



**International Fellowship
of
Bible Churches**
Incorporated

**Handbook
of Faith and Practice**

2018 Edition

Revised by International Assembly
July 11, 2018

SECTION ONE

THE INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF BIBLE CHURCHES, INC.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

PREAMBLE

These Constitution and Bylaws are formed and adopted by the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Incorporated to govern and facilitate its business activities and to meet the requirements of civil law and with respect to the holding of real estate and the maintenance of a tax exempt status. It is not intended that this constitution and bylaws, or any other human law, shall in any way interfere with or modify the doctrines and religious practices of the Fellowship. This corporation is organized for religious, charitable, benevolent and educational objectives and purposes to advance the kingdom of God.

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Chapter One

THE INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF BIBLE CHURCHES, INC.

100. The International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.

The International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. is a voluntary fellowship of ministries who share common goals and purposes within the Church of Christ universal.

105. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall be, insofar as God enables:

- a. To know Christ and to make Him known.
- b. To fulfill the biblical mandates to the Church to worship and glorify God, to evangelize the lost, to edify believers, to seek sanctification and holiness of life for all the saved, and to foster the establishment of the kingdom of God in this present age while waiting for Christ's second coming.
- c. To provide mutual support for cooperative effort and spiritual fellowship between local congregations.
- d. To provide the necessary administrative format for:
 1. Both religious and charitable purposes.
 2. Cooperative effort toward fulfilling the various ministries mandated in Scripture such as: the unification of the body of Christ, church planting, world missions, Christian education, fulfilling social needs of our constituents which relate to kingdom building, meeting the material and emotional needs which may arise on the global scene, and other ministries not named herein.

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Chapter Two

STATEMENT OF FAITH*

205. Revelation of God

We believe God exists and has sufficiently revealed himself. There is a general consciousness of God among all people through creation and conscience. He spoke through the prophets and apostles and finally revealed himself through His Son. The Holy Scriptures are the record of His disclosure, as well as the record of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Ecc 3:11; Psalm 19:1-4; John 1:9; Acts 14:17; Rom 1:23-25; Heb 1:2

210. Authority of Scripture

We believe the Bible was fully inspired by God, given without error, and is our final authority for faith and practice. God superintended the human authors so that what they composed and recorded are an accurate reflection of His revelation of truth. The authority of Scripture is based upon the fact that the Scriptures are the Word of God.

Psalm 12:6; 18:30; 19:7; 119:140; Prov 30:5; Matt 5:18; John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21

215. Sufficiency of Scripture

When the Scriptures are accurately understood, interpreted and applied, with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, as well as careful study and discernment, they are completely sufficient for the believer's direction in Christian living. The Bible is of such complete sufficiency that whatever is not contained in its pages is not to be considered essential to the faith or practice of any believer.

1 Cor 2:10-14; Jude 3; Rev 22:18-19

220. The Trinity

We believe the Bible teaches that there is one God, who exists as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God has always existed and is the creator of all things. He is self-existent, infinite, eternal, and unchanging. He is sovereign, everywhere present, all knowing, almighty, and absolutely perfect. He is the source of all truth, love, goodness, grace, and holiness.

Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:5-7; Deut 6:4; Isa 6:3; Matt 2:16-17; 28:19; John 14:16-17; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 12:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 3:18; 5:4-7

*For more thorough doctrinal explanations, see the official publication, *Fellowship Foundations*. William Sillings with Vic Reasoner. (Bethany, OK: IFBC Publishers), 2003.

225. Deity and Humanity of Christ

We believe the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ, who was eternally one with the Father, entered this world in a human body. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He was fully God and fully man. He lived a sinless life, died on the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven where he sits at the right hand of the Father. Thus, His kingdom has been established.

Matt 1:23; 3:3; 4:2; Luke 2:52; John 1:1; 4:6 8:58; 19:28; Acts 10:36; Rom 9:5; 10:13; 1 Tim 2:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8; 2:14-18; 4:15-16; 1 John 5:20; Rev 1:8

230. The Holy Spirit

We believe the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. We emphasize that the Holy Spirit is a person, not merely a power. He convicts the world of sin. He brings spiritual life and assurance to believers. He produces the fruit of salvation in our lives and gives spiritual gifts to build up the Church. However, since the Spirit divides the gifts according to His will, no single gift can be required for all believers. The true evidence of the Holy Spirit in one's life is holy living.

Ezek 36:26-27; John 3:5-8;16:8-11; Acts 5:3-4; Rom 8:9; 8:16; 12:4-11; Gal 4:6; 5:19-23; Titus 3:5

235. Original Sin

We believe the Bible teaches that we are created in God's image, but we have fallen into a state of sin through Adam's original sin. We are corrupt and cannot save ourselves. Jesus Christ is our only salvation. This salvation comes by God's grace through our faith in the atoning work of Christ as our only sacrifice for sin.

Psalm 51:5; Jer 17:9; Matt 7:11; Rom 3:10-18; 5:12-19; Eph 2:3; 4:22; James 4:1-2; 2 Peter 1:4

240. Atonement

We believe the Bible teaches that the atonement of Christ demonstrates the love of God and turns away the wrath of God against our sin. Thus, the atoning work of Christ satisfies the justice of God's law, reconciles us with God, provides for full restoration from the Fall, and gives us victory over Satan. This atonement is universal in provision, but is effectual only for those who believe.

Isa 53:5; Matt 20:28; John 1:29; 3:16; Rom 5:6-8, 17-21; 1 Cor 7:23; 2 Cor 5:14-21; 1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:11; Heb 2:9; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 2:2

245. Grace

We believe the Bible teaches that God makes the first move in bringing this salvation to us. The Gospel call is the drawing of the Spirit. His preliminary grace awakens the sinner and enables us to repent and believe. Yet this grace is not irresistible. We must repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This saving faith is the gift of God given to those who genuinely repent.

John 1:9-13; 6:44; 12:32; 16:8-11; Acts 8:16; 9:4-18; 10:35; 11:18; 13:43; 18:10; 19:3-4; 22:16;18:24-6; Acts 16:14-16; Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 6:1-2; Eph 2:8; 2 Tim 2:25; Titus 2:11

250. Salvation and Security

We believe the Bible teaches we must be born again. The new birth brings forgiveness and regeneration to a new life with freedom from the practice of willful sin. It also brings adoption as a child of God and the life of holiness is begun. As we walk in the Spirit, we have security in Christ. This security of the believer is conditioned upon a maintained obedient faith.

John 3:3-5; 5:25; Rom 5:1; 8:1; 8:15-17; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 4:7; Eph 2:1; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23;

2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:9; 5:1; Ezek 18:24-26; 33:12-18; John 8:31; 15:6; 1 Cor 15:2; 1 Tim 4:1, 15-16; 2 Tim 2:12; Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-29; James 5:19-20; 2 Peter 1:10-11; 2:20-22; Rev 2:11; 3:5.

255. The Church

We believe the Bible teaches that at the new birth all believers are adopted into the family of God, which is the body of Christ or the Church. The Church is not a particular denomination, but the entire body of believers in Jesus Christ. It exists wherever faithful believers congregate, the Word of God is proclaimed, and the sacraments are administered. The Church exists to glorify God through worship, evangelism, discipleship, service, fellowship, social responsibility, and through expanding the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world. The Bible teaches that we should observe the sacraments of baptism and communion, as outward and visible signs of God's inward grace.

Matt 5:13-16; 6:10; 28:19; John 4:23; 17:21; Acts 2:42, 47; Rom 14:19; 1 Cor 3:10-11; 11:2, 24-26; Eph 3:4-6; 4:4, 16; Heb 10:24-25

260. Sanctification

We believe the Bible teaches that obedient believers will become increasingly convicted of the nature of sin still remaining in them. As they walk in the Spirit, they will be led to a full cleansing from the inner nature of sin and filled with a holy love toward God and our neighbor through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. We believe the Bible promises this perfecting grace, which is also called entire sanctification or Christian perfection. Entire sanctification is commanded, prayed for, and exemplified in the New Testament. Sanctification is provided for by the atoning work of Jesus Christ through the presence of the Holy Spirit. This sanctification, resulting in Christian perfection, implies neither the end of growth or progress, nor absolute perfection. It is a relative perfection in which God imparts holiness and imputes perfection to those who are governed by and who continue to develop in His holy love. Whether in a single crisis moment, or through gentler steps over a longer period of time, all believers are exhorted to press forward and not stop short of the fulness of this blessing.

Deut 30:6; Psalm 130:8; Ezekiel 36:25; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 John 3:8; Eph. 5:25-27; Rom 8:3-4
Matt 5:48; 22:37; 1 Peter 1:16; Phil 3:15; 1 John 4:17; Matt 6:13; John 17:20-23; 2 Cor 13:9, 11; Eph 3:14-21; Phil 1:4-6, 9-11; Col 4:12; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20-1; 1 Peter 5:10-11

265. Last Things

We believe that the kingdom of Christ was established at the time of Christ's first advent and that he will cause His kingdom to so come to earth that His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. While no man knows the day or the hour of His return, we believe that Christ will return a second time to catch away the Church, to raise all who are dead, and to judge the whole world. He will be revealed in His glory, bring the work of salvation to completion, overthrow the world system, and establish a new heaven and earth. There is an eternal heaven to gain and an eternal hell to avoid.

Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27; 17:20-21; John 16:16; Matt 6:10; Psalm 22:27-31; 72; 86:9; 110:1; Isa 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 11:6-9; 25:7-8; 66:23; Jer 31:34; Ezek 47:1-12; Micah 4:1-5; Hab 2:14; Matt 24:36; 1 Thess 4:16-18; Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29; 1 Cor 15:42-44; Rev 20:12-13; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor 4:5; Rev 22:12; Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Thess 2:8; Heb 9:28; John 14:2-3; 1 John 3:2; Rev 7:14-17; 22:3;
Matt 8:12; 25:30-46; Mark 9:42-48; Luke 16:19-31; 2 Thess 1:7-10; Rev 14:10; 20:10

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SECTION TWO

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

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Chapter Three

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

300. Structure for the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.

Decisions regarding priorities and activities on an international scope for the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. are determined through wide participation by many representative leaders. The highest level of policy and decision making in the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. is the local member ministry which is represented at every International Assembly.

305. Local Autonomy

- a. We believe the local congregation to be the visible manifestation of the Church of Christ universal. Furthermore, we believe in the autonomy of each local congregation. We also believe in the interdependent cooperative effort of local congregations with other members of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. and the Church of Christ universal. (Matt. 16:17-19. 1 Cor. 12:13. Col. 1:18. Rev. 1-3.)
- b. The International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. is committed to the concept of the local autonomy of its congregations and therefore anticipates wide diversity of practice concerning church structure and governance on the local level. It is suggested that each congregation review its church structure, giving consideration to such Scriptural, theological, philosophical and historical data as may be made available to the congregation.
- c. If any legislation is found to violate, intrude upon, or in any wise contradict the autonomy of a local church, the bylaws of the local church shall always prevail.

305.1 Local Property

Right to purchase, hold title to, use, and dispose of property for its own use may be vested in the local congregation or the local corporate body.

310. Induction of Churches into Membership of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. and Participation in the International Assembly

- a. Membership for churches in the International Assembly is predicated upon their membership within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. Member churches have full benefit of the rights, privileges and responsibility of participation in the International Assembly. Formal induction of churches into the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. occurs during the International Assembly in recognition of induction during the interim between Assemblies.
- b. Application and approval for membership in the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. is effected through the Commission for Credentials and Membership.
- c. Admission of churches into the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall be based upon formal affirmation of belief and intent.

315. International Assembly--Function

The International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall hold a biennial International Assembly. The business of the Assembly shall be:

- a. To elect, by majority ballot, an elder to serve as General Superintendent of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.
- b. To elect, by majority ballot, an International Coordinating Council composed of twenty members.
- c. To make any necessary changes in the Handbook of Faith and Practice by the procedures outlined in the paragraphs below.
- d. To be the final voice of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. and all boards, commissions, and officers of the Fellowship.
- e. To elect by majority vote a 16 member nominating committee composed of 2 elders and 2 laymen from each quadrant, where possible.

315.1 International Assembly--Time and Place of Meeting

- a. The International Assembly shall convene biennially. The specific days and the location of the Assembly shall be determined by the International Coordinating Council.
- b. The International Coordinating Council shall be empowered to call for a special International Assembly in case of emergency.

315.2 International Assembly--Membership

Membership in the International Assembly shall be according to the stipulations set forth in 315.2a and 315.2b, except that it is provided herein that the General Superintendent and all ICC members shall be voting members of the Assembly by virtue of their offices.

- a. All elders and licensed ministers who are credentialed by the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall be entitled to be delegates to the International Assembly.
- b. All member churches of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall be entitled to three delegates to the Assembly for each twenty-five members or majority portion thereof. All delegates to the International Assembly will be 18 years old or older. No church shall be required to have fewer than three delegates.

315.3 Quorum

Fifty-one percentile of the elected and ex-officio members present for the International Assembly shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of official business. Once a quorum has been established, a lesser number may approve the minutes and adjourn.

315.4 Parliamentary Rule

The standard reference work which shall govern the parliamentary processes of deliberative bodies of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall be the latest revision of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

315.5 Nominating Committees

- a. The International Assembly shall elect a nominating committee composed of two elders and two lay persons from each quadrant of the United States where possible.
 1. Vacancies on the nominating committee shall be filled by the ICC according to the stipulations set forth in 320.2.
 2. This committee shall provide nominees for all elective offices specified herein, except that a nominee for General Superintendent shall come from the ICC itself. The committee shall elect a chairperson and a secretary at the time of its first meeting.
- b. Any deliberative bodies of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. may use a nominating committee, except that 315.5a shall prevail at International Assembly. Such committees shall be appointed by the board responsible at the respective level and shall be composed of six or more members of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. in good standing in addition to the official(s) responsible at the respective levels. It is recommended that where possible one-half of the committee be composed of non-board members. However, any elected board may function as a nominating committee by its own vote unless otherwise provided herein.

315.6 Constitutional Amendments

The provisions of this constitution may be amended or repealed by the following method:

- a. By a two-thirds vote of the International Assembly on resolutions presented by either the International Coordinating Council, or by any three member churches in good standing with the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.
- b. All resolutions must be in the hands of the Fellowship Secretary no later than sixty (60) days prior to the International Assembly in which they are to be considered so that they can be printed and placed in the hands of the registering delegates on the first day of the Assembly.
- c. Before being submitted to the International Assembly for a vote, such resolutions shall be committed for study, formulation and recommendation as to disposition.

315.7 Effective Date of Legislation

Legislation enacted in an International Assembly shall be in force thirty days following the date of its publication unless otherwise stipulated.

315.8 Interpretation of the Handbook of Faith and Practice

The International Assembly shall be the final interpreter of the Handbook of Faith and Practice. However, the International Coordinating Council may offer an official interpretation which shall stand until an International Assembly either ratifies or rejects it.

315.9 General Statistical and Fiscal Year

The General Statistical and Fiscal Year for the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall run from January 1 to December 31.

315.10 Fellowship Property

Right to purchase, hold title to, use, and dispose of property for its own use shall be vested in the International Coordinating Council or the general corporate body.

320. The International Coordinating Council

- a. The International Coordinating Council (known hereafter as the ICC) shall be composed of ten elders and ten lay representatives as prescribed in 320.1.
- b. Interim Actions - The ICC shall be empowered to act on all matters of business and administration between International Assemblies. This empowerment shall include, but not be limited to, the authority to create and empower service commissions to act in its own behalf during the interim between ICC meetings.
- c. The ICC shall be empowered to provide ecclesiastical endorsements for Fellowship elders seeking endorsements as Chaplains. Such endorsements shall be consistent with the IFBC Chaplaincy Handbook. The ICC shall also have authority to deny, review or withdraw ecclesiastical endorsement.

320.1 Election of ICC Members

- a. The International Assembly shall elect, by majority ballot, a General Superintendent and a twenty member International Coordinating Council.
- b. Election of ICC Members
 1. Ten members of the International Coordinating Council shall be elected at each International Assembly.
 2. ICC members shall be elected to serve for a four-year term. They may be elected to serve as members of the ICC for additional four-year terms by majority vote of the International Assembly.
 3. One elder and one lay person shall be elected to serve on the ICC from each of the four quadrants of the United States. Six additional elders and six additional lay persons shall be elected at large.
- c. Election of General Superintendent
 1. The General Superintendent shall be elected to serve a four year term by majority vote of the International Assembly.
 2. The ICC shall submit a nomination for the election of the General Superintendent to the International Assembly.
- d. Election of Employees
 1. Employees of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc., shall be eligible to serve in any elected official or representative capacity while thus employed, provided that the number of employees elected does not exceed 25% of the total number of members of the boards or commissions to which they are elected.
 2. Any office or elected representative position which becomes vacant due to such employment shall be filled according to the stipulations set forth in 320.2.

320.2 Filling Interim Vacancies

- a. In the event that any International level position is vacated between International Assemblies, such vacancy shall be filled by a two-thirds majority vote of the International Coordinating Council, subject to ratification by majority vote of the next International Assembly.
- b. In the event any member of the International Coordinating Council who was elected to represent a quadrant moves from the quadrant he/she was elected to represent between Assemblies, his/her office shall be declared vacant. It shall be filled according to the above method regarding the filling of vacancies.
- c. However, it is herein provided that should a vacancy occur in the final year of an officer's term, the International Coordinating Council may, by two-thirds vote, permit the vacancy to remain until the next International Assembly.

320.3 The ICC

- a. Duties
 1. The ICC shall submit a nomination for General Superintendent to the International Assembly in which such election is called for.
 2. The ICC shall meet at the time of the International Assembly and one other time annually and/or upon call of the General Superintendent.
 3. The ICC shall elect both a Fellowship Secretary and Treasurer.
 4. The ICC shall set the time and place of the International Assembly and shall have the power to call a special session of the International Assembly if deemed necessary.
 5. Minutes of ICC meetings shall be made available upon request to members of the International Assembly, except in cases where personnel or other similarly sensitive issues are under consideration.
 6. The ICC shall establish a Chaplain Initiative Council (CIC) for the purpose of promoting and managing the chaplain initiative of the IFBC under guidelines established by the ICC in the Chaplaincy Guide.
- b. Executive Committee.
 1. An Executive Committee comprised of no fewer than three members from the ICC shall be nominated by the General Superintendent and ratified by the ICC.
 2. The Executive Committee shall be empowered to act in all matters for the International Coordinating Council in the interim between ICC meetings.
 3. The General Superintendent or his personally appointed representative shall serve as chairperson of this committee.
 4. A quorum will be a majority of the members of the committee.
 5. The Executive Committee shall conduct a special review meeting with the General Superintendent prior to each International Assembly, or more often if deemed necessary by a majority of the Executive Committee. The purpose of this meeting shall be to discuss the Superintendent's intentions, plans, health issues, and any other items which may affect the ICC's decision concerning the Superintendent's continued service in that office.

320.4 ICC Officers

- a. General Superintendent. The General Superintendent shall have oversight of all functions of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc., and shall work in connection with the ICC and the Executive Committee. The duties of General Superintendent shall be to:
 1. Provide leadership and oversight for the activities of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc., the International Assembly and the ICC, including the implementation of programs.
 2. Serve as chairperson of the ICC.
 3. Serve as chairperson of the International Assembly.
 4. Serve as chairperson of the Executive Committee.
 5. Sign credentials of ordained ministers, licensed ministers, and evangelists as directed by the International Assembly.
 6. Sign letters of ecclesiastical endorsement and endorsement certificates for chaplains as directed by the ICC.
 7. Be directly amenable to the General Assembly.
 8. Give reports, advice and suggestions with regards to the administration of his/her position.
 9. Provide for the maintenance of any necessary office personnel and supplies as approved by the ICC.
 10. Submit statistical reports regarding the effectiveness of his/her administration to the ICC at least once per year or as otherwise directed herein or by the ICC.

- b. Fellowship Secretary. It shall be the duty of the Fellowship Secretary to:
 1. Sit in the meetings of the International Assembly and correctly record and preserve the Journal of its proceedings.
 2. Correctly record and preserve general statistics of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc..
 3. Sit on the meetings of the ICC and correctly record and preserve the minutes of said meetings.
 4. File and preserve all surrendered credentials of ministers and deliver them only on proper order from the Commission for Credentials and Membership.
 5. Maintain a list of the names and addresses of all Fellowship ministers and ministries and make this list available to Fellowship members upon request.
 6. Convene and chair the review meeting called for in paragraph 320.3.b.5 before each IA or more often as determined by a majority of the Executive Committee.

- c. Fellowship Treasurer. The duties of the Fellowship Treasurer shall be to:
 1. Have custody of funds of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. and to receive and disburse funds as ordered by the International Assembly and/or the International Coordinating Council.
 2. Furnish financial reports to the ICC and the International Assembly.
 3. Present a financial report to each International Assembly.

320.5. Chaplain Initiative Council

- a. The ICC shall establish a Chaplaincy commission in the form of a standing subcommittee called the Chaplain Initiatives Council (CIC), to assist with the provision of ecclesiastical endorsements for Fellowship Elders seeking endorsements as chaplains. The CIC shall be composed of up to twelve elders, all endorsed chaplains to the extent possible. One-third of the members of the CIC present for any meeting shall constitute a quorum.

- b. It shall be the duty of the Subcommittee for Chaplaincy to:
 1. Submit a "yes/no" ballot to the ICC for the election of the CIC.
 2. Recommend policy and guidelines for the ministry of chaplains on behalf of and within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. Such approved policies, altogether, shall constitute the IFBC Chaplaincy Guide.
 3. Examine for ecclesiastical endorsement candidates requesting such endorsement.
 4. Provide for and sustain a relationship with the national endorsing agencies which recognizes organizations as legitimate endorsing entities able to submit qualified candidates for service within service agencies and the armed forces.
 5. Promote Chaplaincy Services, in general, and chaplains, in particular, within the sphere of influence of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.
 6. Recommend a chaplain to serve as Director of Chaplain Initiatives, whose responsibilities are outlined in the IFBC Chaplaincy Handbook

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Chapter Four

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

400. Financial Support for the Fellowship as Church In Mission

The International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. is a church in global mission; therefore:

- a. All individuals and organizations officially affiliated with the International Fellowship of Bible Churches shall be expected to provide regular financial support to the IFBC.
- b. All funds given to the IFBC will be used to support global mission endeavors.
- c. All monies donated from any source for church in mission shall be allocated by the ICC to cover all program costs, including administration and emergency funding.
- d. Recommended levels of support.
 1. The recommended rate of contribution from member organizations and churches shall be set at 10% of tithes and general offerings, excluding offerings designated for missions and/or local building funds.
 2. The recommended rate of contribution for ministers credentialed by IFBC shall be 5% of personal income.
 3. Exception: Where any church which is pastored by an IFBC credentialed minister is actively engaged in supporting IFBC endeavors at a significant level, the recommendation for the expectation of that pastor's 5% contribution shall be suspended.

405. World Missions Support

- a. Ministries may support any world missions and church planting endeavors either inside or outside the United States.
- b. The ICC shall be authorized to determine and allocate funds sufficient for a missions reserve pool which shall be placed into interest bearing accounts. These funds, in their initial amounts (excluding interest), shall be used in case of major missions emergencies, international crises and/or the repatriation of missionary personnel.
- c. A missionary repatriation fund shall be maintained and the interest therefrom shall be allocated to the use of missions administration and/or field operation.

410. Protection of Internal Revenue Service Exemption Under Section 501(c)(3) Ruling for Non-profit Organizations

- a. No member, trustee, officer or employee of, or member of a commission of, or person connected with International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc., shall receive at any time any of the net earnings or pecuniary profits from the operations of said organization. Nor shall any such person be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the organization's assets upon the dissolution of said organization. However, it is herein provided that no person shall be prevented from receiving payment of such reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for said organization, as shall be determined by the appropriate board.
- b. Furthermore, eligible voting members of International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall be deemed to have expressly consented and agreed that upon such dissolution or disposal of the property and assets of said organization, either voluntary or involuntary, the assets of International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc., after debts have been satisfied, then remaining in the hands of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) shall be distributed, transferred, conveyed, delivered, and paid over, in such amounts as the ICC may determine or as may be determined by a Court of

competent jurisdiction upon the application of the ICC, to exclusively charitable, religious, scientific, literary or educational organizations which would then qualify under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its regulations.

415. Exempted Activities

Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, no member, director, officer, employee, or representative of International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc., shall take any action or carry on any activity by or on behalf of said organization, not permitted to be taken or carried on by an organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and its regulations, or by an organization contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of such code and regulations.

Chapter Five

GUIDE TO PRACTICE

500. Theological Basis for the Guide to Faith and Practice

We adopt the Bible, carefully and prayerfully interpreted and applied under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and in light of the faith and practice of the Church of Christ universal--ancient and contemporary--to be our rule of faith and practice, written. Furthermore, we embrace the Spirit-led conscience of both the contemporaneous church and the individual Christian to be the rule of faith and practice, written upon the hearts of believers. We hold the collective and individual consciences of believers to be second in authority only to those things surely believed by us all to be the obligatory revelation of Scripture.

We believe righteousness comes by faith alone (Rom. 4:5), and hence it cannot be legislated. Therefore, it is part of the philosophical and theological underpinning of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. that the multiplication of rules and/or a rule book approach to Christianity be avoided. Furthermore, we adopt a position of tolerance toward diversities in practice which are brought about by the individual operations of the Spirit-led conscience in aspects of life which are not clearly revealed in Scripture by either word or principle.

However, granting that Scripture is unavoidably silent concerning many issues peculiar to each generation since the closing of the canon, and granting that not all things permissible are either constructive or beneficial to the life of Scriptural holiness, it is a duty inherently enjoined upon each congregation and upon each individual Christian to exercise the greatest of caution and careful spiritual discernment when determining what is the mind of the Spirit concerning such issues.

We believe the following principles to be applicable to Christian living.

505. Principle of Preservation

"When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." (John 16:13). "Tarry ...until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Hold on to the pattern of right teaching you learned from me. And remember to live in the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. With the help of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard what has been entrusted to you." (2 Tim. 1:13-14 NLT).

510. Principle of Revival

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31).

515. Principle of Love

" 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (Matt. 22:37-39). "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

520. Principle of Evangelism

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19). "So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Rom. 1:15 - 16).

525. Principle of Stewardship

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10). "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Cor. 9:6-8). "The laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7).

530. Principle of Modesty, Simplicity, and Economy

"In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works." (1 Timothy 2:9, 10). "Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel – rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God." (1 Peter 3:3, 4). "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15 - 17. See context, verses 3 - 29).

535. Principle of Temple Ownership

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). "And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. . . . Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (Romans 6:13, 16).

540. Principle of Obedience and Abhorrence

"If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jer. 31:33. 2 Cor. 3:3). "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among

them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

545. Principle of Authority and Order

"But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God? Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering." (1 Cor. 11:3, 14, 15). "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself." Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." (Eph. 3:22 - 28, 6:1, 2).

550. Principle of Obedience

"Everything is permissible for me"— but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"— but I will not be mastered by anything" (1 Cor 6:12 NIV). "Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things" (Phil. 4:8). "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

555. Principle of the Sanctity of Marriage

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19:5, 6 KJV). (See also Matt. 5:31, 32, 19:1-9. Mark 10:11, 12). "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10 NASB). For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Eph 5:5 NASB). "But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted. (1 Tim 1:8-11 NASB). For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper (Rom 1:26-28 NASB)

560. Principle of Transmittance

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Deut. 6:6-9). "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

565. Principle of Restoration

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Gal. 6:1-3).

570. Principle of the Sanctity of Life

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen 1:27). "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man" (Gen 9:6). "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb" (Ps 139:13). "Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them" (Mk 10:13-16). See also Jer 1:4-5, Jn 1:44.

Chapter Six

THE MINISTRY

600. Call of the Minister

While the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. recognizes that the responsibility for ministering the Gospel to other human beings lies with every Christian, it also recognizes and holds that Christ, the head of the Church, divinely calls some people to devote themselves vocationally to the work of the ordained ministry. As the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. recognizes this divine call, it endorses the same by taking every suitable step to open the way for candidates to enter the office of the ministry.

605. Qualifications of the Minister

The minister in the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. must be assured of at least the following criteria:

- a. The minister must believe that his/her sins are forgiven and that he/she has peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, he/she must believe that he/she has received the fullness of the Spirit and that the Spirit of God currently abides in His sanctifying fullness. And thirdly, he/she must believe he/she has been called of God to the ministry.
- b. The minister must give careful attention to the virtues of Christian character, knowing that the example set forth by the ministry will greatly influence his public service and, to a large degree determine the level of spirituality evident within the church.
- c. We believe the Bible teaches that marriage is only between one naturally born man and one naturally born woman. We believe the Bible also teaches that sexual relations are biblical only if occurring within a marriage between one naturally born woman and one naturally born man. Therefore, IFBC ministers shall not be permitted to approve, teach, support, counsel toward, or perform marriage ceremonies, or endorse in any fashion or through any method, any relationship or behavior that is contrary to this biblical teaching.
- d. The Gold Seal Credential shall serve as the permanent recognition of elders orders within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc., subject to the following requirements:
 1. Submission of an annual written report of ministry activities
 2. Maintenance of godly character and bearing
 3. Orthodox Wesleyan doctrine and lifestyle
 4. General usefulness in the Kingdom of God
 5. And consistent participation in Christian ministry, including active participation and good standing in a local church.

610. Ordination within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.

- a. Provision of Ordination. The International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall provide for the ordination of ministers and shall maintain a roll of ordained elders.
 1. The office of Elder is the highest office in the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.
 2. Ordination to the office of elder within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. is considered a recognition to be bestowed, not a right to be earned.
 - a). Ordination to the office of elder serves as a recognition of a minister's evident qualification for ministry both as a person of integrity and godliness, and also as a

person with gifts suitable to qualify him/her for the ministry.

- b). Ordination shall be granted upon the candidate's overall qualification for ministry.
- b. General Rules for Ordination. Generally speaking, the following rules shall apply to candidates seeking ordination within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.
- 1. Before being recommended for ordination, the candidate must be found to be a properly qualified candidate for ordination by means of a thorough examination by a Credentials Examination Commission established according to the stipulations set forth in paragraph 630 below.
 - 2. The candidate shall have held a Minister's License (or its equivalent) for at least two years, and shall have been a primary minister within a congregation or its missionary works for at least two years.
 - 3. The candidate shall be adjudged to be academically qualified for ordination through completion of either a Bible College Minister's Degree Curriculum, a Minister's Course of Study from a recognized training agency, or the equivalent thereof.
 - 4. The candidate shall have a favorable report concerning his/her own personal Christian experience, good character, honest business and financial dealings, theological and intellectual concepts and usefulness and other items listed in a standardized list of questions for the examination of ordination candidates. Other items of examination may be added at the discretion of the Commission conducting the interview.
 - 5. However, if upon examination of the candidate, the commission conducting the interview determines that the candidate's (1) experience, (2) educational background, (3) recommendation and (4) other ministerial qualifications have prepared him/her sufficiently for ordination, (even though he or she may not have fulfilled all the academic and in-service requirements above) the commission may, upon unanimous vote, present the candidate to the Fellowship of Elders for ordination.
- c. The Gold Seal Credential.
- 1. The Gold Seal Credential may be granted by a majority vote of all members of the Fellowship of Elders present and voting at an International Assembly.
 - 2. The Gold Seal Credential shall serve as the permanent recognition of elders orders within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc., subject only to the maintenance of godly character and bearing, orthodox Wesleyan doctrine and lifestyle, and general usefulness within the Kingdom of God.
 - 3. Each candidate formally recognized by the Fellowship of Elders shall be welcomed into the Fellowship of Elders by the officer in charge. Upon formal recognition, the candidate shall be presented with a Gold Seal Credential signed by the General Superintendent in charge and a witnessing officer, and sealed with the seal of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.
 - 4. Should an ordained minister voluntarily surrender his/her credential for any reason, such surrendered credentials may, at any subsequent time, be restored to the elder upon the decision of the ICC Commission for Credentials and Membership or its appointed representatives.

610.1 Fellowship of Elders

- a. The Fellowship of Elders shall be comprised of all elders in good standing within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.
- b. The Fellowship of Elders shall be vested with the final authority in approving ministerial candidates for the Minister's License, and the Gold Seal Credential.

610.2 Recognition of Elders

a. Transfer of Credentials

1. Any ordained minister whose credentials are presented by a credible credentialing board, and who desires to obtain credentials within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. may, upon presenting his/her former credentials, have his/her credentials transferred to the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. in the following manner:
2. The candidate for transfer must have been carefully and satisfactorily examined by a Credentials Examination Commission, formulated according to the stipulations set forth in paragraph 630.
3. The candidate for transfer shall have a favorable report concerning his/her own personal Christian experience, character, business and financial dealings, theological and intellectual concepts and usefulness and other items listed in a standardized list of questions for the examination of ordination candidates. Other items of examination may be added at the discretion of the Commission conducting the interview.
4. The candidate for transfer must also have given evidence of sufficient knowledge of the Handbook of Faith and Practice, and give evidence of being in harmony with the same in both doctrine and practice by successfully completing the Fellowship Foundations course.
5. The candidate for transfer must present formal letter of proof of good standing from the previous organization
6. The candidate shall fulfill all the applicable obligations with regard to ordination within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc., as they are set forth in paragraphs 610 and 610.1.
7. Each minister so recognized shall be furnished a parchment signed by the General Superintendent in charge and a witnessing officer.

b. The Silver Seal Credential

1. An elder so recognized may be presented a silver seal credential in the interim between International Assemblies, with final approval for the gold seal subject only to the vote of the Fellowship of Elders at the next International Assembly.

611. The Minister's License

a. The International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall provide for the licensing of ministers preparing for ordination, and shall maintain a roll of licensed ministers. b. The Minister's License may be granted in the following manner.

1. Before being presented the Minister's License, the candidate must be thoroughly examined by a Credentials Examination Commission, established according to the stipulations set forth in paragraph 630, as a properly qualified candidate for the Minister's License.
2. The candidate shall have a favorable report concerning his/her own personal Christian experience, good character, honest business and financial dealings, theological and intellectual concepts, usefulness in ministry and other items listed in a standardized list of questions for the examination of ministers. Other items of examination may be added at the discretion of the Commission conducting the interview.
3. Having been found a properly qualified candidate for the Minister's License, the candidate may be granted the license by the Commission which conducted the interview.
4. Each minister so licensed shall be presented a parchment signed by two elders from the Credentials Examination Committee or the General Superintendent and a witnessing officer. The Minister's License Parchment shall bear no seal.

b. The final authority in matters pertaining to the granting and renewal of the Minister's License shall be the members of the Fellowship of Elders present and voting at any International Assembly. (See paragraph 610.1 above).

- c. The Minister's License shall be a temporary license which may be renewed at each International Assembly in the following manner:
 - 1. The licensed minister shall submit a written report of ministry activities to the appropriate commission each year as requested.
 - 2. The licensed minister shall maintain a favorable report concerning his/her own personal Christian experience, good character, honest business and financial dealings, theological and intellectual concepts, usefulness in ministry and other items deemed appropriate by the Fellowship of Elders.
 - 3. Each Minister's License renewal must be approved by a majority of the Fellowship of Elders present and voting at the Assembly.

615. Reports

- a. All ministers licensed or credentialed by the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. shall submit an annual written report to the ICC Credentials Commission as well as the assigned annual administrative fee, which shall be determined by the ICC.
- b. The credentials of any credentialed minister who has failed to report or pay the annual administrative fee for one year shall be temporarily suspended; thus forfeiting the authority valid credentials provides for their ministry. Any minister who fails to submit the annual ministerial report for a period of two years in succession shall be dropped from the roll of credentialed ministers by a two thirds vote of the ICC Credentials Examination Commission. In each case he or she shall be informed of such action by registered, signature required letter.
- c. In such cases, however, a minister's credentials may be reinstated after the first year upon filing their annual report and paying their annual administrative fee and at the approval of the General Superintendent until the final approval of the ICC. After being dropped because of not reporting or paying the annual fees for two years the minister will be renewed by entering the application process as though he or she were a new applicant.

620. Evangelist's Commission

- a. Anyone who devotes his/her time to evangelistic efforts may, by two-thirds vote of the Fellowship of Elders, be commissioned to do the work of an evangelist. Such commission shall continue to the close of the next International Assembly.
- b. Anyone so commissioned shall be furnished an Evangelist's Commission signed by the General Superintendent and a witnessing officer.
- c. Evangelists' Commissions may be renewed at the time of each International Assembly. Renewal of the Evangelist's Commission is subject to the evangelist's written report to the ICC Credentials Examination Commission.

625. Song Evangelist's Commission

- a. Persons who feel the call to the special ministry of song evangelism may be commissioned as song evangelists by the Fellowship of Elders for two-year periods provided that they give evidence of grace, gifts and ability for such work, and they have been carefully examined by a Credentials Examination Commission established according to the stipulations set forth in paragraph 630, concerning their own personal Christian experience, good character, honest business and financial dealings, musical aptitude and usefulness. Other items of examination may be added at the discretion of the examining Commission.
- b. Anyone so commissioned shall be furnished a Song Evangelist's Commission signed by the General Superintendent and a witnessing officer.

- c. Song Evangelists' Commissions may be renewed at each International Assembly, subject to the evangelist's written reporting to the ICC Credentials Examination Commission.

630. Credentials Examination Commissions, Formation of

- a. The Elders of the ICC shall be vested with authority to act as a Credentials Examination Commission and/or to appoint other Credentials Examination Commissions to serve in the interests of ministerial candidates between ICC meetings and International Assemblies.
- b. Credentials Examination Commissions shall be vested with the authority to examine ministerial candidates for both the Minister's License and ordination. They shall also be empowered to grant the Minister's License and to grant the Silver Seal Credential to transferring elders between International Assemblies.
- c. Credentials Examination Commissions shall be amenable, first to the ICC and secondly to the Fellowship of Elders at an International Assembly.
- d. Where possible, each Credentials Examination Commission shall be comprised of no fewer than three elders in good standing within the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.

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Chapter Seven

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

700. Church Discipline

Recognizing that Scripture mandates the disciplining of wayward members of the body of Christ, it shall be the duty of each local congregation to provide for the discipline of any wayward members or ministers within the congregation. It is fundamental to the convictions of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. that (1) the purpose of any discipline administered by the church should be redemptive in every case and that (2) wherever discipline is administered, the church shall apply biblical principles in the matter of church discipline, always seeking to be charitable and to secure the final redemption of the wayward by every possible means. (See Gal.6:1-5).

705. Appellate Court

Recognizing that within the processes of church discipline apparently irreconcilable disagreements arise, and recognizing that Scripture forbids taking one's brother to a court of law made up of unbelievers, the ICC shall appoint and provide for the operation of an appellate court whose duty it shall be to settle disputed matters of discipline of members, ministers, churches and/or member ministries according to the principles outlined in 700.

710. Restrictions and Responsibilities

- a. It shall be the duty of the appellate court to act as a review court to determine whether proper judgment has been made regarding church discipline of members or pastors, and regarding the suspension and termination of membership of churches within the International Assembly and/or the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.
- b. The ICC appellate court shall not conduct court sessions in lieu of or prior to judgment by the local congregation, except in cases where local congregations have no incorporated boards or when judgments are being made against general level executives in the ICC or when the membership of a church within the International Assembly and/or the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc. is in question.
- c. The ICC appellate court shall make final judgment in all cases appealed to it.
- d. Activities in the appellate court shall conform to the following:
 1. All court actions shall be conducted in an orderly manner and in Christian temper, according to the Scriptures.
 2. All court decisions shall be based upon Scriptural principle, and shall be subservient to it.
 3. In all appeals, both the plaintiff and the defendant shall have full right to counsel, provided, however, that such counsel be selected from within the membership or ministry of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.
 4. Any involvement of counsel beyond such provision shall serve to disqualify an appeal as a church-honored action, and the appellate court shall discontinue proceedings and the case be governed by the stipulations set forth in 715, 720, 725, 730, and 735.

715. Termination of Ministerial Relationship by Suspension

- a. In the event a minister shall give significant evidence of departure from the Statement of Faith of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc., formal complaint may be brought before the Commission for Credentials and Membership of the ICC (see Guarantee of Rights). After

investigation and upon a two-thirds majority vote, said commission shall reduce complaint to written charges. Such written charges shall be delivered to the accused without undue delay, and the accused shall have thirty days from date of delivery in which to submit to said commission a written answer. Should no response be forthcoming, following the thirtieth day and after further consideration the Commission for Credentials and Membership may, if it deems advisable, vote by a two-thirds majority to place the member in a state of suspension for a period of not less than six months nor more than a year. However, if such action is not taken, no permanent record of the case shall be kept. During the period of suspension, the Commission for Credentials and Membership, or its properly appointed representatives shall faithfully, prayerfully, and tenderly deal with said minister in effort to effect reconciliation and redemption of the minister's relationship to the ministry.

- b. Any suspended minister shall be ineligible to vote, hold office or minister during the period of suspension.
- c. The Commission for Credentials and Membership, on its own initiative, may reverse its decision for suspension at any time during the period of suspension and the minister be restored to full ministerial relationship immediately.
- d. If at the end of the stipulated suspension period the suspended minister has not shown sufficient evidence of repentance and correction, resulting in the reversal of the decision of the Commission for Credentials and Membership for suspension, his/her ministerial relationship shall terminate and name be removed from the roll of elders. However, in such cases, the local church shall determine the church membership status of the minister.
- e. While in suspension a minister may appeal to the ICC appellate court. If the ruling of the Commission for Credentials and Membership is over-ruled, the member shall be restored to ministerial relationship according to the decisions, provisions and/or restitutions prescribed by the appellate court.

720. Guarantee of Rights, Disciplinary Action, and Reinstatement Limitations and Privileges

- a. No minister shall be required to enter the state of suspension more than once on the same charge. Succeeding suspension or trial actions must be predicated upon new action by the defendant even though the charge may be identical to one over-ruled in a previous suspension or trial proceeding.
- b. No person shall be denied the right to face those who shall finalize the judicial action against him/her.
- c. No defendant or plaintiff shall be denied the right to meet and cross-examine all witnesses called upon during a trial proceeding.
- d. Evidence secured from witnesses in a suspension or trial proceeding shall not be considered or received unless such testimony be given under solemn affirmation.
- e. In the event the ministerial relationship is terminated under stipulations set forth in 715, or said minister surrenders his credentials rather than face charges or follow trial or suspension proceeding to conclusion, said termination shall be permanent after one year. However, it is herein provided that such termination may be subject to review at a later date.

725. Special Investigative Procedure Regarding Single Signature Charges

If the local board or ICC shall receive a statement of charges signed only by the person involved as alleged victim or participant, said board or commission shall have the power to appoint an investigating committee and assign the case to its proper jurisdiction according to the provisions of this chapter.

730. Termination of Ministerial Relationship by Default

In the event an ordained elder or licensed minister forfeits his/her local church membership by default, his/her credentials shall automatically terminate.

735. Termination of Membership Within the International Assembly

- a. In the event that a member church of the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Incorporated shall give sufficient evidence of departure from the faith and practice of the Fellowship, formal complaint may be brought before the ICC by written document, signed by the plaintiffs describing the alleged departure. After formal complaint has been received, the ICC or its duly appointed representative shall make investigation of the complaint. After investigation and upon two-thirds vote, said committee shall reduce complaint to written charges. Such written charges shall be delivered to the accused without undue delay, and the accused church shall have thirty days from the date of delivery in which to submit a written response to the ICC. Should no response be forthcoming, following the thirtieth day and after further consideration said commission may, if it deems advisable, vote by two-thirds majority to place the church in a state of suspension for a period not shorter than six months, but not to exceed eighteen months. However, if such action is not taken, no permanent record of the case shall be kept.
- b. Any suspended member church shall be ineligible to vote or to retain officers in any international level office during the period of suspension.
- c. The Commission for Credentials and Membership, upon its own initiative, may reverse its decisions at any time during the suspension period and the church restored to full membership privileges immediately.
- d. If by the appropriate International Assembly the suspended church has not shown sufficient evidence of correction of faith and practice, the Commission for Credentials and Membership may present the case to the International Coordinating Council for review, after which, the International Coordinating Council may, if it deems advisable, recommend the termination of membership for the suspended church from the International Assembly and/or the International Fellowship of Bible Churches, Inc.
- e. While in suspension a member church may appeal to the ICC appellate court. If the ruling of the Commission for Credentials and Membership is over-ruled, the church shall be restored to full membership according to the conditions and/or restitutions prescribed by the appellate court upon the member church or the Commission for Credentials and Membership. Actions against the Commission for Credentials and Membership shall be subject to ratification by the next International Assembly.

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Chapter Eight

BOUNDARIES

800. Quadrants

- a. Quadrants shall be defined as those four sections of the United States and Canada imposed as the result of the following lines and instruction.
- b. A line extending in an east-westerly direction along the southern borders of Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia and Maryland shall divide the continental United States into northern and southern portions.
- c. A line extending in a north-southerly direction along the eastern border of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas shall divide the continental United States into eastern and western portions.
- d. The imposition of the lines named above shall form the quadrants. They shall be named the Northwest Quadrant, the Southwest Quadrant, the Northeast Quadrant, and the Southeast Quadrant, according to their relations to the lines and the compass.
- e. The State of Hawaii shall partake of the Southwest Quadrant.
- f. The Dominion of Canada west of the eastern border of the province of Manitoba and the state of Alaska shall partake of the Northwest Quadrant.
- g. The Dominion of Canada east of the eastern border of the Province of Manitoba shall partake of the Northeast Quadrant.

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