?

7. Does this position require supervision of others?

Yes____ No____

(List names of those supervised.)

8. What important decisions are made in this position without getting permission?

9. What contacts are made with people outside the church by this position?

(Vendors, salesmen, etc.)

10. Give any comment that will aid in describing your work.

Volunteer Leader Screening Form

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position involving the supervision or custody of minors. It will help our church family provide a safe and secure environment for all preschoolers, children, and youth who participate in our ministries and use our facilities.

Personal

Name _____ Date _____
Present Address _____ SS# _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Day Phone (_____) _____ Evening Phone (_____) _____
Occupation _____ Marital Status _____
On what date would you be available to begin? _____
What is your minimum length of commitment? _____
Do you have a current driver's license? Yes No Please list your license number: _____
Have you ever been charged with, indicted for, or pled guilty to an offense involving a minor? Yes No
If yes, please describe all convictions for the past five years: _____
Were you a victim of abuse or molestation while a minor? Yes No *(If you prefer, you may refuse to answer this question. Or you may discuss your answer in confidence with one of the ministers rather than answering it on this form. Answering yes or leaving the question unanswered will not automatically disqualify you.)*

Church Activity

When did you make your profession of faith in Christ? _____
When were you baptized? _____ Are you a member of our church? Yes No
If no, where are you a member? _____
List (name and address) other churches you have attended regularly during the past five years:

List all previous church work involving preschoolers, children, or youth:

Church Name	Address	Type of Work Performed	Dates
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

List all previous nonchurch work involving preschoolers, children, or youth:

Organization	Address	Telephone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Personal References

(not former employers or relatives)

Name	Organization	Address	Telephone
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Applicant's Statement

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize references or churches listed in this application to provide information (including opinions) they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with preschoolers, children, or youth. I release all such references from any liability for furnishing such evaluations, provided they do so in good faith and without malice. I waive any right I may have to inspect references provided on my behalf. Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the bylaws and policies of this church and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church. I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing release and know the content thereof and I sign this release as my own free act. This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Signature _____

(Disclaimer: This form is solely for illustrative purposes. State and local laws may vary. It is recommended that each church solicit the advice of an independent and qualified attorney. LifeWay Christian Resources and the Southern Baptist Convention assumes no liability for reliance on this form.)

Sample Staff Counseling Policies

Dr. Dale Huff, retired State Missionary at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, has reported that sexual misconduct has entered the top ten reasons for forced termination during the past three years. It is vitally important that we protect ourselves and our families from even the hint of or the temptation toward sexual misconduct.

Counseling Policies may be a part of an office and staff procedures manual rather than a part of the overall church policies.

These policies should include such practices as:

- The door to the study should be left open for counseling appointments. A small sign may be placed to indicate to others not to enter.
 - There should be a window on the door or even in the wall of the office
 - Counseling members of the opposite sex should never take place when the office is closed.
 - Set time limits for counseling sessions.
 - Make appointments for visits so that you never visit a woman alone.
-

Sample Employment Application Addendum

Applicant Statement (Please initial each statement.)

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I authorize references or churches listed in this application to provide information (*including opinions*) they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children.

I release all such references from any liability for furnishing such evaluations, provided they do so in good faith and without malice.

I waive any right I may have to inspect references provided on my behalf.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the bylaws and policies of this church and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I further state that I have carefully read the forgoing release and know the content there of and I sign this release as my own free act. This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understand.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Witness' Signature _____ Date _____

Sample Sexual Harassment Policy

Definition (EEOC 29 Code of Federal Regulations 1604.11)

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when...

- (1) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment,
- (2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
- (3) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

b. Purpose

To define the policy of the Baptist State Board of Missions, Alabama Baptist Convention that all employees have the right to a work environment free from all forms of discrimination and conduct which can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment.

c. Policy

The Board's position is that sexual harassment is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. No employee - either male or female - shall be subject to unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome, that is personally offensive, that debilitates morale, and that, therefore, interferes with work effectiveness. Such behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

d. Policy Implementation

It is the responsibility of the senior pastor, ministers, and supervisors to make sure the organizational component for which each is responsible is in full compliance with this policy. Employees who have complaints should report such conduct to their supervisors. If this is not appropriate, employees are urged to report and ask the assistance of the **Senior pastor**. It is the responsibility of the Senior **pastor** to provide guidance, investigate charges of impropriety, and recommend appropriate action. All claims must be thoroughly investigated.

e. Complaints Procedure

(1) Employee

Complaints of sexual harassment should be brought to the attention of the supervisor unless the alleged harasser is the employee's supervisor. In such cases, the employee should feel free to bypass the supervisor and take the complaint directly to the **Senior pastor**.

(2) Supervisor

After notification of any employee's complaint, the supervisor will immediately contact the Senior **pastor**.

(3) Process

(a) After notification of the employee's complaint, a confidential investigation will immediately be initiated to gather all facts about the complaint. The Senior pastor will have the primary responsibility for investigations.

(b) After the investigation has been completed, a determination will be made regarding the resolution of the case by the executive secretary. If warranted, disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken. If no action is warranted, then both parties will be informed that the facts did not substantiate the allegations. In this situation, steps must be taken to facilitate both parties continuing to work with each other.

(c) Non-Retaliation - This policy prohibits retaliation against employees who bring sexual harassment charges or assist in investigating charges. Any such employee will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, nor discriminated against or discharged because of the complaint.

f. Non-Employees

In addition to the above, any complaints of sexual harassment by an employee against vendors or any other non-employees who do business with the CHURCH should be reported and investigated in the same manner as stated in section 5.

Sample Electronic Media Policy

Internet/Web Site//Electronic Media Policy

Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions

Introduction

The Intranet, Internet, Web Site, E-mail, Fax and other electronic media offer unique opportunities. Churches and associations along with the whole world traverse this electronic media with contrasting goals, morals, and intentions. Your use to support missions, ministry and Alabama Baptists through both business and personal use should uphold the values consistent with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

This policy is motivated by a need for the State Board of Missions staff to realize electronic media capabilities as a resource and means for extending ministry beyond the Baptist Building. The Internet and web site (*alsbom.org*) are mission and ministry neighborhoods where you can communicate and promote Christ's message, Alabama Baptists' ministries, and Board Staff services.

Electronic Media Etiquette Policies

With access comes responsibility. It is the user's responsibility to abide by the policies and procedures of this and other networks/systems. The fact that a user **can** perform a particular action does not imply that they **should** take that action. Use these electronic resources in a manner consistent with the ministry purposes for which they are provided.

These guidelines outline your responsibilities:

- 1) Respect the privacy of other users, and do not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data or passwords belonging to other users without permission.
- 2) Use the electronic media consistent with the common ethical practices and accepted community standards of Christ and Alabama Baptists.
- 3) Ensure that care is taken to prevent unauthorized use of, or access to accounts by other parties.
- 4) Respect the legal protection provided by copyright and license to programs, data, and documents.
- 5) Never load unlicensed copyrighted software.
- 6) Never assume your electronic communications are private or that it can only be read by yourself or the recipient. Always exercise caution and care when transferring sensitive material over electronic media.
- 7) Use of systems and/or networks in attempts to gain unauthorized access to the State Board of Missions systems/networks is prohibited.
- 8) Internet access should be kept to a minimum, and lengthy hookups are discouraged.
- 9) Sharing your password is emphatically discouraged. Should you decide to share your password with another person, you will be solely responsible for the actions that the other person appropriates.
- 10) Do not share the mailing list of churches, church staff, or associations without the written permission from the Executive Secretary.
- 11) Personal Internet access is authorized for reasonable usage at times before and after regular office hours, and during the lunch hour, provided the phone lines are not needed for convention business.
- 12) Personal use for commercial (*for-profit*) purposes is prohibited.

E-mail Policies

The e-mail policies are as follows:

- 1) Be responsible for regularly checking messages; some may need to check at least twice a day. E-mail should receive the same attention as a phone call.
- 2) Do not logon to another users' e-mail account.

- 3) Do not send e-mail from any computer other than your own without permission from that computer's user.
- 4) If you suspect that someone has tampered with your e-mail or you receive obscene e-mail, please report this to the Director of Business Management.
- 5) Use of e-mail for personal use is acceptable after hours and during lunch.
- 6) Keep a hard-copy list of e-mail addresses in case your computer experiences a hardware failure.
- 7) Don't ask for a return receipt unless it is necessary.

Web Site Policies

The web site (*alsbom.org*) is for the State Board of Missions only; entities and auxiliaries need to have their own web space. Links to these and other related web sites are permitted.

Violations

Users violating these guidelines are immediately reported to the Director of Business Manager. The Senior pastor reserves the right to limit and prohibit access to any employee suspected of violations. To ensure accountability and audit security, all incoming and outgoing use is recorded in a log file. Illegal acts may subject violators to prosecution by local, state, and federal authorities. Other alleged or authenticated violations will result in disciplinary action. Each guideline violation will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Secretary. Some cases may result in termination of employment by the Executive Secretary.

I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD, AND ACCEPTED THE ABOVE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES. I UNDERSTAND THAT ANY VIOLATION OR UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR IS CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION, INCLUDING TERMINATION.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Sample Pre 2011 Model Bus & Van Policy Guidelines

Some excellent web sites for risk management are www.guideonecenter.com and <http://www.churchmutual.com/> Both of these companies have very good risk management information. Guide One Center has especially good information on 15 passenger vans.

First, this is really not a policy statement, but look into the purchase of a vehicle that meets school bus safety standards. Liability issues and insurance companies will eventually prevent us from using 15 passenger vans. These vehicles that meet safety standards are more expensive up front but are actually less expensive over the life of the vehicle. Many insurance companies will not write any new insurance policies for 15 passenger vans. See www.guideonecenter.com

Work with your insurance company to complete your bus and van policies. Things are changing rapidly, so meet with your agent periodically. Seven years ago, our insurance agent (for my church) had no stipulations about drivers or a list of drivers – as long as they were church members. Now the same company has many stipulations. There are differences in each company's requirements. However, policies should include:

1. **Screening process for drivers.** Check driving records of all drivers.
2. **Qualifications of drivers.** Age. Some insurance companies require age 21, some require age 25. Some have a maximum age for driving church vehicles. Driving record – have minimum standards. Never allow a person to drive a church vehicle who has ever had a DUI.
3. **Driver Training.** Set minimum standards. Some insurance companies are requiring a safety training course. A safety course is good risk management even if not yet required by your insurance company. Some companies are requiring a safety course or a CDL license to drive a 15-passenger van. Have periodic safety update training especially if you have 15 passenger vans.
4. **Pre- and Post-trip vehicle inspections.** Have a simple check list.
5. **Require seat belt usage** by all passengers and communicate safe procedures.
6. **Require safety items** on board the vehicle – first aid kit and fire extinguisher
7. **Require a maintenance schedule** that meets or exceeds the manufacturer's guidelines. Require high quality tires with good tread. Require semi-annual inspections by a qualified mechanic.
8. **Set policy against speeding.** Many insurance companies are requiring that 15 passenger vans be driven at no more than 55 or 60 MPH due to the high risk of roll-over of these vehicles. Set policies about driving 15 passenger vans similar to the recommendations at Guide One Center. (Take out the back seat, no more than 10 people, keep good tires, keep ½ tank of gas or more, not more than 55 or 60, required safety course, no luggage on top, etc.) Set all of these items as policy.
9. **Require multiple drivers** on long trips preferably trading out every 3 hours. Follow DOT guidelines concerning the maximum hours a person may drive in a day.
10. **Non-owned vehicles.** (When people travel in cars to a church sponsored event, for example.) Require the same basic safe, well-maintained vehicle as your church vans or bus. Have a pre-trip check list including tires, lights, turn signals, basic maintenance, brakes, exhaust system (a quick visual inspection may be all that you can do, but look for obvious signs – smoke coming from underneath the car!). Require the same basic driver qualifications such as age. Require a certain level of insurance for the non-owned vehicle. Set a policy concerning who pays the deductible in case of an accident.
11. **Insurance.** Have adequate coverage and have a million dollar or more “**umbrella policy.**” (It would be better to set a high deductible and have the umbrella policy. The high deductible will help pay for the additional coverage and we should not have too many small claims on our record anyway.) Make sure you have **non-owned vehicle insurance** for occasions when private cars are taken. Discuss with your agent about renting a vehicle or hiring a bus and adequate insurance coverage. Make sure

you have **automatic medical payments**. This guarantees that the medical will be paid even before it is sorted out as to who was at fault and whose insurance should pay.

12. **Hiring a bus.** Some churches have certain requirements for hiring a bus rather than using the church-owned vehicle. Some churches require a certain distance before hiring a bus. Some allow this practice more often for senior adults for greater comfort and ease of entry. Set policy about payment of such expenses.
13. **DOT number** and inspection for all vehicles requiring a CDL.
14. **Cleanliness.** As the church desires. Each group after an out-of-town trip is responsible to have the van washed and cleaned inside.
15. **Eating and drinking** on the bus/van. Set policy as the church desires.
16. **Luggage.** Do not allow luggage on top of a 15-passenger van. Do not pull a trailer with a 15-passenger van. Most insurance companies are recommending taking out the back seat, not having more than 10 people on board and no luggage in the back space where the back seat was. Luggage should be loaded so that it cannot become a projectile in case of an accident or panic stop.
17. **Minors.** Set standards for teacher-pupil ratio. Our standards for youth trips were usually 1 to 5 and many camps such as Centrifuge and World Changers required such a ratio. Set standards for children - ratios like Sunday School or better. Do not include the driver in the ratio – let the driver concentrate on the road.
18. **Child Seats.** Alabama law has requirements for having proper restraints for children under 6. However, the NHTSA recommends booster seats for children over 40 lbs., age 4-8 unless they are taller than 4' 9". <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/> This may make trips with groups of younger children almost impossible unless you have a school bus. Note that right now studies are being conducted pertaining to recommendations for school busses (concerning seat belts, booster seats and children). Watch for changes in this area. If there is a time that young children must be transported in a car or van, they must be in a proper seat or booster seat (according to age and weight) according to Alabama Law. Churches should never transport children to and from school in a 15-passenger van (there is a law that prevents a dealer from selling a 15-passenger van for the purpose of transporting school children. The responsibility was originally placed on the dealer, but more and more the courts are placing the responsibility on the church. See www.guideonecenter.com)
19. **Set a policy about other groups** or churches borrowing the van. For example, can an associational event use your church van? Can they with your driver? Discuss this with your insurance company. Your insurance company may discourage this because of the liability risk.
20. **Budget.** In our church, our budget line for transportation covered the vehicle, maintenance, and the gas expense for those we pick up on Sunday morning. Groups using the vans must take the cost of fuel out of their budget. We also had a policy that the van should be left full of fuel for the next group. Other churches charge a mileage rate to the budget of the group using the van.
21. **Transportation team or committee.** Define the responsibilities of the transportation committee. Are they a policy making group, a maintenance group or both?
22. **Scheduling.** Set a procedure as the church desires.
23. **Logbook.** Should have entries for date, destination, mileage, and any items needing repair.

Notes on Newer Vans

Advanced Safety Technology

“Advanced safety technologies provide consumers with vehicle innovations that save lives. These new

technologies are **capable of eliminating 94 percent of fatal crashes involving human error.** ^{“1}

Stability Control

“Electronic stability control (ESC), standard in all vehicles as of 2011, helps drivers maintain control of their vehicle during extreme steering maneuvers by keeping the vehicle headed in the driver’s intended direction, even when the vehicle nears or exceeds the limits of road traction.”²

Forward Collision Warning System

“A forward collision warning (FCW) system is an advanced safety technology that monitors a vehicle’s speed, the speed of the vehicle in front of it, and the distance between the vehicles. If vehicles get too close due to the speed of the rear vehicle, the FCW system will warn that driver of an impending crash. It’s important to note that FCW systems do not take full control of the vehicle or keep the driver from operating it.”³

Lane Departure Warning System

“A lane departure warning (LDW) system is an advanced safety technology that alerts drivers when they unintentionally drift out of their lanes without a turn signal. It’s important to note that LDW systems do not take full control of the vehicle or keep the driver from operating it.”⁴

¹ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/passenger-vans>

² <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/passenger-vans#stability-control>

³ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/passenger-vans#forward-collision>

⁴ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/passenger-vans#lane-departure>

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