

THE DISCIPLINE
OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

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The Evangelical Church

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THE DISCIPLINE

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CHAPTER 1: DECLARATION OF FAITH

Article I - The Triune God

¶101. The Holy Scriptures declare there is but one true and living God (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 6:4; John 8:58), an eternal being without a body, indivisible, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness. He is the Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible (1 Timothy 1:17). He rules with gracious regard for the well-being and salvation of all men, to the glory of His name. In this Godhead there is a Trinity (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14) of one substance and power, and coeternal, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Article II - Jesus Christ, The Son of God

¶102. The Holy Scriptures declare that Jesus Christ is truly God (Acts 17:2-3; Colossians 2:9) and truly man (Hebrews 2:17; Acts 2:22; 4:9-10), in Whom the divine and human natures are perfectly and inseparably united. He is the eternal Word made flesh (John 1:14), the only begotten Son of the Father Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). As ministering Servant, He lived, suffered and died on the cross. He was buried, rose from the dead (Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8) and ascended bodily into heaven to be with the Father, from whence He shall return (Acts 1:9-11; Acts 2:22-24). He is eternal Savior and Mediator (Hebrews 4:14-16; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Timothy 2:5-6), Who intercedes for us, and by Him all men will be judged (2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15).

Article III - The Holy Spirit

¶103. The Holy Scriptures declare that the Holy Spirit proceeds from (John 14:16-17; 15:26-27) and is one Being with the Father and the Son (Acts 5:3, 4). He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:8-11). He leads men, through faithful response to the Gospel, into the fellowship of the Church. He comforts, sustains, empowers and sanctifies the faithful, and guides them into all truth (John 16:7, 12-15; John 14:26).

Article IV - The Holy Scriptures

¶104. The Holy Scriptures in their entirety are the inspired, inerrant, written Word of God (2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21). They alone contain the will of God as far as it is necessary for us to know it for our salvation, so that whatsoever is not contained therein, nor can be proved thereby, is not to be enjoined on any as an article of faith, or as a doctrine essential to salvation (Galatians 1:8-9; Revelation 22:18-19). By the Holy Scriptures we understand those sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testament.

In both the Old as well as the New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, Who being both God and man, is the only Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) between God and man. Even though Christians are not bound by the ceremonies and rites of the Old Testament (Galatians 3:11, 23-25; Galatians 4:9-10; Colossians 2:16-17) they are nevertheless not exempt from the keeping of the moral laws) Matthew 22:37-40; James 2:8; 1 Timothy 1:5).

Article V - Depravity and Preventive Grace

¶105. The Holy Scriptures declare that through the transgression of Adam man is fallen from original righteousness (Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 3:10-18, 22-23) and apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is not only entirely destitute of holiness, but is inclined to evil, and that continually (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Psalm 58:3), and except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3-7). Man in his own strength, without divine grace, cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God.

The Holy Scriptures further declare that man is a free moral agent and that he is responsible for his eternal destiny, and that, influenced and empowered by the Holy Spirit and due to the preventive grace of God (Romans 2:4) is enabled to exercise his will for good and to the glory of God (Acts 17:24-28; Romans 5:15-21; Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 2:11-14; Ephesians 2:8-10).

Article VI - Provision for Salvation

¶106. The Holy Scriptures declare that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. The offering of Christ freely made on the cross through the shedding of His blood is the perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world, both original and actual, so that no other satisfaction is required (John 19:30; Hebrews 7:25- 27; 9:25-28; 10:12).

Article VII - Justification, Regeneration, Adoption

¶107. The Holy Scriptures declare that we are never accounted righteous before God through our works or merit (Isaiah 64:6; Galatians 2:15-16), but that those who fully repent of their sins are justified or accounted righteous before God only by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1-2; Romans 4:3-5; Galatians 5:5-6). Regeneration (Titus 3:4-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 1:12) is the renewal of man in righteousness through Jesus Christ after the image of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature and experience newness of life. This is initial sanctification. By this new birth the believer becomes a child of God, receives the spirit of adoption (1 John 3:1; 2 Corinthians 6:18), and is made an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Holy Spirit bears witness to this gracious work (Romans 8:13-16; Galatians 4:4-7) and immediately assures the regenerate believer that he has passed from death unto life, that his sins are all forgiven and that he is a child of God.

Article VIII - Sanctification

¶108. The Holy Scriptures declare that sanctification begins in the new birth and is the work of God's grace through the Word and the Holy Spirit, by which those who have been born again and delivered from the willful practice of sin are enabled to live in accordance with God's will (Acts 15:8-9; Romans 8:1-4; 6:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24), and to seek earnestly for holiness without which no one will see God (Hebrews 12:14).

There is a clear distinction that must be made between consecration and entire sanctification. Consecration is that more-or-less gradual process of devoting oneself wholly to God, consummating in the crucifixion of the old self or death to the Adamic nature, by the help of the Holy Spirit which comes to a completion at a point in time.

Total consecration of necessity precedes and prepares the way for that definite act of faith which brings God's instantaneous sanctifying work to the soul.

Entire sanctification is that second definite, instantaneous work of God, wrought in the heart of the believer, subsequent to regeneration, by which God cleanses the heart from all inherited sin and fills the soul and spirit with the person of the Holy Spirit, thus enabling us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37; Galatians

5:22- 23; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 1:9). This gracious work is conditioned upon total consecration of the whole self to God, total death to all inherited sin, and faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary (Romans 6:1, 2, 11-14; 12:1-2).

Entire sanctification does not deliver us from the infirmities, ignorance and mistakes common to man, nor from the possibility of further sin. A person is freed so that he may experience a continued growth in divine knowledge, spiritual strength and good works to the glory of God (Hebrews 12:10-15; Philippians 2:1-5). The Christian must continue to guard against the temptation to spiritual pride and seek to gain victory over this and every temptation to sin (Colossians 1:9-14). There also follows a life of Christian perfection which consists in a purity such as that of Jesus (1 John 3:3), resulting in the same mind which was also in Him, and enabling us to walk even as He walked (Philippians 2:2).

Article IX - Security of the Believer

¶109. The Holy Scriptures declare that the believer is secure in Christ as long as he walks in obedience and faith (Philippians 1:4-6; 2:12). The Scriptures also declare that it is possible after the experience of regeneration and/or the experience of entire sanctification to depart from grace and fall into sin, and if one remains in this state to be eternally lost (Hebrews 6:1-6; 10:26-31; Matthew 18:15-35; Galatians 5:4). However, by the grace of God, a man may through repentance and faith rise again from a backslidden state and be restored to righteousness and true holiness (Galatians 6:1).

Article X - Good Works

¶110. The Holy Scriptures declare that good works are the necessary fruits of faith and follow regeneration (Ephesians 2:10), but they do not have the virtue to remove our sins or to avert divine judgment (Galatians 2:15-16). We believe good works, pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, spring from a true and living faith for through and by them faith is made evident even as a tree is discerned by its fruit (James 2:17-18; 3:10-13; Philippians 1:9-11; John 15:1-8).

Article XI - The Church

¶111. The Holy Scriptures declare that the Church is the community of (born again) believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the fellowship of the redeemed in which the Word of God is preached

by men divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit the Church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers and the redemption of the world. (Acts 2:47; 2:41-47; 1 John 1:7; Colossians 1:18, 21)

Article XII - The Sacraments

¶112. The Holy Scriptures declare that the sacraments, ordained by Christ, are not only pledges and symbols of the Christian's profession, but they are also signs of God's love and grace toward us, by which He works invisibly in us, quickening, strengthening and confirming our faith in Him. Two sacraments are ordained by Christ our Lord, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

1. Baptism

Baptism (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-41; 8:36-39; 16:30-33) signifies entrance into the household of faith, and is a symbol of repentance and inner cleansing from sin, a representation of the new birth in Christ Jesus and a mark of Christian discipleship, and is to be administered to those who receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Children are under the atonement of Christ, and as heirs of the Kingdom of God, are acceptable subjects for Christian baptism. The promise of God is "unto you and unto your children" (Acts 2:39). Children of believing parents through baptism become a special responsibility of the Church. They must, however, be nurtured and led to a personal acceptance of Christ, and by profession of faith confirm their baptism.

Every adult person being baptized and the parents of every child to be baptized should have the privilege of choosing the mode of baptism, namely sprinkling, pouring or immersion.

2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19-22; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29) is a representation of our redemption, a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ, and a token of love and union which Christians have with Christ and with one another. Those who rightly, worthily and in faith eat the broken bread and drink the blessed cup partake

of the body and blood of Christ in a spiritual manner until He comes.

Article XIII - Healing

¶113. The Holy Scriptures declare that God is able to heal and that we ought to pray for the sick. Although healing cannot be demanded of God, it may be sought in accordance with the instructions in James. God heals in three ways: (1) through the natural processes of the human body which may be aided by medical help, (2) through the instantaneous intervention of God bringing healing to the body, and (3) through the death and resurrection of the body to a glorified state (James 5:13-16).

Article XIV - The Lord's Day

¶114. The Holy Scriptures declare that the Lord's Day is divinely ordained for private and public worship, for rest from unnecessary work, and should be devoted to spiritual improvement, Christian fellowship and service. It is commemorative of our Lord's resurrection and is an emblem of our eternal rest. It is essential to the permanence and growth of the Christian Church, and important to the welfare of the civil community (Matthew 28:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Hebrews 10:24-25; Revelation 1:10).

Article XV - Public Worship

¶115. The Holy Scriptures declare that divine worship is the duty and privilege of man, who in the presence of God, bows in adoration, humility and dedication (Psalm 95:1-7a, 6; Ephesians 5:19-20). It is essential to the life of the Church, and the assembling of the people of God for such worship is necessary to Christian fellowship and spiritual growth (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25).

The Scriptures further reveal that the order of public worship need not be the same in all places but may be modified by the Church according to circumstances and the needs of men. It should be in a language and form understood by the people, consistent with the Holy Scriptures to the edification of all, and in accordance with the order and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

Whosoever willingly and purposely breaks the ordinances, ceremonies and rites of the Church to which he belongs ought to be rebuked openly, as one that offends against the order of the Church

and wounds the consciences of the weaker brethren, in order that others may be deterred from similar neglect (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-7).

Article XVI - The Second Coming of Christ

¶116. The Holy Scriptures declare the coming of Christ to be a bodily return to the earth and that He will cause the fulfillment of all prophecies made concerning His final and complete triumph over all evil. Faith in the imminence of Christ's return is a rational and inspiring hope to the people of God (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-15).

Article XVII - Resurrection, Judgment and Future State

¶117. The Holy Scriptures declare that there is a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous (Ecclesiastes 12:14; John 5:22-24; Acts 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:8-10). All men stand under the righteous judgment of God, both now and in that day. The Scriptures further teach an eternal state of rewards in which the righteous dwell in endless life in heaven (Isaiah 35:8-10; 2 Corinthians 5:8-10; Revelation 21:22-27) and the wicked in endless punishment in hell (Matthew 25:41-46; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8).

Article XVIII - Christian Property

¶118. The Holy Scriptures declare that God is the owner of all things and that the individual holding property is lawful and is a sacred trust under God. Private property is to be used for the manifestation of Christian love and liberality, and to support the Church's mission in the world. All forms of property, whether private, corporate or public, are to be held in solemn trust and used responsibly for human good under the sovereignty of God (Ephesians 4:28; Acts 4:34-37).

Article XIX - Civil Government

¶119. The Holy Scriptures declare the importance of recognizing the sovereign governments under whose protection we reside. The sovereignty of these governments should be respected (Matthew 22:16-21; Romans 13:1-6). Generally speaking, war and bloodshed are not in keeping with the Gospel and Spirit of Christ, nevertheless, at times in order to preserve orderly governments in the world, war is the unpleasant alternative. As Christian citizens it is our duty to

give moral strength and purpose to our respective nations through sober, righteous and godly living (Titus 2:11-14). (See ¶213)

CHAPTER 2: SPIRITUAL AND MORAL VALUES

A value is a passionate core belief that drives the thinking and life of those that hold to it. In The Evangelical Church living like Christ, pursuing holiness of heart and life, is our supreme value. It is from this desire to be like Jesus, to pursue holiness, that we derive our Spiritual and Moral Values. It is our desire to live our lives according to the values and life of Jesus Christ as taught in His Word. Knowing that we cannot list every potential situation of how one is to live out that life in Christ, it is the responsibility of every generation to understand what it means to live a holy life in their culture and context. Through prayer, the study of God's Word, and the Holy Spirit's help we can discern how the Lord would have us live.

The following Spiritual and Moral Values reflect this one desire to be like Christ. What follows is what The Evangelical Church today believes are essential values to live and reflect the holiness of Jesus Christ in our world.

A. Spiritual Values

1. We value FAITH

¶201. The Word of God declares that “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6). Through faith a believer becomes aware of God and of the reality of His presence. Through faith he becomes confident of God's mercy, a partaker of saving grace, and conscious of His favor and fellowship. Faith is a means to development. Progress in the Christian life is made through the diligent exercise of faith and the performance of those duties which belong to the life of the believer.

2. We value PRAYER

¶202. Christ prayed often and said that “men should always pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1, NKJV). We value the life of prayer because Jesus taught His disciples to pray (Luke 11:2-4; Matthew 6:9-13), and gave them that brief but comprehensive pattern of prayer which embodies all the elements of true petition.

Prayer is not simply a Christian duty, but also the privilege of every sincere and trusting heart and an absolute necessity for sustaining the life of the soul.

3. We value the WORD OF GOD

¶203. We believe that the Bible is crucial in establishing, developing, and sustaining spiritual life. Christ and the apostles and the saints of the ages by precept and example have testified to this great truth. The Bereans were of “more noble character...for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day” (Acts 17:11). “I have hidden your word in my heart,” said the Psalmist, “that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11). The Bible should be studied daily, prayerfully, diligently, and systematically so that the believer may “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18), that he may become effective in Christian service, and “that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17).

4. We value WITNESSING

¶204. We value the sharing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ because by its very nature it is intended for all people and designed for all nations. We value people who are not believers in Christ, so we endeavor to love them as Jesus does (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9). As believers we are called to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). Therefore, we strive to be obedient to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). Furthermore, we will graciously pray for, care for, and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with anyone and everyone who does not yet believe in Christ. We will also use whatever means are pleasing to the Lord to enhance the advancement of the Gospel. Therefore, we encourage Christians to refrain from any questionable activity or practice that would injure their witness in any way.

5. We value WORSHIP

¶205. God is worthy of our worship; therefore, we value authentic individual and corporate worship of God. It is the privilege for all followers of Christ to participate in and to promote the worship of God corporately (Hebrews 10:24) and as a lifestyle (Romans 12:1).

6. We value FELLOWSHIP

¶206. We value sharing our life in Christ with other followers of Jesus Christ. The walk with Jesus in this life on earth is to be lived in community with one another. Through that sharing of the common life in Christ we gain and give strength, wisdom, Biblical perspective, comfort, encouragement, discipline, prayer support, accountability, love, and many other positive helps towards a growing walk in Christ (Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:42-47).

7. We value OBEDIENCE

¶207. We value obedience to Christ and His Word (John 14:21; Matthew 28:19-20). We are commanded to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40). We are enabled to obey through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Out of obedience, we are willing to pursue active restoration, through loving church discipline of those who are disobedient and caught up in sin (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:2).

8. We value the SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

¶208. The Holy Scriptures declare that a Spirit-filled believer lives by love out of a pure heart (1 Timothy 1:5). Therefore, we will be marked not only by our testimony, but also by a growing life of personal and corporate holiness as we live under the constant influence of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:15-18; Leviticus 11:45; 1 Peter 1:15-16).

9. We value SERVING OTHERS

¶209. Like our Lord Jesus, we live not to “be” served, but “to” serve any and all people (Mark 10:42-45; Galatians 6:10). The “way” we serve will be determined by God’s Word (Matthew 25:31-46; John 13:14-15) and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives.

10. We value the BODY OF CHRIST

¶210. Each believer becomes part of Christ’s body and receives gifts and graces for the building up of His Church to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:3-13; Ephesians 4:11-16);

1 Peter 4:10-11). We understand that Jesus placed great importance on unity within the body. We believe it is our responsibility to demonstrate this unity to the world through our actions as members of the body of Christ (John 17:17-23). We will therefore always “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). We will cooperate with other ministries in the body of Christ to see all people come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

11. We value STEWARDSHIP

¶211. We believe that everything is owned by God (Psalm 24:1). Therefore, everything that we have has been entrusted to us by Him. He is our Master and we are His stewards (Matthew 25:14-30). We value giving to God as an act of worship, obedience, and investing in His Kingdom with our time, talent, and treasure. We believe Jesus taught clearly that tithing is our minimum financial responsibility to the Kingdom work of God (Matthew 23:23). We further believe that gambling for financial gain stands opposed to our faith in and dependence upon God to meet our needs. Therefore, our time, our talents, our treasures, the earth we inhabit, and everything else should be invested for Him in a way that brings Him honor (Genesis 1:27-29; Colossians 3:17).

12. We value the LORD’S DAY

¶212. The Lord’s Day has been ordained by God for rest from unnecessary labor and for the worship of God, spiritual growth, and ministry (Deuteronomy 5:12-14; Hebrews 10:25). We therefore believe that at least one day a week should be set aside for these practices. The Lord also made clear that if “emergencies” arise on that day, we are free to take care of those (Matthew 12:11-12; Mark 2:27-28).

B. Moral Values

1. We value the SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

¶213. We believe God is the Creator of human life; therefore, the human life is of inestimable worth and significance in all its dimensions, including the unborn, the aged, the widowed, the mentally impaired, the unattractive, the physically challenged, and every other condition in which humanness is expressed from

conception to the grave. We believe that all human life should be both preserved and protected. Consequently, we are opposed to such things as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and any other act terminating life for the sake of convenience. (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 139:13-16).

2. We value HUMANITY

¶214. We understand that God has created all people in His image; therefore, the church respects human personality, which is inherent in every race, nation, and creed. We believe the Bible teaches there is no basis whatsoever for the belief in the superiority or inferiority of any people (Acts 17:26; Galatians 3:26-28). The church, following the example of Jesus Christ, upholds the rights and privileges of every individual as clearly defined in the Bible. The church calls on its members to commit their attitudes, their actions, and their influences in faithful witness to this fact. The church must continually examine her teaching and practices so to be certain that no violations of human rights are being committed within her fellowship or towards the world. The church must motivate, inspire, and encourage the establishing of fair practices, legislation, and law enforcement which are in harmony with the Gospel as revealed in Jesus Christ. Consequently we are opposed to such things as prejudice or segregation based upon differences of race or national origin, as well as slavery, prostitution and the trafficking of human lives which demean the value of the human life, body and soul.

3. We value MARRIAGE

¶215. We believe that the institution of marriage was intended by God to be a permanent, life-long, growing relationship between a man and a woman regardless of trials, sickness, financial difficulties or emotional stresses that may ensue.

Therefore, as pastors and churches we will:

- a. Cherish only worthy and ennobling thoughts on the subject of courtship and marriage.
- b. Practice deliberation and wisdom in every step leading up to a marriage.
- c. Counsel earnestly with each couple in preparation for marriage in the Christian home.

Since marriage is a divine covenant and the union of one man and one woman entered into mutually, it is sacred and morally binding so long as both shall live and ought not to be dissolved at will. When human failure results in placing the marriage in jeopardy, the church strongly urges the persons involved to seek counsel with their minister in order to effect reconciliation so that the marriage may be preserved. Whenever divorced persons seek marriage through the Church, ministers may solemnize such marriages only after having ascertained the circumstances through counsel with the persons involved, presenting the claims of the Gospel and the Biblical teaching on the Christian home. Ministers may, if it seems desirable, consult with fellow ministers and/or local church officials.

Consequently, we stand opposed to such things that would devalue the sanctity of marriage including homosexual unions or marriages, polygamy and divorce, except on the grounds of adultery or abandonment (Mark 10:4-12; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16). We stand opposed to the practice of abuse of any form in a marriage.

4. We value the FAMILY

¶216. God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of a person related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union of Christ and His Church, and to provide a framework for intimate companionship, a channel for sexual expression, and the means for procreation of the human race. Husband and wife are of equal worth before God because both are created in His image (Genesis 1:27) and God has no partiality among persons (Ephesians 6:9).

The general attitude of relationships within the family is one of submission (Ephesians 5:21). Wives are to submit themselves to their husband as to the Lord, and husbands are to give themselves to their wives in the same way that Christ gave Himself up in love for the church (Ephesians 5:22-25). This spirit of mutual submission should permeate the home so that none of its members insist on his or her rights but rather subject themselves to one another in love.

The husband has a God-given responsibility to provide for, protect, and lead His family.

The wife has a God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the home and nurturing the children.

If a marriage is lived according to these truths, the love between husband and wife will show itself in listening to each other's viewpoints, valuing each other's gifts, wisdom, and desires, honoring one another in public and in private, and always seeking to bring benefit, not harm, to one another.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. They are to teach their children spiritual and moral values, lead them, through consistent Christ-like example with loving discipline, to faith in Jesus and to make choices based on Biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-4).

5. We value BIBLICAL HUMAN SEXUALITY

¶217. The Scriptures clearly teach that the human race possesses a God-created sexuality characterized by heterosexual expression in a monogamous Biblical marriage (Genesis 2:21-25). Any deviation from this is sin and goes outside of God's best and blessed expression and experience of human sexuality (Romans 1:20-27). However, the grace of God has made provision for the forgiveness of sin, perfect healing and deliverance, and restoration of a life of personal dignity and human sexuality as set forth in the Holy Scriptures (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

6. We value CITIZENSHIP

¶218. We understand the God-given authority of the government under which we live. We take seriously our privileges and responsibilities under such a God-ordained human government. Therefore we obediently do the following:

- a. Pray for those in governmental leadership (1 Timothy 2: 1-2).
- b. Obey the laws of the land unless they conflict with God's higher laws (Acts 4:18-19).
- c. Encourage all people to use any privilege the government allows them that will make a difference in society. This includes consistent, informed voting.

- d. Encourage people who are called by God to serve in government.

7. We value the HUMAN BODY

¶219. The Scriptures clearly teach that through God's forgiving grace the believer's body has become the temple and dwelling place of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Therefore, we believe in the proper care of the human body so that we might in good health and strength serve our God to the fullest potential. Therefore, we would urge the people of God to maintain healthy habits as well as abstain from all practices and substances that would take this "strength to serve" from the body, such as gluttony or the abuse of medically prescribed drugs.

Due to the negative influence on the human body and the devastating effects in personal lives, personal relationships and society at large, we urge followers of Christ to abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages and non-medically prescribed drugs.

8. We value the HUMAN MIND

¶220. The Scriptures teach us that our minds are to think on the positive and godly things of life (Philippians 4:8), that we are to let the mind of Christ be in us (Philippians 2:5), and that we are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

Therefore, we encourage daily reading of God's Word, engaging our minds with materials that would match the mind of Christ, and staying away from materials that would in any way undermine this transforming process (Romans 12:2).

CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL STATEMENT

A. Background

¶301. The origin of The Evangelical Church can be traced back to the Wesleyan movement in England under John Wesley, the founder of The Methodist Church. It is distinctly a North American Church, having had its beginnings in the great spiritual awakening which visited the early colonists in the New World after the middle of the eighteenth century. Like the early Methodists they preached the pure Word of God, and declared that men can be saved from sin, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and that this experience must be followed by a life of dedication and holiness.

1. The United Brethren in Christ Church

¶302. In the eighteenth century it pleased God to raise up men like William Otterbein and Martin Boehm who preached the Gospel of the crucified Christ in its purity. Armed with the spirit and grace of God these men worked among the Germans in America and called sinners unto repentance. Their labors were blessed of God and they organized many places of worship and led many precious souls to Christ. The Lord called others who were willing to devote themselves to His service. The work grew rapidly and in 1789 the first Conference was held in York County, Pennsylvania.

At the Conference held in Frederick County, Maryland, on September 25, 1800, they officially united themselves into a Society which bore the name, The United Brethren in Christ, and elected William Otterbein and Martin Boehm as Superintendents or Bishops.

The need for a Book of Discipline was deeply felt and in 1815, at the General Conference held in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, a Book of Discipline containing the doctrine and rules of the Church was presented. These brethren believed that God is a God of order, and that where there is no order and no church discipline, the spirit of love and charity will be lost.

2. The Evangelical Association and The Evangelical Church

¶303. Upon the instruction and advice of that godly Minister of the Gospel, Jacob Albright, a number of persons in the state of Pennsylvania, who had become deeply convinced of their sinful state through his ministrations, and who earnestly groaned to be delivered from sin, united in the year 1800, and agreed to pray with and for each other, that they might be saved from sin and flee from the wrath to come.

In order to accomplish this work properly they agreed mutually to spend each Sunday in prayer and in the exercise of godliness; also to meet each Wednesday evening for prayer; diligently endeavoring to avoid everything evil and sinful, and to do all manner of good as God should give them strength and ability. The number of those disposed to attend these meetings soon increased and grew daily.

The first steps of organization were taken in 1800 when Jacob Albright organized three classes, appointing a class leader for each class. The first Council was held on November 3, 1803. The first Conference was held in 1807 in Kleinfeltersville, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. In 1809 a Book of Discipline was adopted and printed. In 1816, at the first General Conference, the name, The Evangelical Association was adopted. In this new church "conversion" was the central theme, a word which signified a gracious, regenerating experience with God, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. During the nineteenth century the operations of this church enlarged in evangelism, education and publications. In the latter part of the century, differences arose in The Evangelical Association which culminated in a division in 1891. A considerable number of ministers and laymen withdrew and took the name The United Evangelical Church, which held its first Conference in 1894. Both churches endeavored to carry on the work of the Lord, and grew in numbers and missionary enterprise. By 1910 the growing conviction that the two churches should be re-united found articulate expression, and in 1922 The Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church were united under the name The Evangelical Church.

3. The Evangelical United Brethren Church

¶304. Negotiations, beginning in 1933, were consummated in 1946, at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, when The United Brethren in Christ and The Evangelical Church united and became The Evangelical United Brethren Church. This church sought to serve its Lord in the proclamation that salvation is available to any upon the free, personal acceptance of God's offer, through Jesus Christ. Conversion, while personal, is not a private matter and finds its consummation in holy living and in serving as an instrument of God for the redemption of the whole world.

4. The United Methodist Church

¶305. Over the years there were many contacts between The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church and its antecedents, revealing their common heritage. These contacts led to the merger of these two denominations in 1968, forming The United Methodist Church. However, due to a growing difference in theological emphasis and social philosophy, there were those from the former Evangelical United Brethren Church for whom it was deemed best to decline from entering into the newly formed United Methodist Church. The differences between Canadian and United States law, plus the fact that since 1925 The Methodist Church had not existed in Canada led to the formation of two separate churches: The Evangelical Church in Canada and The Evangelical Church of North America.

5. The Evangelical Church in Canada

¶306. The Evangelical Church in Canada dates its origin to a visit by John Dreisback to Ontario in 1816. The first missions were established in 1839. In 1863 the Canada Conference was organized which centered in the province of Ontario.

In 1899 the Canada Conference sent its first missionary to Western Canada. From this small beginning the Northwest Canada Conference emerged as a missionary Conference in 1927. In 1928 the Dominion government granted a separate charter to this organization.

In 1946 the Conference came to be a part of the newly formed Evangelical United Brethren Church. At the time of the merger of The Evangelical United Brethren Church with The Methodist Church a request was made for the status of autonomy. This request was favorably received and the status of autonomy was officially consummated in June, 1970.

In 1982 the Northwest Canada Conference of The Evangelical Church and The Evangelical Church of North America merged into one denomination. At the time of this merger the concept of an “all-Canada” church was retained. In 1992 Hillcrest Christian College of the Northwest Canada Conference of The Evangelical Church and Mountainview Bible College of The Missionary Church of Canada merged to become Rocky Mountain College. This was a prelude to the merger of the Northwest Canada Conference of The Evangelical Church and The Missionary Church of Canada. In June, 1993 this merger was effected, forming The Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada.

6. The Evangelical Church of North America

¶307. The Evangelical Church of North America was born June 4, 1968, in Portland, Oregon, when forty-six congregations and about eighty ministers met in an organizing session. Within two weeks a group of about twenty churches and thirty ministers from Montana and North Dakota became a part of the new church. These congregations and ministers had been a part of The Evangelical United Brethren Church but had declined to enter the newly formed United Methodist Church.

The former Holiness Methodist Church became a part of The Evangelical Church of North America in 1969, bringing its local churches, ministry and membership, along with a flourishing mission field in Bolivia, South America. The Wesleyan Covenant Church joined in 1977, along with its missionary work in Mexico and Brownsville, Texas, and its work among the Navajo Indians in New Mexico.

Involved cooperation with recognized evangelical organizations has been a hallmark of the new denomination. These organizations include Global Wesleyan Alliance, Wesleyan Holiness Consortium, National Association of Evangelicals, World Gospel Mission, and One Mission Society.

B. Denominational Distinctive

¶308. Against the background of the rich heritage of The Evangelical Church with its roots deep in historic Methodism our distinctive is best summarized by the following: John Wesley wrote, “In 1729 my brother Charles and I, reading the Bible, saw we could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others to do so. In 1737 we saw that holiness comes by faith. In 1738 we saw that men are justified before they are sanctified; but still holiness was our object - inward and outward holiness. God then thrust us out to raise up a holy people.”

After he had preached the doctrine for half a century, and had seen thousands brought into the experience, two years before his death he wrote, “This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists, and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appears to have raised us up.”

The distinctive mission of Methodism was recognized by the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1824, and in the address to the General Conference they said, “If Methodists give up the doctrine of entire sanctification or suffer it to become a dead letter, we are a fallen people. Holiness is the main cord that binds us together; relax this, and you loosen the whole system.”

This will appear more evident if we call to mind the original design of Methodism. It was to raise up and preserve a holy people. This was the principle object that Mr. Wesley had in view. To this end all the doctrines believed and preached by Methodists tend (Sermon on Psalm 93:5, *The Double Cure*, 1887, pp.3-4).*

*Jessop, H. C., *Foundations of Doctrine*, pp. 48-49,
Chicago Evangelistic Institute, Chicago, IL 1938.

C. Purpose

¶309. The purpose of The Evangelical Church is to glorify God by proclaiming to all people the Gospel message of salvation from all sin in this life through faith in Jesus Christ so that they might be transformed to live the Great Commandment and fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 22:37-40; 28:18-20; Luke 1:74-75).

CHAPTER 4: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. The Value of Church Membership

¶401. The Evangelical Church values people being connected to their local church through membership. We consider church membership to be a sacred fellowship involving both privileges and responsibilities, and uniting with the Church to be one of the most important events of life.

The Bible clearly teaches that God’s plan in this world is to be primarily carried out through the local church (¶701-704). Also, the life of both the local church and the individual Christian are to be lived in the context of “one another.” Furthermore, the Word of God describes each individual follower of Christ as a member of His body. Therefore, scripture places a high priority on being connected with and engaged in the local church.

In the community of the local church a person will experience encouragement, accountability, and growth in their faith. They will also be involved in a vision for the Kingdom that is greater than their own, having a place to be equipped and utilize their gifts in service. They will also have an opportunity to give voice to the direction of the church through service on boards or committees and voting for godly leadership.

Local church membership serves as a witness to the church and their community that a person is a follower of Christ, that they are united with the local church and committed to its faith, values and mission.

B. Responsibilities of Members

¶402. Worship – Exalt God in Worship

Every member shall live a life of worship so that their life is a pleasing sacrifice bringing glory to God. They shall endeavor to build worship practices into their life which includes both public and private worship. It is expected that they will read and meditate on the scriptures and practice private prayer at home. They are also expected to participate regularly in corporate worship experiences and regularly expose themselves to the preaching and teaching of the Word of God and participation in the Lord’s Supper through the local church.

¶403. Discipleship – Experience God’s Holiness and Wholeness

Every member shall avail themselves of opportunities to participate in spiritual disciplines which will enable them to continue to grow as devoted followers of Jesus Christ. They shall seek to incorporate into their lives the same values, attitudes and patterns of behavior that are consistent with the character of Jesus. They shall take interest in the spiritual development of other born-again Christians giving special care especially to those in their own home.

¶404. Fellowship – Engage in Authentic Community

Every member shall live out their faith in connection with fellow disciples of Jesus. They shall give themselves fully to fulfilling the command of Jesus to “love one another, as I have loved you” (John 13:34). They shall endeavor to encourage and build up one another in the faith. They shall endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and avoid all conversation and behavior that leads to dissension in the community of faith.

¶405. Service – Equip for Ministry

Every member shall be involved in performing good works in service to our Lord Jesus Christ. They are to use their God given gifts, abilities, time, talents and treasures to serve His Kingdom in and through the local church. They shall practice Biblical stewardship on a regular basis to support the ministry of the local church. They shall look for opportunities to attend to the needy both in their community and around the world.

¶406. Evangelism – Express the Good News of Salvation

Every member shall participate in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. They shall give themselves to prayer for the salvation of the lost. They shall seek the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit to demonstrate a godly life as they share their faith. It should be their earnest desire to see all people come to salvation in Jesus Christ and they shall contribute of their time and resources to this end.

C. Steps to Becoming a Member

¶407. Persons seeking membership in The Evangelical Church shall declare they have personally accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and purpose to live a life of growing discipleship (¶402-406).

¶408. The membership of The Evangelical Church consists of persons who have been received (1) on profession of faith, (2) by certificate of membership in good standing from other Evangelical Churches, or (3) by transfer from other recognized evangelical denominations.

1. Committee on Membership

¶409. The local Church Council (¶710.b.(2)) shall serve as the Committee on Membership unless another body is designated by the Council to serve in that capacity.

¶410. The committee shall vote on recommendations made by the local church Minister, or the person designated by him to make such recommendations, related to requests for membership, transfer, withdrawals, removals and change in membership status.

2. Members Received Through Profession of Faith

a. Membership Introduction

¶411. Every candidate for membership is encouraged to spend a reasonable amount of time becoming acquainted with the local church before making a request for membership. This time of introduction should be seen as an opportunity for the church and prospective member to become acquainted with each other.

b. Membership Orientation and Instruction

¶412. Church membership is a sacred fellowship involving privileges and responsibilities, and uniting with the Church is one of the important events of life. Therefore, each local church shall provide for the proper membership instruction in the following areas:

- (1) The theology, spiritual and moral values, history, vision, mission and polity of The Evangelical Church.
- (2) The privileges and responsibilities of members of The Evangelical Church including participation in the sacraments of the church (¶112) and the meaning and significance of the membership vows. (Book of Rituals, pg. 17)

(3) The history, values, vision, mission, ministries and polity of the local church.

c. Membership Application and Interview

¶413. A person who wants to become a member in The Evangelical Church shall make inquiry of the local church Minister or the person designated by the minister to handle applications for membership to request an application. The candidate shall give testimony in the interview to their personal salvation in Jesus Christ and their understanding of the doctrines, spiritual and moral values and mission of The Evangelical Church and the local church (¶410).

d. Recommendation for Membership

¶414. The local church Minister, or his designee, shall make recommendation for membership of the candidate to the Committee on Membership after satisfactory completion of instruction (¶412) and the interview (¶413).

3. Members Transferring from another Evangelical Church

¶415. Due to the unique nature of each individual local Evangelical Church each member transferring to another Evangelical Church shall follow the Steps to Membership in ¶411-414.

¶416. When a member of The Evangelical Church moves and desires to transfer membership that person should communicate that desire to the new minister. The minister of the new church will communicate the member's desire to transfer to the minister of the former church. Upon such a request if the person is in good standing, the minister of the former church or his designee, upon the approval of the Committee on Membership, shall issue a Certificate of Transfer and send it to the minister of the church to which such member has moved.

4. Members transferring from other evangelical denominations:

¶417. Persons who present a Certificate of Transfer as a member in good standing from another recognized evangelical denomination desiring to unite with a local Evangelical Church shall follow the steps to membership as outlined in ¶411-414.

D. Public Expression of Membership Commitment

¶418. Upon approval by the Committee on Membership arrangements shall be made for the candidate to take their membership vows before the congregation or the local church Council. After affirming their commitment to the church through the taking of the vows the candidates shall be welcomed into the fellowship of the local Evangelical Church.

E. Church Membership Record

¶419. Each local church must keep a record of the membership which includes the following information regarding each member:

1. Name
2. Date Received into Membership
3. Manner in which they were received (Profession of Faith, Transfer)
4. Membership Status (Active, Non-Resident, Inactive)
5. Date Removed from Membership
6. Reason for being Removed (Death, Transfer, Withdrawal, Council Action)

This membership record should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis by someone designated by the Committee on Membership.

F. Status of Church Membership

¶420. Active Members

Active members are those members who are regularly in attendance at the stated services, serve the church in some capacity and contribute of their financial resources to the ministry of the church.

¶421. Non-resident Members

Any member of a local Evangelical Church who is involved in ministry that takes them away from the opportunity to support their local church in which their membership resides may be listed as a Non-resident Member until such time as they can reasonably return to active participation in their church. It is recommended that any Non-resident member who attends another Evangelical Church should transfer their membership to the church in which they are participating within two years of their beginning to attend that church.

¶422. Inactive Members

When a member of the Evangelical Church becomes inactive in their attendance, participation in local church activities and financial support for a period of one year they may be considered as an Inactive Member. That person should be contacted by the Minister, or the person designated by him to make such contact and given the opportunity to correct the situation. They should also be informed if they do not make a reasonable effort to correct the situation after three months their name will be presented to the Committee on Membership for a vote to be removed. After an affirmative vote by the Committee on Membership to be removed they shall be informed of the decision and their name shall be removed from the membership.

G. Certificates for Withdrawal

¶423. When a member of The Evangelical Church desires to unite with another recognized evangelical church, or to withdraw from the church, he shall be entitled to receive a Certificate of Good Standing and Recommendation, or an Honorable Withdrawal issued by the Minister, or the person designated by him, upon the approval of the Committee on Membership.

CHAPTER 5: THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

“He appointed twelve - designating them apostles - that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.” (Mark 3:14)

“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” (Ephesians 4:11-12)

“No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was.” (Hebrews 5:4)

A. The Itinerancy

¶501. The itinerancy of The Evangelical Church consists of its ministers bound together in a unique relationship and serving according to the itinerant system.

1. Field Assignments

¶502. The itinerant system is the accepted method of The Evangelical Church by which assignments of fields of labor are made to its Ministers.

- a. All the assignments shall be made of indefinite tenure.
- b. Any change in assignments shall be made by the Conference Superintendent(s) with the concurrence of the minister and/or the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations of the local church involved (¶¶711.h.(5); 820.b.(5-8)).
- c. All assignments shall be read annually at the Annual Conference. All ministers and all fields of labor shall subscribe to and abide by the assignments (¶¶819.i.(1-2)); 820.b.(6)).

2. Special Assignments

Ministerial members of a Conference, serving as chaplains, evangelists, temperance workers, teachers, missionaries, or as any other full-time religious workers, may be placed upon the list of

assignments made to the ministers of that Conference, provided that such privilege is annually, upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministerial Relations, voted by the Annual Conference.

B. Ministers' Classifications

1. General Classifications

¶503. The ministers of The Evangelical Church are classified as Probationers and Elders: Itinerant Elders (Active, Inactive and Retired); and Local Elders.

¶504. The Itinerant Elders of the Conference, upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministerial Relations, shall determine to which of the foregoing classifications each minister shall belong.

¶505. An Elder shall not be permitted to reside within the bounds of one Conference and at the same time be a member of another Conference for a period of more than two years, except:

- a. Elders serving in special ministries of The Evangelical Church approved by the General Superintendent and Conference Superintendents of the Conferences involved;
- b. Retired Itinerant Elders;
- c. Such Itinerant Elders who by vote of the Annual Conference are placed upon the list of annual assignments serving institutions and organizations not directly connected with The Evangelical Church.

2. Probationers

¶508. Probationers are males who have been licensed to preach in accordance with the order and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, but who have not been ordained and who are engaged in preparation and service looking toward ordination (¶¶531-546).

3. Elders

¶509. Elders are males who have been advanced to the Order of Elder and have been ordained in accordance with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (¶555).

a. Itinerant Elders

¶511. Itinerant Elders are those Elders of The Evangelical Church who have offered themselves without reserve for

service, and who have been received into the itinerancy by a three-fourths ballot vote of the Itinerant Elders present at the Annual Conference. They are classified as follows:

- (1) **Active Itinerant Elders** are elders of The Evangelical Church who have proven themselves worthy in the ministry and who are actively engaged in pastoral service, supervisory, or special work, which is recognized and approved by the Annual Conference.
- (2) **Inactive Itinerant Elders** are elders of The Evangelical Church who, because of impaired health or other sufficient reason, are temporarily unable to, or disqualified from performing the functions of an active Itinerant Elder and have been placed by the Annual Conference on the list of Inactive Itinerant Elders.
- (3) **Retired Itinerant Elders** are elders of The Evangelical Church who, because of age, fixed by their respective conferences or because of disability have been placed by their Annual Conference on the list of Retired Itinerant Elders (§826.i).

¶512. Itinerant Elders shall have the right to vote and hold office in the Conference.

¶513. Itinerant Elders are those elders who have been received into the itinerancy and who continue therein (¶¶501; 502; 509-511; 555).

¶514. An Itinerant Elder who is adjudged by a two-thirds vote of the Itinerant Elders present at the Annual Conference to be unqualified for the itinerant ministry shall be listed as a Local Elder (¶¶517; 518).

¶515. An Itinerant Elder shall not be permitted to remain in the itinerancy without assignment longer than two consecutive years except students in theological schools, and Retired Itinerant Elders. However, an elder sixty-three years of age or older may be permitted to remain in the itinerancy without assignment for a period of three years.

¶516. If an Elder who has been received into the itinerancy in The Evangelical Church refuses to accept his assignment, or if during

the year he refuses to do the work which he was assigned, he shall be dealt with as one disobedient to The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (§§501, 502; 562; 563; 607-640; 820.b.(8-11)).

b. Local Elders

¶517. **Local Elders** are:

- (1) Those elders who have not been received into the itinerancy, or
 - (2) Those elders who have not been continued in the itinerancy.
- Local Elders are not to vote or hold an office in the conference for which an Itinerant Elder is eligible.

¶518. A Local Elder adjudged to be disqualified for his office by a two-thirds vote of Itinerant Elders present at the Annual Conference shall have his license revoked, provided that a period of at least one year has elapsed between this action and that described in ¶514.

4. Special Ministries Personnel (Commissioning)

¶520. Special ministries personnel are men or women whom the Annual Conference has certified and commissioned to areas of special ministry.

- a. Special ministries personnel may include leaders in areas of but not limited to Christian Education, Camping, Music, Youth, Children, Counseling, Missions, Church Planting, and Evangelism.
- b. Steps toward certification as a candidate for commissioning shall be as follows:

Call to the Ministry

- (1) From time immemorial the Christian Ministry has been held in reverence and honor. Thoughtful and devout Christian people have ever esteemed it sacred and unique, and of divine appointment. The Church has insisted that those who are to receive her credentials and are commissioned for special ministries must be known to possess the requisite qualities of heart, mind, and body (§§201-220; 531; 591)

Candidates for Commissioning

- (2) Persons who have publicly affirmed their call of God to

the Christian Ministry (who intend to prepare for the work of the ministry) to be commissioned, and whose intention to enter the Christian Ministry have been officially recognized by the Annual Conference, but who have not yet been commissioned, shall be known as Candidates for Commissioning and shall immediately seek, with the assistance of their minister, the guidance of the Conference Board of Ministry with reference to further procedures and to their educational programs (§520.b.(7); 532).

Declaration of Purpose

- (3) In order to be listed as a candidate for commissioning, the applicant must sign the Declaration of Purpose for the Christian Ministry. This declaration must also bear the signatures of the Conference Superintendent, the Minister and the Lay Leader of the local church of which the candidate is a member (§533).

Member in Good Standing

- (4) Only such persons are to be commissioned who have been members in good standing in The Evangelical Church for at least one year, who have met the prescribed educational requirements, have satisfactorily passed the Doctrinal Examination (§831.e.(12)), and who are able to present a good testimony from the respective local churches to which they belong concerning their character, and their physical, mental, and spiritual fitness for the work of the ministry (§544; 591).

Above Reproach

- (5) No person shall be commissioned who is divorced or has married a divorcee (except as both parties concerned be adjudged innocent by the Annual Conference to which application for commissioning is made), or who does not recognize that the body should be treated as the temple of the Holy Spirit (thus making it inconsistent with both Christian testimony and sound principles of health to injure one's influence or body by the use of tobacco, intoxicating beverages, narcotics, or any such harmful products), or who is indifferent to financial obligations, or who condones or practices

homosexuality.

Ministers who are already commissioned shall have their credentials invalidated should any of the above situations apply. The Commissioned Minister will be accountable to maintain the moral and ethical standards of the ordained clergy (§§201-220; 591; 539).

Personal Statement

- (6) Candidates for Commissioning shall prepare a written statement concerning their age, health, religious and church experience, call to the ministry, purpose in seeking entrance into the ministry, educational record and plans, which together with the recommendation from their local church, shall be presented to the Conference. This document shall be submitted to the secretary of the Board of Ministry (§831.e.(9); 540).

Recommendation

- (7) A candidate for commissioning in The Evangelical Church must have been a member in good standing of The Evangelical Church for at least one year and be able to present a good recommendation from the local church to which the candidate belongs in the following form (§541):

<p>LOCAL CHURCH RECOMMENDATION FOR COMMISSIONING</p> <p>At a meeting properly announced and held on...(date)...for the purpose of recommending ...(name of candidate)... as a candidate for commissioning, there were ...(number)... members of ...(name of local church)... present. At this meeting ...(number)... members of ...(local Church)... voted to recommend ...(name)... as a suitable person for ministry in ...(area to be identified)... , and to hereby give the candidate a good testimony respecting the candidate's Christian character, believing that the candidate possesses the necessary qualifications, and that this candidate is called to the ministry of ...(area to be identified)...</p> <p>Signed: ...(Minister, Conference Superintendent, or Chair)...</p>
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- (8) A meeting for the purpose of recommending a candidate for commissioning must be preceded by at least two public announcements, and be held in the presence of the Minister, or Conference Superintendent, who shall counsel with those present regarding the ability and qualifications of the applicant, and make plain the importance of such recommendation to ministry. In order that The Evangelical Church may be assured that

those persons who present themselves as candidates for this ministry are truly called of God, let those who consider recommending such for commissioning for ministry in The Evangelical Church prayerfully and earnestly ask themselves these questions (§542):

- (a) Do these candidates know the grace of God in the forgiveness of sins?
 - (b) Have they victory over sin, and is the love of God shed abroad in their hearts?
 - (c) Are they exemplary in all manner of life?
 - (d) Have they gifts for the work of this ministry?
 - (e) Are they able to think clearly?
 - (f) Do they exercise good judgment? Have they a right understanding of the plan of salvation?
 - (g) Have they the ability to communicate effectively?
 - (h) Have they been active and faithful in Christian service in the local church?
 - (i) Do they bear witness to Christ, and is their witness effective?
- (9) To be valid such recommendation must be signed by three-fourths of the local church members present at this meeting (§543).

Assurance in These Matters

- (10) There must be assurance in these matters, for only persons of genuine Christian experience, of godly character, and pious life, whose conduct is above reproach, who flee hurtful lusts, and who are free from worldly habits and practices that would mar their influence or compromise their witness can receive the approval of The Evangelical Church as ministers of Jesus Christ. If married, does the spouse support this call, and does the spouse exhibit Christian graces (§544)?

Examination

- (11) The candidate for commissioning shall be examined by the Conference Superintendent, or an elder appointed by the Conference Superintendent. The candidate shall answer the following questions at the Annual Conference Session or at the local Church Council

meeting: (§545.)

- (a) Do you believe yourself to be divinely called to be commissioned to the ministry of ...(*specify*)...?
- (b) Have you obtained the pardon for your sins and found peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ; and is the Spirit of God bearing witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?
- (c) Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit and can you testify to the experience of entire sanctification? If not, are you earnestly seeking to be sanctified wholly?
- (d) Are you acquainted with the doctrines and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church?
- (e) Do you agree with the doctrines and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, and will you follow, promote and defend them?

Granting a Commission

- (12) If candidates answer satisfactorily the foregoing questions before a local Church Council, it may, by a majority vote, recommend them to the Annual Conference, which upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministerial Relations, may by a three-fourths ballot vote of the Itinerant Elders, commission the candidate (§546).

Training

- (13) Training leading to a formal commissioning for special ministries will be determined by the Conference Board of Ministry but is normally expected/considered to be at least a college degree or certificate in the commissioned area, and the equivalent of one year's service in their respective areas of ministry, and the three-fourths ballot vote of the Itinerant Elders will be required before commissioning. This commissioning is not to be considered a step toward ordination as an elder in The Evangelical Church.

Amenability

- c. Amenability shall be to the Conference Superintendent and the Annual Conference. If they are employed by a local church, the commissioned personnel are also amenable to the Senior Minister and the local Church Council (§§721; 819.i.(4)).

Annual Validation

- d. Commissioned Ministers are subject to yearly review by the Committee on Ministerial Relations with validation of commissioning for a three year period.

Employment Termination

- e. If they are serving in a local church, their employment shall cease when the Senior Minister leaves the field of service. They may continue to serve with the unanimous consent of the new Senior Minister, the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations and the Conference Superintendent.

Members of the Annual Conference

- f. They are commissioned members of the Annual Conference with the same voting status and privileges as lay members.

g. Duties of Commissioned Personnel:

- (1) Their chief concern, regardless of the commissioned area, is to win as many people as possible to Jesus Christ, to build them up in the Christian faith and practice, and to lead them into the fellowship and service of the Church.
- (2) They shall know and adhere to The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.
- (3) They shall affirm annually their adherence to the doctrine and standards of The Evangelical Church (§§101-220; 820.b.(10-11); 831.e.(12)).
- (4) They shall accept any responsibilities given to them at the Annual Conference Session and report their work regularly to the Conference Superintendent and Annual Conference. If employed by a local church, they shall also report to their Senior Minister and local Church Council (§§502; 516; 819.i.; 820.b.(6)).
- (5) They may request to be released from their employment by presenting a written request to the Senior Minister and the Conference Superintendent. The granting of such request shall rest with the judgment of the Senior Minister and the Conference Superintendent and Conference Chair (§§597; 598; 819.i.; 820.b.(6)).
- (6) They shall not organize a church or receive compensation for labor in so doing without the consent of the Conference Superintendent.

- (7) In exceptional cases the Conference Superintendent may authorize commissioned persons to administer the sacraments of Baptism and The Lord's Supper.
- (8) They shall support the work of the Annual Conference and if employed by a local church they shall support the work of the Senior Minister.
- (9) They shall maintain membership in a local Evangelical Church. Failure to do so will result in a loss of credentials. All commissioned personnel not serving a local church shall keep the Conference Superintendent and Conference Secretary informed as to the place where they hold their membership. If employed by a local church, they shall keep their membership in that church (§819.i).

g. Transfer of Commissioned Personnel
(§§595-599)

5. Supply Pastors

¶525. When emergency circumstances make it impossible to assign a field to a licensed or ordained Minister of The Evangelical Church, it becomes the responsibility of the Conference Superintendent(s) to provide supply leadership as follows (§§819.i.(1); 820.b.(6)):

a. Ministerial Student

¶528. A Ministerial Student may serve as a supply if approved by the Board of Ministry and assigned by the Conference Superintendent(s) where he is needed (§§532, 533; 820.b.(6-7)).

A letter of authorization to preach shall be issued and will be valid until the next Annual Conference. This letter of authorization to preach shall be prepared at the time by the Conference Superintendent(s) and co-signed by the Conference Secretary and shall read as follows:

**LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION TO PREACH FOR
MINISTERIAL STUDENTS**

This is to certify that ...(name of student)... , a Ministerial Student who is under the guidance of the Board of Ministry of the ...(name of Conference)..., has been granted a letter of authorization to preach the Gospel in The Evangelical Church, and to conduct the stated services of worship, and administer the work of the Church under the direct supervision of the Conference Superintendent but without authority to administer the sacraments of the Church, or to perform marriages.

Given this ...(date)... day of ...(month)... ,...(year)... in ...(Annual Conference)..., this letter of authorization is void after ...(expiration date)...
Signed ...(Conference Superintendent)... and ...(Conference Secretary)...

b. Layman

¶529. A layman (other than a Ministerial Student) may serve as supply approved by the Conference Superintendent(s) (¶820.b.(7)). A letter of authorization to preach shall be issued and will be valid until the next Annual Conference Session. The issuing of a letter of authorization to preach shall not be regarded as a step toward becoming a Probationer. This letter of authorization to preach shall read as follows:

LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION TO PREACH
FOR A LAYMAN

This is to certify that ...(name of layman)... has been granted a letter of authorization to preach for service in The Evangelical Church, with the right to preach, to conduct the stated services of worship, and administer the work of the Church under the direct supervision of the Conference Superintendent but without authority to administer the sacraments of the Church, or to perform marriages. Given this ...(date)... day of ...(month)... ,...(year)... in ...(Annual Conference)..., this letter of authorization is void after ...(expiration date)...
Signed ...(Conference Superintendent)...

C. Entrance into the Ministry

1. Call to the Ministry

¶531. From time immemorial the Christian Ministry has been held in reverence and honor. Thoughtful and devout Christian people have ever esteemed it sacred and unique, and of divine appointment. The Church has insisted that those who are to receive her credentials and are commissioned to preach must be known to possess the requisite qualities of heart, mind, and body (¶542).

2. Ministerial Students

¶532. A person who has publicly affirmed his call of God to the Christian Ministry, who intends to prepare for the work of the ministry, and whose intention to enter the ministry has been

officially recognized by the Annual Conference, but who has not yet been licensed as a Probationer, shall be known as a Ministerial Student and shall be so listed by the Annual Conference. A person so committed shall immediately seek, with the assistance of his minister, the guidance of the Conference Board of Ministry with reference to further procedures and to his educational program.

Declaration of Purpose

¶533. In order to be listed as a Ministerial Student or candidate for the ministry, the applicant must sign the Declaration of Purpose for the Christian Ministry. This declaration must also bear the signatures of the Conference Superintendent, the Minister and the Lay Leader of the local church of which he is a member.

3. General Requirements for License to Preach

Certificate of License

¶535. Every Minister of The Evangelical Church must have a license stating how far he is empowered by an Annual Conference in his official functions, which license must be signed by the Conference Superintendent and Conference Secretary of the Annual Conference in which the minister holds his membership (¶¶546-549).

Member in Good Standing

¶536. Only such persons are to be licensed to preach who have been members in good standing in The Evangelical Church for at least one year, who have met the prescribed educational requirements, and who are able to present a good testimony from the respective local churches to which they belong concerning their characters, and their physical, mental and spiritual fitness for the work of the ministry (¶591).

Educational Requirements

¶537. Candidates for the ministry shall have completed at least two years of college level work in a school approved by the Conference Board of Ministry (¶831.e.(2)(b, d)).

Exceptional Cases

¶538. In special instances of recognized necessity, older men who cannot secure the required two years of college work may be accepted as candidates for the ministry provided: (1) that the candidate shall be at least thirty-five years of age; and (2) that he

shall fulfill all of the disciplinary requirements for entrance into the Ministry of The Evangelical Church according to the provisions of The Discipline, except those set forth in ¶831.e.(2)(e) relating to formal education.

Above Reproach

¶539. No person shall be licensed to preach who is divorced or has married a divorcee (except as both parties concerned be adjudged innocent by the Annual Conference to which application for License to Preach is made), or who does not recognize that his body should be treated as the temple of the Holy Spirit (thus making it inconsistent with both Christian testimony and sound principles of health to injure one’s influence or body by the use of tobacco, intoxicating beverages, narcotics, or any such harmful products), or who is indifferent to his financial obligations, or who condones or practices homosexuality.

Ministers who are already licensed or ordained shall have their credentials invalidated should any of the above situations apply (¶¶201-220; 591).

4. Procedures for Obtaining a License to Preach

a. Personal Statement

¶540. Every candidate for the ministry shall prepare a written statement concerning his age, health, religious and church experience, call to the ministry, purpose in seeking entrance into the ministry, educational record and plans, which together with his recommendation from his local church, shall be presented to the Conference. This document shall be submitted to the secretary of the Board of Ministry (¶831.e.(9)).

b. Recommendation

¶541. A candidate for the ministry of The Evangelical Church must have been a member in good standing of The Evangelical Church for at least one year and be able to present a good recommendation from the local church to which he belongs in the following form (¶543):

<p>STATEMENT OF RECOMMENDATION FOR A LICENSE TO PREACH</p> <p>At a meeting properly announced and held for the purpose of recommending ...(name of candidate)... as a candidate for the</p>

ministry, there were ...(number)... members of ...(name of local church)...present. At this meeting ...(number)... members of ...(local church)... voted to recommend ...(candidate)... as a suitable person for the office of the ministry, and to hereby give him a good testimony respecting his Christian character, believing him to possess the necessary qualifications, and that he is called to this office. This letter is given on this ...(date)... day of ...(month)... ,...(year)...
Signed: ...(Minister, Conference Superintendent, or Chair)... [See ¶543.]

¶542. A meeting for the purpose of recommending a candidate for the ministry must be preceded by at least two public announcements, and be held in the presence of the Minister, or Conference Superintendent, who shall counsel with those present regarding the ability and qualifications of the applicant, and make plain the importance of such recommendation to the ministry. In order that The Evangelical Church may be assured that those persons who present themselves as candidates for her ministry are truly called of God to this office, let those consider recommending such for license as Ministers of The Evangelical Church, prayerfully and earnestly ask themselves these questions:

- (1) Do these candidates know the grace of God in the forgiveness of sins?
- (2) Have they victory over sin, and is the love of God shed abroad in their hearts?
- (3) Are they exemplary in all manner of life?
- (4) Have they gifts for the work of the ministry?
- (5) Are they able to think clearly?
- (6) Do they exercise good judgment? Have they a right understanding of the plan of salvation?
- (7) Have they the ability to speak in public?
- (8) Have they been active and faithful in Christian service in the local church?
- (9) Do they bear witness to Christ, and is their witness effective?

¶543. To be valid such recommendation must be signed by three-fourths of the local church members present at this meeting.

Assurance in These Matters

¶544. There must be assurance in these matters, for only

persons of genuine Christian experience, of godly character, and pious life, whose conduct before man is above reproach, who flee hurtful lusts, and who are free from worldly habits and practices that would mar their influence or compromise their witness, can receive the approval of The Evangelical Church as Ministers of Jesus Christ. If married, does the wife share in the call, and does that wife exhibit Christian graces (§591)?

c. Examination

¶545. The candidate for the ministry shall be examined by the Conference Superintendent, or an elder appointed by the Conference Superintendent. The candidate shall answer the following questions at the Annual Conference Session or at the local Church Council meeting (§831.e.(11)):

- (1) Do you believe yourself to be divinely called to preach the gospel?
- (2) Have you obtained the pardon of your sins and found peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ; and is the Spirit of God bearing witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?
- (3) Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit and can you testify to the experience of entire sanctification? If not, are you earnestly seeking to be sanctified wholly?
- (4) Are you acquainted with the doctrines and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church?
- (5) Do you agree with the doctrines and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, and will you follow, promote and defend them?

5. Granting and Validating Licenses to Preach

¶546. If the candidate answers satisfactorily the foregoing questions before a local Church Council, it may, by a majority vote, recommend him to the Annual Conference for license; or if before an Annual Conference, this Conference, upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministerial Relations, may by a three-fourths ballot vote of the Itinerant Elders, grant him a License to Preach as a Probationer. A license thus granted, in order to remain in force, must be validated at each subsequent session of the Annual Conference by a majority ballot vote of its

Itinerant Elders present, having been recommended by the Committee on Ministerial Relations, until the Probationer has been advanced to the Order of Elder (§§819.k.; 831.e.(2)(c); 831.e.(11)).

§547. The licenses of all Probationers are subject to validation annually by a majority vote of the Itinerant Elders of the Annual Conference present at the session (§§819.k.; 831.e.(2)(c), 831.e.(11)).

§548. No Probationer shall remain in this standing for more than six years without a three-fourths ballot vote of the Itinerant Elders of the Annual Conference (§§819.k.; 831.e.(11)).

§549. The granting of License to Preach, advancement to the Order of Elder, and reception into the itinerancy shall be by ballot, only elders in the itinerancy voting (§§819.k., 831.e.(11)).

6. Minister from Another Church

§550. A minister from another recognized evangelical denomination desiring to unite with The Evangelical Church, shall present to the Board of Ministry in the Annual Conference in which he seeks admission, a certificate of health and a certificate from his church, setting forth his standing in the office of the ministry, and also a good testimony of his Christian character from persons who know him. He shall give satisfactory assurance of his agreement with the doctrines, Discipline, government, and usages of The Evangelical Church. He shall pass the doctrinal tests satisfactorily, pass examinations in The Discipline and in the history of The Evangelical Church, and shall also assume either orally or in writing, the vows contained in the form for ordaining elders. If he is non-ordained he shall satisfy the Conference Board of Ministry that all educational requirements for admission to the rank of Probationer have been met, and fulfill all requirements for normal advancement toward ordination. If the Annual Conference concerned considers his credentials, statements, and educational qualifications to be satisfactory, it may, upon recommendation of the Committee on Ministerial Relations, by a three-fourths ballot vote of its Itinerant Elders present, receive him as a Probationer or elder according to the rank which he held in his former church, and issue to him the appropriate certificate (§§596.b.; 831.e.(2)(c); 831.e.(9); 841.e.(11)).

D. Advancement to Order of Elder

1. Courses of Study

¶553. Probationers who have not completed a full course of study in an approved theological seminary, and who shall be deemed exceptional cases by the Board of Ministry on the basis of restrictive health conditions or other justifiable reasons as presented through the Conference Superintendent(s), shall be allowed to pursue the course of study for Probationers as set forth by The Discipline of The Evangelical Church and administered by the Board of Ministry (¶¶831.e.(2).(b-e), 831.e.(10).(b)).

2. Presentation to the Annual Conference

¶555. A Probationer who has proved faithful may be presented by the Board of Ministry to the Annual Conference as a Candidate for the Order of Elder, providing he (¶¶831.e.(2)(c); 831.e.(11)):

- a. Is the holder of a valid License to Preach.
- b. Has completed a baccalaureate degree approved by the Conference Board of Ministry.
- c. Has completed (*one of the following*):
 - (1) A full course of graduate study leading to a Master of Divinity degree and at least one year of internship under assignment by the Annual Conference beyond any internship required by the academic institution, or
 - (2) An alternate graduate level study program in the field of pastoral ministries of at least thirty semester hours (45 quarter hours), as approved by the Conference Board of Ministry, and a minimum of three years of internship under assignment by the Annual Conference beyond any internship required by an academic institution, with the proviso that the candidate's combined academic record include curriculum in Biblical Studies, Christian/Wesleyan Theology, Christian History and Thought, and Christian Ministry, plus a practicum program (¶831.e.(2)(e)). For those completing the Master of Divinity degree, the year of service may be waived by the Annual Conference upon recommendation of the Conference Superintendent, the Conference Board of Ministry and the Conference Committee on Ministerial Relations.

d. Has satisfactorily passed the Doctrinal Examination (§§831.e.(2)(f); 831.e.(12)).

If having been recommended by the Committee on Ministerial Relations, the candidate for ordination receives a three-fourths vote by ballot of the Itinerant Elders of the Annual Conference present, he shall be ordained as an Itinerant Elder according to The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (§§509; 513; 514).

E. Duties of a Minister

1. Fulfill the Great Commission

¶560. It is the first duty and should ever be the chief concern of every Minister of The Evangelical Church to win as many people as possible to Jesus Christ, to build them up in the Christian faith and practice, and to lead them into the fellowship and service of the Church. To this end he shall employ his time and devote his energies to prayer and study, preaching, teaching, and pastoral visitation (§819.d.(2)).

2. Follow The Discipline

¶561. It is the duty of every Minister of The Evangelical Church to be acquainted with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church. It does not become any minister to amend the rules of The Evangelical Church; it is his duty to observe them (§§545.(9); 565; 820.b.(10-11)).

¶562. Every minister shall be responsible for annual affirmation of question 11 of the Doctrinal Examination (§831.e.(12)), and adherence to the polity, spiritual culture and moral standards of The Evangelical Church (§§101-220; 820.b.(10-11)).

3. Perform His Assignment

¶563. It is the duty of every Minister of the Evangelical Church to accept the assignment given to him at the Annual Conference Session, to move to his field of labor promptly (unless otherwise provided) and to report his work regularly to his Conference Superintendent, to the local Church Council and to his Annual Conference (§§502; 516; 819.I.; 820.b.(6)).

¶564. Should a minister, after he has duly entered upon the work assigned him, consider it necessary to be released from his assignment, he shall present a written request to his Conference

Superintendent and Conference Chair seeking release from each such assignment and setting forth the reason for such request. The granting of such request shall rest with the judgment of his Conference Superintendent and Conference Chair (§§597; 598; 819.i.; 820.b.(6)).

4. Pastoral Leadership

¶565. The Minister is the ranking officer of the local church and as such is the leader of its life and program. He is the minister of the entire congregation, and is responsible for providing spiritual and administrative leadership in all phases of the operation of the local church, supporting, defending and promoting the standards, doctrines, and polity of The Evangelical Church, and diligently observing all duties assigned him by The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (§561)

a. Spiritual Nurture

¶566. It is the duty of every Minister serving a congregation to give personal attention to the spiritual needs of the people under his pastoral care. He shall endeavor to visit in their homes and use other means of personal contact for the purpose of spiritual counsel. He shall endeavor to enlist their active participation in the worship, fellowship and work of the congregation; give guidance in establishing and maintaining the practice of private and family worship and Bible reading; encourage regular financial contributions for the support of the local, state, national, and world-wide ministry of the congregation, and otherwise fulfill his duties as spiritual counselor and shepherd of those under his care.

b. Christian Education

¶567. Unless otherwise provided for, the Minister shall be the Director of Christian Education of the local church. A Director of Christian Education other than the Minister may be hired or appointed by the local Church Council upon nomination by the Minister (§721). The Minister, as Director of Christian Education, shall plan for regular training sessions for teachers and officers of the Sunday School to prepare them for more efficient work in their departments and classes, and to aid them in comprehending and promoting the total educational program of the church.

(1) Offer Special Attention

¶568. The Minister shall pay special attention to the children and young people in his church. He shall provide instruction in matters of Christian living by private conversation, meetings for prayer and addresses, and by classes for doctrine and catechetical instruction (¶701.c.).

(2) Ensure Adequate Teaching

¶569. It shall be the duty of every Minister to provide for the instruction of the children, youth and adults on his field of labor in the doctrines of the Christian religion, in the meaning of the Christian life, in the history of the general church, and in the history, faith and polity of The Evangelical Church. This instruction should provide opportunity for a personal experience of Christ, encourage commitment to Him as Savior and Lord, and lead to membership in the Church. He shall seek to train adequate leadership for all the departments of the work of his church.

(3) Encourage Higher Education

¶570. He shall encourage young people to attend the educational institutions approved by The Evangelical Church, and enlist adults in giving liberally of their means to equip and endow such institutions more adequately (¶¶994-996).

c. Protect His Pulpit

¶571. The Minister, in order to preserve the doctrine and interests of The Evangelical Church, shall use the utmost care in his leadership of the local church and in granting permission to preach to a person not regularly licensed. He shall not engage an evangelist other than one approved by the Annual Conference without first securing consent from his Conference Superintendent (¶834.(6)(d)).

d. Other Duties

¶572. It is the duty of the Minister, in accordance with the order and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church:

- (1) To organize new churches (¶¶701-704; 820.b.(13));
- (2) To receive new members into the Church (¶¶401-403; 407; 710);
- (3) To issue certificates of transfer of, and dismissal or withdrawal from church membership (¶¶410; 419;

423);

- (4) The Minister may appoint one of the members of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations annually (§711.c.(2));
- (5) To convene the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations within ten days following their election to elect a Chair and a Secretary of the Committee and shall report the election results to his Conference Superintendent (§711.e.);
- (6) To annually nominate the members of the local church Committee on Personnel and shall present the same to the local Church Council for election (§714.b.).

e. Plant a Church

¶573. Any Minister of The Evangelical Church, with the approval of the Conference Superintendent or the Annual Conference, is authorized to organize a local church. He shall receive members according to the order and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, give to each the right hand of fellowship, and enroll their names in the official membership record book. He shall cause to be elected a Lay Leader, and if deemed advisable an Assistant Lay Leader(s), and such Trustees as may be required (§820.b.(13)).

(1) Permission to Begin a Church

¶574. No Minister shall arbitrarily organize a church or receive compensation for labor in so doing without the consent of the Conference Superintendent (§820.b.(13)).

(2) Procedure to Discontinue a Church

¶575. A Minister in The Evangelical Church is not permitted to discontinue or disband any appointment in his field without the authorization of the Annual Conference (§§728-730). In the event a local church of The Evangelical Church is discontinued or its relationship dissolved, it is the Minister's responsibility, or in the case that there is no minister assigned it is the Conference Superintendent's responsibility, to transfer the remaining members to the nearest Evangelical Church, or to such church or churches as the members concerned may request (§§729.(2).(d)).

f. Maintain the Membership Record

¶576. The Minister is the custodian of the official record book of each local church in his field. He shall see that every name is properly entered, and that no member is recorded as having terminated or lost his membership, except by transfer, withdrawal, removal without certificate, death or disciplinary procedure (¶¶705.c; 914.5.1).

g. Maintain the Administrative Record

¶577. It is the duty of the Minister, in addition to his responsibilities with respect to the official membership roll of each local church, to keep a separate Administrative Record for the church.

(1) He shall enter therein:

- (a) The schedule of worship services;
- (b) The roster of officials of the church (or churches) including: the members of the local Church Council, the Lay Member of the Annual Conference, Lay Leader(s), Church Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Church Trustees (also the year of each one's election), officers of the Sunday School and auxiliary organizations;
- (c) Names of Probationers, Ministerial Students, and other life recruits;
- (d) A complete list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of all the members of the local church;
- (e) A list of names and addresses of shut-ins;
- (f) Names and addresses of prospective church members;
- (g) Location of the following: church property deeds and other important church documents; the official church membership record book (¶576); the local Church Council book of minutes.

(An Annual Conference may require its members to provide additional data.)

(2) This Administrative Record shall:

- (a) Be corrected by the Minister in cooperation with the local Church Council each year immediately preceding the Annual Conference Session;
- (b) Be examined annually by the Conference Superintendent.

h. Chair of the Local Church Council

¶578. The Minister shall be the Chair of the local Church Council except when the Conference Superintendent or his

appointed representative is present to chair the meeting.* The Vice-Chair, having been elected from the membership of the local Church Council, may preside at the request of the Chair, except when the Conference Superintendent or his appointed representative is present to chair the meeting (§710).

**Editorial note: In historic practice across The Evangelical Church, the meeting of the local Church Council when the Conference Superintendent is present and presiding is generally referred to as "The Local Conference." This term is in concert with the terms "Annual Conference" and "General Conference."*

i. Administrative Leader

¶579. The Minister as the leader of the life and program of the local church is responsible for its stated services and its regular prayer meetings, and in the absence of the Conference Superintendent of the area, he shall control the appointment of all services to be held in the churches assigned to him. He shall call and preside at the Annual Congregational Meeting and preside at the local Church Council meetings in his church and conduct all elections of Lay Leaders, Assistant Lay Leaders, Trustees and officers of the Sunday School, and auxiliary organizations. However, the Vice-Chair may preside at the Congregational Meeting and the local Church Council at the request of the Minister (§§722-723).

j. Building Project Manager

¶580. Where the erection of any church building becomes necessary and there are reasonable prospects that it can be erected, it is the duty of the Minister to see to it that the work is properly organized and executed. The Minister shall not only consult with his congregation and its leaders, but he shall seek the guidance of his Conference Superintendent, and the Conference Board of Church Extension so that the proper location, suitable plans, and an adequate program of finance are assured (§820.b.(19)).

k. Auxiliaries Support

¶581. The Minister or someone appointed by the Minister shall preside at the election of officers for the local church

Evangelical Men, Evangelical Women, and Evangelical Youth (§701.b.).

1. General Supervisor

¶582. The Minister shall have general supervision of all the organizations within the churches assigned to him. He shall give undivided support and cooperation to all the departments of church activity, and shall work in harmony with the plans and policies of The Evangelical Church. He shall in each congregation on his field of labor encourage the organization, foster the life and promote the interests of the recognized agencies of The Evangelical Church.

m. Ex Officio Member

¶583. The Minister is an ex officio member of all program and administrative bodies of the local church. He shall be an advisory member of the Board of Trustees except where the laws of the country or state require him to be a member of such a board (§713.a(3)).

n. Administer the Sacraments

¶584. An ordained minister is authorized to administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to solemnize marriage. He shall preside when the various rituals of The Evangelical Church are used as identified and specified in *The Rituals of The Evangelical Church*.

5. Probationers Under Appointment

¶585.

- a. In cases of necessity, where it is impractical for the Annual Conference to make other satisfactory arrangements, a Probationer who is regularly serving a church may be permitted to administer the sacraments and to solemnize marriages wherever the law of the state permits.
- b. Probationers who have served as pastor for one year and are presently serving under assignment as a pastor may annually be granted the same voting rights as a Lay Member by vote of the Annual Conference.

6. Denominational Programs Promotion

¶586. Every Minister shall present the interests of The Evangelical Church to the members of his church. He shall see that his field is amply supplied with literature approved by The Evangelical Church, and as may be furnished by the program agencies, so that the purpose of each agency may be understood and the

denominational program carried out. It is his duty to see that the special days authorized are properly announced and observed. He shall strive earnestly to enlist every member of his charge to give systematically to the missionary and benevolent causes of The Evangelical Church. He is responsible for the presentation and securing of the annual amounts apportioned to his church by the Annual Conference interests.

Should he fail in his responsibility and not be able to give satisfactory reason for such failure, he shall be accountable to the Annual Conference (§819.d.).

7. Certificates of Transfer

¶587. It is the duty of a Minister, that when a member of The Evangelical Church moves from one local church to another, the Minister shall notify the minister of the church to which the member moved. Upon the request of such a member, if he is in good standing, the Minister, upon the approval of the local Church Council, shall issue a Certificate of Transfer and send it to the Minister of the church to which such member has moved (§408; 410; 415-417).

8. Certificates of Recommendation

¶588. It is the duty of a Minister, that when a member of The Evangelical Church desires to unite with another Evangelical Church, or to withdraw from the Church and is thereby entitled to receive a certificate of good standing and recommendation or of honorable withdrawal, the Minister, upon approval of the local Church Council, will issue said certificate (§410; 423).

9. Annual Conference Attendance

¶589. An Itinerant Elder shall attend the annual sessions of the Annual Conference in which he holds his membership. If unable to attend the Annual Conference Session, he shall report by letter setting forth the reason for his absence. Should any minister in active service, whether an Itinerant Elder or a Probationer serving under appointment by the Annual Conference, absent himself from the session of the Annual Conference without a satisfactory reason for his absence, he shall be dealt with as one disobedient to The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

10. Minister's Church Membership

¶590. Every minister shall maintain membership in some local Evangelical Church and upon neglect or refusal to do so shall lose his ministerial relation. All ministers not serving a regular assignment shall keep the Conference Superintendent and Conference Secretary of their Annual Conference informed as to the place where they hold their membership. Each minister serving a local church shall hold his membership in the church where he serves. The transfer of his membership and of his wife and minor children who are church members shall be effected through Annual Conference assignment (¶819.i).

F. Code of Ethics for Ministers of The Evangelical Church

¶591. The Christian Ministry, from the inception of the Christian movement, has been held in reverence and honor. The Church has insisted that those who receive her credentials and commission to preach must be called of God and be known to possess the requisite qualities of body, mind and heart.

The minister is God's servant. He is a preacher of the Gospel, a teacher of the Christian religion. He is the pastor of a congregation. He is a minister of the Church of Christ. He is in a worthy succession of able men in the noblest of callings. The task of the minister is so great and so exacting that it requires a high code of ethics to which he must strictly adhere.

1. Personal Standards

A Minister of The Evangelical Church has the following personal standards:

- a. He is conscious of the sacredness of his high calling.
- b. He diligently cultures his own soul.
- c. He sets apart adequate time to develop his intellectual capacities, to keep abreast of current thought and to prepare his messages.
- d. He keeps his body physically fit.
- e. He gives full time service to his ministerial duties.
- f. He maintains a high moral standard in speech and conduct and is decorous in manners and dress.
- g. He is above reproach in all business transactions and financial matters.
- h. He presents the truth tactfully and constructively.

- i. He honors by acknowledgment the use of another's material.
- j. He regulates the demeanor of his own family. He realizes that a wife and children are God-given. The minister shall develop a binding relationship with his family and diligently seek to enhance their spiritual growth.

2. Parish Standards

A Minister of The Evangelical Church has the following parish standards:

- a. He accepts a pastorate under sacred obligation and will faithfully perform his duties until released.
- b. He is the spiritual shepherd of all his people and of those who have no shepherd.
- c. He is above reproach in the performance of pastoral acts.
- d. He regards his service as primary, his remuneration as secondary.
- e. He engages in no other kinds of remunerative work without the consent of his Conference Superintendent.
- f. He keeps confidences inviolate.
- g. He is the representative of The Evangelical Church and is a messenger of good will and unity.
- h. He meets his obligations to the community as a servant of God and seeks opportunities for community service which will manifest the Spirit of Christ.
- i. He cooperates with character-building agencies and endeavors to promote their moral and spiritual objectives.
- j. He will leave the church property in good condition and the records full and complete when he moves from a field.

3. Professional Standards

A Minister of The Evangelical Church has the following professional standards:

- a. He respects the parish of another minister and renders service in such parish only in emergencies or with the consent of the assigned minister.
- b. He seeks to enhance, not to degrade, the work of another minister.
- c. He deals honorably with the record of his predecessor and

successor.

- d. He gives his endorsement only to those movements, agencies, or individuals which have been thoroughly investigated and have his full personal approval.
- e. He responds to community calls for his services which do not interfere with his ministerial duties.
- f. He promotes the entire program of his church.
- g. He consults first with his Conference Superintendent before any serious discussion or consideration is given to a change in assignment (§564).
- h. A minister is always a gentleman.

G. Ministerial Support

¶592. The salary, residence, traveling and moving expenses of ministers serving on local fields of labor according to the direction of the Annual Conference shall be provided for according to The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (§§711.h.(3); 819.h.).

1. Salary Package

¶593. Proposals for salary and other provisions for ministerial support shall be initiated by the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations (§711.h.(3)) under the direction and on approval of the Conference Superintendent, and according to the standard of minimum financial support for ministers as established by the Annual Conference (§819.h.), and shall be recommended to the local Church Council for adoption and inclusion in the local church's annual budget (§712). Applicable laws of a country or state may require that all budget items be approved by the Annual Congregational Meeting.

2. Special Assistance

¶594. Retired ministers and ministers incapacitated for service and widows and orphans of ministers shall be aided according to the order and rules of the Annual Conference(s) in which they have served and belonged (§819.h.).

H. Transfer of Ministers

1. Certificates of Transfer Between Conferences

¶595. Any minister who desires to transfer his membership from an Annual Conference to another in The Evangelical Church, shall upon vote of the Annual Conference to which he belongs, be

granted a Certificate of Transfer to such Conference, stating his qualifications and relation in the Annual Conference, provided that he is in good standing and has made satisfactory adjustment of any obligations to the Annual Conference. The Certificate of Transfer, if not presented to such Annual Conference within one year from date of issuance, becomes null and void.

2. Relationships to Annual Conferences

¶596. Transferring Out

- a. When a minister is granted a Certificate of Transfer by his Annual Conference, his rights and privileges in that Conference shall cease; his membership shall begin in the Annual Conference to which he moves on the date of his reception.

Transferring In

- b. All active ministers or equivalent transferring from other denominations shall be required to serve one year in a provisional relationship before final acceptance is granted upon a three-fourths vote of the Itinerant Elders present and voting. No minister shall be continued in such provisional relationship for a period of more than two years.

3. Certificates of Transfer Between Denominations

¶597. When a Minister of The Evangelical Church desires to unite with another church and requests the transfer of his credentials, he shall be entitled to receive a Certificate of Recommendation and Withdrawal stating his status and standing in The Evangelical Church. This Certificate may be issued by the Annual Conference upon vote of the Itinerant Elders, providing he is in good standing and has made satisfactory adjustment of all his obligations to the Annual Conference, including the surrender of his credentials to the Conference Superintendent. (¶564)

4. Certificates of Withdrawal

¶598. When a minister desires to withdraw from The Evangelical Church, he shall be entitled to receive a Certificate of Withdrawal. This Certificate may be issued by the Annual Conference upon vote of the Itinerant Elders, providing he is in good standing and has made satisfactory adjustment of all his obligations to the

Annual Conference, including the surrender of his credentials to the Conference Superintendent. (§564)

5. Ad Interim Transfers

¶599. Where there is a need for transfer, withdrawal or provisional acceptance for any minister during the Conference year (ad interim of Annual Conference Sessions) such transfer, withdrawal or provisional acceptance may be granted by the Council of Administration (by a three-fourths majority mail vote of the Itinerant Elders voting within thirty days of notification) upon recommendation of the Board of Ministry and the Conference Superintendent(s).

CHAPTER 6: JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

Biblical Philosophy

All Christians are encouraged to avoid conflicts (Proverbs 17:14) and overlook offenses (Proverbs 19:11). When an offense is too great to overlook then the principles in Matthew 18:15-17 should be observed.

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector” (Matthew 18:15-17 NIV).

Matthew also reminds the church to “go after lost sheep” (¶612) (Matthew 18:12-14) and to practice “forgiveness” as God forgives us (Matthew 18:21-35; 6:12,14-15).

Scripture provides a clear powerful way for resolving conflict and addressing sin. As Christians we are told to apply 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 by not going to civil courts as a first resort. In addition, Scripture calls us to more than confronting brothers or sisters. The purpose of approaching another person, and/or church discipline, is restoration and reconciliation (¶207).

A. Framework

¶601. The following steps were developed by The Evangelical Church to provide a clear biblical framework for carrying out church discipline so that everyone in The Evangelical Church is treated fairly and consistently if they come under discipline.

¶602. These steps apply to church members just as they do to leaders of the Church.

¶603. If a person falls into sin (Ch. 2 Spiritual and Moral Values), it is the responsibility of other church members to lovingly confront him or her and, if he or she refuses to repent, to initiate whatever

disciplinary action is needed to move him or her toward repentance and protect others in the church from their wrongful actions. No one, including leaders, is above disciplinary guidelines, and everyone can benefit from them.

¶604. Mutual accountability and discipline within the church are commanded by God in Scripture and are one of the most important responsibilities of a true church of Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:12-20; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 2:11-14; Ephesians 5:5-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 3:8-11; Hebrews 10:24-30; 12:5-17; 2 John 1:7-11; Revelation 3:19).

¶605. Church discipline is the exercise of the authority that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed to the visible church for the preservation of its purity, peace, and good order. Both formal members and attenders are under the care of and subject to the discipline of the church. The ultimate goal of all discipline is to train Christians to be self-disciplined so that they may share in the holiness of God (Hebrews 12:7-13).

¶606. Discipline is concerned with the prevention and correction of offenses; an offense being defined as anything in the doctrine or practice of a member or minister of the church that is contrary to the Word of God. For example, offences that are heretical, immoral, illegal, or unethical.

B. General Guidelines on Discipline

¶607. The purpose of discipline is:

1. To guard and preserve the honor of God (Romans 2:24; 1 Corinthians 10:31);
2. To protect the purity of the church and to guard other Christians from being tempted, misled, divided, or otherwise harmed (1 Corinthians 5:6); and
3. To restore fallen Christians to usefulness to God and fellowship with His church (see Matthew 18:12-14; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 7:8-10; Galatians 6:1-2).

¶608. Discipline involves three components or phases:

1. God commands all Christians to make every effort, with His help, to discipline themselves and lead godly lives (see

Ephesians 4:25–5:6; 2 Timothy 1:6-7; 2 Peter 1:5-11). If a Christian is unable to discipline themselves then they are encouraged to seek the help needed.

2. If a Christian fails to discipline himself or herself and is entangled in a sin, God commands other brothers and sisters in Christ who have firsthand knowledge of the offense to lovingly confront, counsel, and encourage him or her toward repentance (Matthew 18:15-16; Galatians 6:1-2; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:24-25).
3. If these personal and informal efforts do not correct an offense, God commands the church leaders to intervene and exercise their authority to resolve the matter, protect the church, and, if possible, restore the offender (see Matthew 18:17-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 13:17). This third phase, which may be referred to as formal discipline, involves a hearing before the most appropriate board, with the direction of the pastor and/or superintendent, which provides spiritual/ministry oversight in the local church (Council/Elders/Pastor Parish Relations). Such a hearing shall be carried out according to the following procedures (§613) which are designed to provide due process for the offender and promote a just resolution.
4. Criminal matters shall be referred to the appropriate legal authorities as well as the most appropriate board(s) in the church. In particular, pastors, superintendents, and others in church leadership shall immediately determine whether they have an obligation to report offenses under the laws requiring mandatory reporting of certain offenses (e.g. child abuse, domestic abuse) and if there are any circumstances that could prevent reporting based upon the manner in which the information was obtained.

¶609. When an offense is personal and known only to a few individuals, discipline may not be instituted until there has been a good faith effort to resolve the matter privately and informally (Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1). If the matter cannot be handled privately then an accusation should be submitted:

1. Every accusation must be submitted to the appropriate board in writing.
2. A person may be censured for filing a charge that the board determines to be without merit (Deuteronomy 19:16-21).

¶610. An accusation that is serious enough to warrant discipline and/or a hearing is:

1. An offense in the area of conduct and practice that seriously disturbs the peace, purity, and/or unity of the church;
2. An offense in the area of doctrine for a non-ordained member that would constitute a denial of a credible profession of faith as reflected in his or her membership vows; or
3. An offense in the area of doctrine for a credentialed minister that would constitute a violation of the system of doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures as that system is set forth in our Declaration of Faith (ch. 1), Spiritual and Moral Values (¶¶201-220), and/or Code of Ethics (¶591). When the board convenes to determine whether an offense has occurred and to administer censure, it shall be referred to as a “formal discipline” (¶¶627-631).
4. The chairperson and the secretary of the board shall be the officers of the disciplinary hearing. If one of those persons are the accused, then another person on the board shall be appointed. If this is the case, the accused person shall be excused from acting as a board member during the proceedings but shall be entitled to appear as an accused person (¶¶613-622).

C. Application of Discipline

¶611. Discipline shall be carried out in the church in a redemptive, biblically faithful manner. This requires adherence to the following principles:

1. Act in a loving, patient, and redemptive manner, rather than being harsh, abrupt, or vindictive. Be consistent in applying discipline to the people in our church.
2. Be careful not to show favoritism as you follow your disciplinary guidelines. Always speak the truth.

3. Communicate only to people who have a legitimate right to know.
4. If discussing unproven accusations with a credentialed minister, label them as such; do not allow unsubstantiated charges to be publicly proclaimed by the church.
5. Base decisions on clearly delineated biblical grounds.

¶612. Just as a good shepherd will go after a sheep that has wandered from the flock (Matthew 18:12-14; Ezekiel 34:4-16), so shall the leaders and members of the church seek to restore a wandering member to the Lord through biblical discipline.

1. Therefore, discipline may be instituted or continued either before or after a member seeks to withdraw from membership if the board determines that such discipline may serve to guard and preserve the honor of God, protect the purity of the church, or restore the wandering member to the Lord. While the church cannot force a withdrawing person to remain in the congregation, the church has the right and the responsibility to encourage restoration, to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make a final determination as to the person's membership status at the time withdrawal is received. In doing so, the board, at its discretion, may temporarily suspend further disciplinary proceedings, dismiss any or all charges pending against the accused, or proceed with discipline and pronounce an appropriate censure as provided in these guidelines.
2. If a member renounces the communion of the church by joining some other church and formally submitting to its jurisdiction, and if charges have been made against him/her at the time he or she joins the other church, those charges shall be communicated to the other church as provided in ¶627, and further disciplinary proceedings shall be terminated.

D. Disciplinary Hearing

¶613. A person accused of an offense shall be given a written notification to appear before a hearing at a specific time and place. The notification should specify the charges that have been brought against the accused. Ordinarily all notifications shall be served in

person, but in case that is not possible, notifications shall be sent by certified mail to the person notified.

¶614. At the first meeting of the disciplinary hearing only these actions may be taken:

1. The accusations shall be read and formally presented to the accused together with the names of any witnesses and copies of any documents that may be presented against him/her. If the accusations are accepted by the accused and confession is made, then they shall move toward restoration. If the accusations are denied, then;
2. The disciplinary hearing shall fix the time, date, and place for a second meeting, which shall not be less than ten days later (except as provided in ¶615), and shall issue notifications directing all persons to appear at that time whose presence it may deem necessary; and
3. The accused shall be granted notifications in which he or she may insert the names of the witnesses whom he or she wishes the disciplinary hearing to summon.

¶615. If an alleged offense has the potential to harm others or lead them into sin, or cause division or disruption, the leaders may accelerate the entire disciplinary process and move promptly to protect the church by pronouncing the censures of admonition, rebuke, suspension, or deposition (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Titus 3:10-11). For the same reason, the Superintendent may find it necessary to temporarily suspend a minister.

¶616. If an accused refuses or fails to appear without satisfactory reason for his or her absence at the time appointed for the hearing of the case, he or she shall again be notified, with the warning that, if he or she does not appear, the disciplinary hearing will proceed in his or her absence. The time allowed for the appearance on notification shall be determined by the disciplinary hearing with due consideration for the circumstances. If the accused still refuses or fails to appear, the hearing may proceed in his or her absence. When proceeding in the absence of the accused, the disciplinary hearing shall appoint counsel for the accused, who shall present a case to the disciplinary hearing in defense of the accused. Such counsel shall be entitled to present evidence, interview witnesses, interpose objections, and otherwise act in defense of the accused.

¶617. If unusual circumstances require it, a disciplinary hearing may deny an accused person the right of participating in the Lord's Supper (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 11:27-28) or of performing the functions of his or her office until a hearing is concluded.

¶618. If the accused appears at the second meeting of the disciplinary hearing, he or she shall be asked to admit or deny the charges. If the accused denies the charges, the disciplinary hearing shall proceed to receive evidence. No person shall be deprived of the right to set forth, plead, or offer into evidence the provisions of the Word of God or of The Discipline of The Evangelical Church. If subsequent meetings of the disciplinary hearing are required, the accused and all witnesses shall be notified to appear as provided above.

¶619. The accused shall be entitled to assistance of counsel. No person shall be eligible to act as counsel who is not a member in good standing of The Evangelical Church and/or does not affirm the statement of faith of this church. The accused shall be given a copy of the minutes.

¶620. Any person may be a witness in a hearing if the members of the disciplinary hearing are satisfied that he or she has sufficient competence to make the following affirmation, which is required of all witnesses: "I solemnly swear that by the grace of God I will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth concerning the matters on which I am called to testify."

¶621. Witnesses should provide firsthand knowledge. Evidence must be factual in nature. It may be direct or circumstantial. Caution should be exercised in giving weight to evidence that is purely circumstantial. The accused may object to the competency of any witness and to the authenticity, admissibility, and relevancy of any testimony or evidence produced in support of the charge and specifications. The members of disciplinary hearing shall decide on all such objections after allowing the accused to be heard in support thereof. If the accused so requests, no witness, unless he or she is a member of the disciplinary hearing, shall testify in the presence of another witness who is to testify concerning the accusations.

¶622. At the conclusion of the hearing, the accused may make a final argument with respect to and in accordance with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church. The members of the disciplinary hearing, after deliberation, shall vote on each charge and each specification separately. If the disciplinary hearing decides that the accused is guilty, it shall proceed to determine the censure. Censure shall not be pronounced before the expiration of the time in which the accused may file notice of appeal.

E. Appeals

¶623. Notice of an intention to appeal a decision of the disciplinary hearing must be filed in writing with the secretary of the disciplinary hearing within ten days after the judgment has been announced. In order to file and have an appeal accepted, the appellant (one who is appealing) must lodge the appeal and the specifications of the error with the secretary of the disciplinary hearing of the local church board.

1. For a credentialed minister, an appeal shall be made to the secretary of the Board of Ministry within thirty days after the filing of the notice of appeal.
2. If the appeal is made to the conference on a local church level, the Conference Superintendent can convene a hearing to entertain the appeal and if necessary make a judgment. The Superintendent shall choose two persons either Itinerant Elders or Special Commissioned Personnel

F. Judgment

¶624. If a person who has been adjudged guilty refuses or fails to present himself or herself for censure at the time appointed, the members of the disciplinary hearing shall notify him or her to appear at another time. If he or she does not appear after this notification, the censure may be pronounced in his or her absence.

¶625. The following censures may be pronounced by the disciplinary hearing:

1. *Admonition* means to tenderly and solemnly confront the offender with his or her sin, warning him/her of his/her danger, and exhorting him/her to repentance and to fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ (Colosisans 1:28; 3:16).

2. *Rebuke* is a form of censure more severe than admonition. It involves setting forth the serious character of the offense, reproving the offender, and exhorting him or her to repentance and to more fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ (Proverbs 17:10; 27:5; 2 Timothy 3:16).
3. *Suspension* is a form of discipline by which one is deprived of the privileges of membership in the church, of office, or of both. It may be for a definite or indefinite time. An officer or other member of the church, while under suspension, shall be the object of deep concern and earnest dealing from the church to the end that he or she may be restored (1 Corinthians 5:12).
4. *Deposition* is a form of censure more severe than suspension. It involves a solemn declaration by the disciplinary hearing that the offender is no longer an officer of the church.
5. *Expulsion*, also referred to as disfellowshipping, is the most severe form of censure and is resorted to only in cases of offenses aggravated by persistent impenitence. It involves a solemn declaration by the board over church membership that the offender is no longer considered a member of the body of Christ (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

¶626. Since the church is a body made up of many parts (1 Corinthians 12:12-30), what happens to one member of the church necessarily affects and is of legitimate concern to other members (Romans 12:15-16; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 12:12-30). Therefore, the indefinite suspension, deposition, or expulsion of a member shall be announced to the church so that its members will be able to pray for, encourage, and exhort the accused as opportunities arise, as well as be on guard against any gossip or divisiveness that might arise from the offense or censure (1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14; Titus 3:10-11). The public announcement of censure shall always be accompanied by prayer that God will graciously use the discipline for His own glory, the restoration of the offender, and the edification of the church (¶611). This announcement may be made during a regular worship service, at a special meeting of the membership/congregation, or by letter. Each

church can decide the most appropriate means and venue for communicating the decision (Matthew 18:17).

¶627. If an accused leaves the church during the disciplinary process or while a censure is still in effect, and if the board learns that he is attending another church, the disciplinary hearing may inform that church that the person is currently under church discipline and may ask that church to encourage the accused to repent of his or her sin and to be restored to the Lord and to any people whom he or she has offended. Such communications enhance the possibility that a person may finally repent of his or her sin, and, at the same time, serve to warn the other church to be on guard against the harm that the accused might do to their members (Matthew 18:12-14; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:9-10, 14-15; 3 John 1:9-11).

¶628. If a person who has been censured through suspension, deposition, or expulsion comes to repentance, the church shall warmly and lovingly restore him or her to fellowship within the body (Matthew 18:13; Luke 15:11-32). Once the board is persuaded that the person has sincerely confessed his or her wrongs and sought forgiveness from God and the person or persons he or she offended, it shall announce his or her restoration. That announcement shall be accompanied by a solemn admonition to the congregation that the restored person's offenses have been forgiven and are not to be held against him or her or otherwise hinder his or her fellowship within the church (2 Corinthians 2:5-11). When deemed appropriate by the board, however, the restored person may be restricted from certain responsibilities within the church until he or she has demonstrated the requisite qualities for those responsibilities (1 Timothy 3:2-8; Titus 1:6).

G. Disciplinary Hearing Pertaining to Credentialed Ministry

¶629. The Process for a formal charge against a Credentialed Minister:

1. All accusations shall be reported to the Conference Superintendent. The Conference Superintendent will make an initial inquiry into the accusation and if he believes the accusation has merit, the Conference Superintendent will call for an investigation.

2. If the accusations have merit, the Conference Superintendent will appoint an outside Committee of Investigation of at least two other conference elders to examine the accusations.
3. The Committee of Investigation shall insist on receiving firsthand information. They will not accept hearsay, anonymous, or secondhand reports (Deuteronomy 19:15; 1 Timothy 5:19). The team is committed to go to original sources and hear the relevant information.
4. If there is a hearing of inquiry, the accused pastor must have the opportunity to hear testimony against him and to make a prepared defense (Deuteronomy 19:16). In some cases, it may be appropriate for investigators to gather preliminary information and talk with witnesses on their own, but the accused leader should eventually have the opportunity to hear and respond to any adverse witness or evidence that may be considered by those who will render a final decision in the matter.
5. If a confession is made, then the restoration process shall begin.
6. If a leader has done something wrong, he or she should be given the opportunity to confess it, take responsibility for his or her actions, and make needed changes (Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9). In cases of sin or violations of trust, or when there is a lack of genuine repentance, a minister may be required to surrender his or her office and/or his or her credentials. But when he or she clearly demonstrates a repentant and teachable spirit and the offense does not automatically disqualify him or her for office, he should be reassured of God's grace and forgiveness, and given an opportunity to show how God is helping him/her to change. Similarly, if it is discovered that the accuser brought the complaint without valid grounds, the accuser should be encouraged to repent and change.

¶630. When a Pastor comes under accusation it is important to distinguish the difference between a complaint and a formal accusation. The Conference Superintendent can make the

determination whether it qualifies as a complaint or a formal accusation and may consult with the Board of Ministry.

1. Complaints may be about preferences or about methodology and should be resolved within the local church by the Pastor and local leaders.
2. Formal accusations (e.g. financial mismanagement, sexual sin, etc.) regarding sinful behavior are much more serious.

¶631. In each Annual Conference there shall be a Judicial (disciplinary hearing) Committee consisting of five Itinerant Elders elected by ballot of ministerial members for a period of five years, one to be elected each year. This committee, in addition to the Chair, shall serve as a disciplinary hearing in all cases where charges are preferred against a credentialed minister. Only those who are Itinerant Elders in The Evangelical Church in good standing are eligible to serve as members of the Judicial Committee (¶831.c.). A Conference Superintendent shall serve as Chair of the conference committee, but he shall not be entitled to vote (¶¶820.b.(28); 831.c.). A General Superintendent shall serve as the Chair of the committee to address charges against a Conference Superintendent but shall not be entitled to a vote (¶921.n.).

H. The Disciplinary Hearing of a General Superintendent or Other Denominational Officer

¶632. A disciplinary hearing for the General Superintendent or other denominational officer by The Evangelical Church will consist of the Superintendents from the other conferences.

I. Judgment Pertaining to Ministers

¶633. All censures in paragraph ¶625 may be pronounced for ministers.

J. Expelled Ministers

¶634. A minister, in whatever order of office he or she may stand, who is expelled from The Evangelical Church shall not be allowed to perform any official functions nor shall he be recognized as a member or Minister of The Evangelical Church, without true penitential confession and reformation, and without being received anew as a member into The Evangelical Church, and as a minister. In case a minister's license or commissioning is revoked, or he or she is expelled from the Church, or he or she withdraws either under

charges or in an irregular manner (§598), his license as a minister or his or her commissioning shall be revoked and credentials shall be annulled and he or she shall surrender them to the Conference Superintendent, or to the General Superintendent in the case of a Conference Superintendent (§820.b.(9); 921.n.).

K. Restoration

¶635. The goal of the church is to restore fallen members and leaders. (Galatians 6:1) The wide variety of situations prevent a detailed description, but the restoration process will include:

1. Confession, Repentance, and/or Godly Sorrow – (James 5:16; 2 Corinthians 7:10-11)
2. Forgiveness (Luke 17:3-4; 1 John 1:9; Ephesians 4:32)
3. Admonition, Censure, Suspension, Deposition, or Expulsion (Proverbs 12:1; Hebrews 12:5-6,10-11)
4. Counseling, Godly Advice, and Accountability (Proverbs 11:14; 19:20)\Restoration (Galatians 6:1)
5. Celebration (Luke 15:5-10)

¶636. The local church, conference, or denominational leadership shall appoint a Restoration Team to come alongside of the individual(s) and seek to provide a pathway for restoration. The restoration of the individual to God, to their own family, and to the Body of Christ are a priority. Restoration may or may not include restoration to a church office.

¶637. There can be no set amount of time for complete restoration. Each situation requires discernment given the kind of offense, the damage incurred, and the responsiveness of the individual(s). The Restoration Team is encouraged to act with firmness and gentleness, neither taking too long nor moving too quickly.

¶638. The Restoration Team may consult with other evangelical leaders, Christian counselors, and experts in Christian restoration to study how best to restore an individual given the particulars of his or her situation.

L. Celebration of Restoration

¶639. Repentance should be a joy for the church and a joy for individuals, as it is with the angels in heaven (Luke 15:2-10). Sin is devastating in every way, so repentance should be celebrated as a sign of new life and restoration (Luke 15:7, 10, 22-24; Matthew 18:10-14). Restoration Teams shall seek to celebrate steps of repentance and restoration along the way with as many as are appropriate to include and when possible or appropriate the church body itself.

M. Titles

¶640. The Evangelical Church recognizes that local churches, as evidenced in The Discipline, use different terms to describe the same or similar persons or entities such as pastor/minister and board/council/elders/Pastor Parish Relations. These terms are intended to be used interchangeably but, in the event of a dispute, the superintendent shall have final authority to determine the persons subject to certain types of discipline and the appropriate entity to resolve a particular matter.

CHAPTER 7: THE LOCAL CHURCH

A. The Essential Elements of a Local Church

Paragraphs 701-704 comprise the essential elements of a local Evangelical Church. These elements express the purpose and provide the criteria of viable local church.

1. Ministry in the Local Church

¶701.

- a. The local church is the fellowship of born-again believers in any given community who are connected through their commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Local churches should be involved in need oriented ministry reflecting the spiritual gifts, natural skills of the congregation and the nature of the culture in which the church resides aimed at fulfilling the purpose of the church. The purpose of the local church is to lead people to:
 - (1) Exalt God in worship (worship and sacraments)
 - (2) Experience God's wholeness and holiness (discipleship)
 - (3) Engage in authentic community (fellowship)
 - (4) Equip believers for ministry (ministry/service)
 - (5) Express God's Good News through demonstration and proclamation locally, regionally, and globally (evangelism and missions)
- b. Local ministries are essential to the health and mission of the local church and should take into consideration each age group (i.e. men, women, youth, etc.).
- c. Children's Ministries
 - a. Purpose: Children who are under the age of accountability, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement of Christ, are heirs of the Kingdom of God. By Christian nurture and godly training they should be led into personal acceptance of their inheritance through living faith in Jesus as Savior and into a conscious experience of salvation through obedience to Christ as Lord (¶568).

- b. Child Dedication: It is expected of those who dedicate their children to God through Christian baptism or infant dedication that they be faithful in instructing them in the Word of God, bringing them up in the fear of the Lord and guiding them into the fellowship and activities of the church. These children are to be given the special pastoral care of The Evangelical Church (§568).
- c. Provision for Ministry: Every Local Church, under the leadership of the Senior Minister shall structure a program of ministry especially designed to reach, teach and train children. This program shall focus chiefly on the knowledge of Biblical truth relating to but not limited to one's relationship to God, family, church, community, missions, stewardship, Christian social concerns, and evangelism. This instruction shall include the doctrines of the Christian religion, the meaning of the Christian life, the history of the Christian church at large, and the history, faith and order, life and practice of The Evangelical Church.

Children should be encouraged to be regular in attendance at the various services of worship and instruction, and other activities designed to assist them in living the Christian life. Implementing such a program may utilize Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, day clubs, summer children's camps, and other such activities. Above all, they should be encouraged to repent of their sins, and trust fully in Jesus Christ for salvation (§§567-569).

2. Ministry in Our Communities

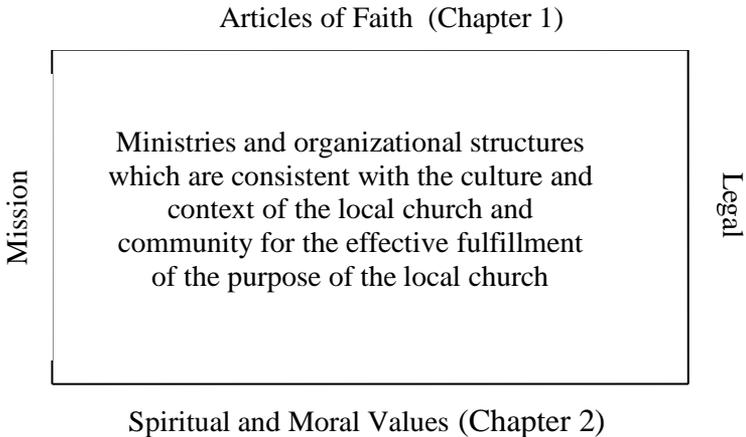
¶702. The local church is connected to our local communities through the love of Christ which compels us to demonstrate His love through acts of compassion and sharing the Gospel. These acts of compassion, service and the manner in which the Gospel is presented should reflect the needs and culture of the community in which the local church ministers and always be conducted with the aim of fulfilling the Great Commission.

3. Ministry with Christ's Church Around the World

¶703. The local church is connected to the church of Jesus Christ around the world through their salvation and faith in Him, the presence of the Holy Spirit and participation in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

4. Ministry as an Evangelical Church

¶704. Local Churches of The Evangelical Church are churches as defined in ¶¶701-703, that are voluntarily connected to The Evangelical Church through a commitment to a common faith, common moral and spiritual values, common mission to the local body of believers and the world at large and a common church polity, as expressed in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church. The responsibility of each local Evangelical Church is to develop ministries and organizational structures that are consistent with the cultural context of their church and community, the Articles of Faith (Chapter 1) and the Spiritual and Moral Values (Chapter 2), and the mission of The Evangelical Church (¶701) and civil government regulations so as to effectively fulfill the purpose of the local church (cf. below). Since the local church is connected to the Annual Conference and denomination it shall be accountable to the Annual Conference and support and participate in the broader ministry of the Conference and Denomination.



5. Local Church Corporation

¶705.

- a. Each local Evangelical Church in the United States shall form itself into a corporation under the laws of the state in which it is situated. It shall do so under the leadership of an attorney.

- b. The object of the corporation shall be the promotion of Christianity through leading people to:
 - (1) Exalt God in worship (worship and sacraments)
 - (2) Experience God's wholeness and holiness discipleship)
 - (3) Engage in authentic community (fellowship)
 - (4) Equip believers for ministry (ministry/service)
 - (5) Express God's Good News through demonstration and proclamation locally, regionally and globally (evangelism and missions)
- c. The members of this corporation shall consist of the members of the local church, as shown by the current membership record.
- d. The officers of this corporation shall consist of a Board of Trustees of three or more persons chosen from its members in such manner, time and place as shall be specified in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.
- e. The Trustees shall have the management and control of all property of the corporation, subject to the provisions of the Discipline, and the by-laws adopted by the corporation consistent with The Discipline, the provisions of the annual Conference and the applicable laws.

B. Becoming an Evangelical Church

1. Pursuing Affiliation and Membership

¶706. If a local group of born-again believers, from outside The Evangelical Church, desires to become a member congregation of The Evangelical Church, they shall pursue affiliation and membership by the following procedure:

- a. The prospective group's leadership meets with the Conference Superintendent, or his designated representative, to make inquiry into affiliation and membership. This inquiry shall include a clear presentation of the Articles of Faith (Chapter 1) and the Spiritual Culture and Moral Standards (Chapter 2) and the Essential Elements of the Evangelical Church (¶¶701-704).
- b. The Conference Superintendent, or his designee, shall present to the prospective group the process, privileges and responsibilities of affiliation and membership.
- c. The prospective group shall petition the Annual Conference for Affiliate Church Membership according to their rules of

operation or agreed upon procedures for making corporate decisions.

- d. The petition shall be presented by the Conference Superintendent to the Conference Board to the Conference Council of Administration, which shall make recommendation for approval of the petition to the Annual Conference.
- e. The Annual Conference shall approve the petition by at least a two-thirds vote.
- f. The Affiliate Church shall petition for full membership in The Evangelical Church to the Conference Council of Administration, within two years of becoming an Affiliate church.
- g. The Annual Conference shall approve the petition for full membership by a two-thirds vote upon recommendation from the Conference Council of Administration.

2. Affiliate Church

¶707. The purpose of the Affiliate Church is designed to create a period of introduction, providing a mutual exploration of the relationship between The Evangelical Church and the Affiliate Church.

- a. An Affiliate Church shall be invited to participate in the ministries and the activities of the Annual Conference.
- b. An Affiliate Church shall be invited to send a Ministerial and Lay Representative to participate in the Annual Conference Session as advisory members.
- c. An Affiliate Church shall be invited to utilize the services and guidance of the Annual Conference.
- d. An Affiliate Church may receive assistance in ministerial supply, as needed. It is understood that the Annual Conference is not obligated to make an assignment through its itinerant system, but will offer whatever assistance is possible.
- e. An Affiliate Church shall be invited to receive all publications and promotions generated by the Evangelical Church.

- f. An Affiliate Church participates in biblical stewardship by supporting conference and denominational ministries through service and financial contributions.
- g. An Affiliate Church shall be invited to access the guidance and direction of the Conference Superintendent as they explore further association with the Annual Conference leading to full membership status or disassociation.

3. Church Plants and Restarts

¶708. At an agreed-upon time by the church plant or restart and the conference board which oversees such projects, these churches are to be considered a full member church of The Evangelical Church with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities as described in the Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

C. The Organizational Structure of an Evangelical Church

1. General Guidelines

¶709. The organizational structure of a local Evangelical Church shall be developed by the local church in consultation with the Conference Superintendent to effectively fulfill the Essential Elements of the Evangelical Church as expressed in ¶¶701-705. The organizational structure shall be established according to the following guidelines:

- a. No organizational structure shall be developed that is contradictory to the Articles of Faith (Chapter 1) and the Spiritual and Moral Values (Chapter 2) of The Evangelical Church as set forth in The Discipline.
- b. The organizational structure shall be developed in accordance with the mission and values of The Evangelical Church.
- c. The organizational structure must be developed in accordance with the laws of the local, state and federal governments providing those laws do not contradict the laws of God.
- d. The pastor is the ranking officer of the local church and as such is the leader of its life and ministries. He is the pastor of the entire congregation, and is responsible for providing spiritual and administrative leadership in all phases of the operation of the local church supporting, defending and promoting the values and mission of The Evangelical Church

(¶¶701-704). The pastor shall be a member of the Local Church Council and shall serve as chairman of both the Local Church Council and Congregational Meetings unless he designates someone else to serve in that capacity.

- e. There shall be in each local church a minimum of five essential committees and boards to provide for the missional and administrative effectiveness of the local church:
- 1) The Local Church Council
 - 2) The Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations
 - 3) Stewardship and Finance Committee
 - 4) The Board of Trustees
 - 5) Personnel Committee

The local church, with the approval of the Conference Superintendent and in reference to The Discipline, may name these committees and boards by other names and may designate a particular group to fulfill the responsibilities of more than one of these committees and boards. The local church may also establish further committees for the purpose of carrying out administrative tasks, such as, but not limited to: Christian Education, Missions, Social Concerns and Compassion Ministries.

2. Essential Committees and Boards

¶710. The Local Church Council

a. Membership:

- (1) The membership shall consist of no less than six members elected from the membership of the church.
- (2) Churches should include on the Local Church Council those individuals who fulfill the offices of Pastor, Lay Leader, Lay Member, Chairman of the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee and President of the Trustee Board.
- (3) Additional members of the council may be elected or appointed to serve on the council by the members of the Local Church Council as needed for the proper and efficient care of the ministry of the church. The length of term and the number of terms served shall be determined by the Local Church Council.

b. The duties of the Local Church Council:

- (1) They shall work in partnership with the pastor to provide for the spiritual well-being and ministry effectiveness of the church.
 - (2) They shall in consultation with the pastor be responsible for the formation of boards, teams, committees or ministries that effectively accomplish the Essential Elements of the local Church (§§701-704).
 - (3) They shall receive regular reports from all boards, teams, committees and ministries of the local church.
- c. All boards, teams, committees and ministries of the local church are amenable to the Local Church Council.

¶711. The Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations

a. Membership:

The Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations shall consist of not fewer than five persons and not more than seven.

b. Eligibility:

Members of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations shall have been members in good standing of the local Evangelical Church for at least one year prior to being elected. No staff member or immediate family of the minister or staff member may serve on the Committee. If a person ineligible to serve on the committee is elected as a lay member to the Annual Conference, and there is no other elected member to the Annual Conference available to serve, the vacancies will be filled upon election by the Local Church Council with the Conference Superintendent and/or his designated representative present and presiding.

c. Election:

- (1) The Lay Member of Annual Conference elected by the Local Church Council shall be a member of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations.
- (2) The duly assigned pastor may appoint one of the committee members annually.
- (3) Upon nomination by the Local Church Council the remaining members of the Committee shall be elected annually by those local church members present at the Local Church Council with the Conference Superintendent or his appointed representative present and presiding. The responsibility of electing members

may be given to the membership of the congregation in consultation with the Conference Superintendent.

d. Terms of Office:

The Local Church Council may establish terms of office (terms not to exceed three years) for and elect the remaining members of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations on a rotating term basis.

e. Organization:

Following the election, the Minister shall convene the committee within ten days to elect the Chair and Secretary.

f. Meetings:

The committee shall meet periodically with either the Conference Superintendent or with the Minister present, at the request of either, or at the request of the Chair of the committee. The committee may meet without the Minister or Conference Superintendent, with the approval of the Minister and the Conference Superintendent. The record of the proceedings of such a meeting shall be submitted to the Minister and the Conference Superintendent. It may meet with the Conference Superintendent without the Minister being present, but in such a case the Minister shall be informed of such meetings and later be brought into consultation either by the committee or by the Conference Superintendent. When the committee meets with the Minister present, the Minister may, at his discretion, absent himself from the meeting.

g. For a Circuit:

Where there is more than one church served by a minister, there may be one Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations with at least one representative from each church. In the event that only one congregation on a field wishes to confer, its representatives on the committee may meet separately with the Minister or the Conference Superintendent, or both.

h. Responsibilities:

- (1) Endeavor to maintain an awareness of the relationship between all ministers assigned by the Conference Superintendent or hired by the Local Church Council and the congregation and to communicate its assessment to the Conference Superintendent;

- (2) Provide evaluation to the Conference Superintendent of all ministers of the church pertaining to their ministry effectiveness and adherence to the Essential Elements of a Local Church as expressed in ¶¶701-704.
- (3) Provide opportunity for counseling on matters pertaining to the relationship with all assigned ministers and staff, and with the congregation(s) including: pulpit supply, initiating proposals for salary, housing, travel expense, vacation, refresher courses, and other matters related to the effectiveness, comfort and well-being of all ministers and their families;
- (4) Serve as a conferring and counseling committee only, and not assume responsibility as a nominating or legislating committee.
- (5) Confer with the Conference Superintendent regarding pastoral changes prior to his appointment of the pastor. (¶502.1.b.).
- (6) Serve the pastor as a conferring and consulting committee on all matters involving ministry staff hiring and effectiveness, the general ministry effectiveness of the church and the resolution of conflict between ministers and members of the congregation.
- (7) This committee will maintain confidentiality regarding all of their discussions, documentation, and social networking. (Reference *Robert's Rules of Order* on "Executive Session.")

¶712. Stewardship and Finance Committee

a. Membership:

The membership and size of the committee shall be determined by the Local Church Council and elected for terms and in the manner determined by the Council but shall include the treasurer and financial secretary.

b. Organization:

The chairperson and secretary of the committee shall be elected from among its members.

c. Meetings:

Meetings shall be called by the chair in accordance with the policies determined by the Local Church Council.

d. Responsibilities:

- (1) To encourage biblical stewardship among the members of the congregation and endeavor to implement stewardship principles for the local church that are in accordance with biblical stewardship principles.
- (2) To provide for the efficient receipt, recording and distribution of all monies received by the church and its various auxiliaries and ministries.
- (3) To provide through the church treasurer financial reports to the Local Church Council according to their policies, to the congregation on an annual basis and to the Conference Superintendent according to the policies of their Annual Conference.
- (4) To confer with the Conference Superintendent and/or a professional financial advisor to ensure that all accounting procedures are in line with government standards for non-profit religious corporations. This would include an annual evaluation of all treasuries in the local church by a non-interested party.

¶713. The Board of Trustees

a. Provision

There shall be in every local church a Board of Trustees elected from among the members of the local Evangelical Church who are at least twenty-one years of age, and elected by the local congregation to fulfill the duties assigned to them in their Constitution.

b. Constitution

Article I - Membership

- (1) There shall be for each local church a Board of Trustees consisting of not fewer than three persons elected from among the members of the local Evangelical Church who are at least twenty-one years of age, have been a member in good standing of the local Evangelical church for at least one year and whose tenure of office shall be so arranged that there shall be an annual election of one or more Trustees, each to serve three years, or until his/her successor is elected, or as the state or country may require.

- (2) All Trustees shall be elected at a Congregational Meeting by the members of the local church present and voting thereon, who are of legal age, unless the charter of the local church or the laws of the state require or permit otherwise.
- (3) The pastor shall be an advisory member of the Board of Trustees except where the applicable laws require him to be a member of such a board.
- (4) Should a Trustee withdraw from the membership of The Evangelical Church, or be excluded therefrom, his trusteeship therein shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or exclusion.
- (5) Vacancies occurring in the Board of Trustees shall be filled by election for the unexpired term by the Local Church Council.

Article II - Organization

The Board of Trustees shall organize by electing from its membership a President, Vice President, Secretary, and if needed, a Treasurer, who shall perform the duties usually pertaining to their respective offices.

Article III - Meetings

The Board of Trustees shall meet at least annually at such time and place as the board may determine. Special meetings may be held at the call of the President or of two Trustees. A majority of the members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum.

Article IV - Amenability

The Board of Trustees is amenable to the Local Church Council and the local congregation, to which bodies it shall report at least annually and as required by each.

Article V - Duties

- (1) The Board of Trustees shall hold and manage all the real and personal property of the local church, receive and administer all bequests, trusts, and funds entrusted to them for the local church in conformity with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church and with the applicable laws.

- (2) The Board of Trustees, under the direction of the Local Church Council, shall insure adequately and provide for the care and maintenance of all properties of the local church.
- (3) The board shall make certain that any church-owned parsonage is in proper living condition for use by a duly appointed minister of the church.
- (4) The board shall make certain that the church building is in proper condition and open for use to carry on ministries that are in harmony with the Essentials of a Local Church in ¶¶701-704.
- (5) The Board of Trustees shall not permit anyone to preach or to present any cause or interest in The Evangelical Church without the consent of the duly appointed pastor.
- (6) The Board of Trustees shall provide for the security of such funds as may be entrusted to them.
- (7) The Board of Trustees shall keep an accurate record of its proceedings and report the same to the Local Church Council and to the congregation at least annually and as required by each. An annual report shall include the transactions of the year, the estimated value of the property and its condition.

c. Field Trustees

- (1) A field composed of two or more churches, each having a local Board of Trustees, may have in addition a Board of Trustees for the field as a whole.
- (2) This board shall hold title to and manage the property belonging to the entire field, such as parsonage, camp ground, burial ground and such other property as may be committed to it. It shall receive and administer funds for the field in conformity with the laws of the state or country.
- (3) This board shall consist of not less than three persons, elected from those who are members of the local Evangelical Churches who are at least twenty-one years of age, and elected by the local congregations involved, in numbers proportionate to their membership.
- (4) These Trustees shall be elected for three years, or until their successors are elected. Vacancies occurring in the

Board of Trustees shall be filled by election for the unexpired term; such election to be held in the same manner as for Trustees of a local church.

- (5) The duties of the Field Trustees shall be the same as those of local church Trustees.

¶714. Personnel Committee

- a. The Local Church Council shall elect a Personnel Committee whose membership is to be broadly representative of the congregation, and elected from those who are members of the local Evangelical Church.
- b. They shall be elected annually by the Local Church Council upon nomination by the pastor.
- c. This committee shall elect its own Chair and Secretary.
- d. It shall serve as a Committee on Nominations for all elective offices and committees of the local church, except where The Discipline provides otherwise.
- e. It shall seek to enlist leadership for the total program of the church, study non-ministerial staff needs and make recommendations to the Local Church Council, except where The Discipline provides otherwise.
- f. This committee will maintain confidentiality regarding all of their discussions, documentation, and social networking. (Reference *Roberts Rules of Order* on "Executive Session.")

3. Other Committees

¶715. Establishing Other Boards, Committees

The Local Church Council in consultation with the pastor may create boards, teams, committees or ministries that effectively accomplish the Essential Elements of the Local Church (¶¶701-704).

4. Church Officers

¶716. Lay Member and Alternate Lay Member of the Annual Conference

a. Election:

- (1) The Local Church Council shall elect a Lay Member(s) and Alternate(s) of the Annual Conference. The responsibility of electing Lay Members may be given to the membership of the congregation in consultation with the Conference Superintendent.

- (2) The election shall take place at a meeting called by the Conference Superintendent to be held at least 60 days prior to the Annual Conference Session.
- (3) The election shall be conducted by the Conference Superintendent or his appointed representative.
- (4) If the Conference Superintendent is not present for the election the results of the election must be reported to him within ten days following the election.

b. Eligibility:

- (1) The Lay Member(s) and Alternate(s) must be members in good standing of The Evangelical Church for at least two years and the local church from which they are elected for at least one year with the exception of newly formed churches.
- (2) They must be of legal voting age.
- (3) The wife of a minister in the local church is not eligible.
- (4) Widows of ministers are eligible for election.

c. The Number of Lay Member(s) Elected for the Local Church:
The number of Lay Member(s) elected by each local church shall be elected on the following basis of resident membership:

- 1-150: 1 Lay Member
- 151-500: 2 Lay Members
- 500 and over: 3 Lay Members

d. Term of Office:

The Lay Member(s) and Alternate(s) shall continue in this relationship until their successors are elected, or until the time of the next Annual Conference Session following the one to which they were elected, whichever shall occur first.

e. Member of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and the Local Church Council:

The Lay Member (or when there is more than one Lay Member, the Lay Member designated by the local Church Council) shall become a member of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations and a member of the Local Church Council and report the actions of and promote the program of the Annual Conference Session in the local Church Council.

¶717. Financial Secretary

The Local Church Council shall choose to elect a Financial Secretary or hire a person to fulfill the duties of the Financial Secretary listed in ¶717.c.(1-3).

a. Election:

The Financial Secretary shall be elected annually by the Local Church Council from among the members of the church.

b. Hire:

The Local Church Council may hire a person to perform the duties of the Financial Secretary upon the recommendation from the pastor and in consultation with the Conference Superintendent.

c. Duties:

- (1) Receive and record in confidential form all monies coming to the church, not under immediate control of the Trustees;
- (2) Keep an accurate account with each individual contributor;
- (3) Distribute these monies as designated by the contributors to the local church Treasurer(s) and take a receipt for the same.

¶718. Church Treasurer

The Local Church Council shall choose to elect or hire a Church Treasurer.

a. Election:

The Church Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Local Church Council from among the members of the church.

b. Hire:

The Local Church Council may hire a person to perform the duties of the Church Treasurer upon the recommendation from the pastor and in consultation with the Conference Superintendent.

c. Duties:

- (1) Deposit promptly all funds received from the Financial Secretary or from any other source in a bank approved by the Local Church Council.
- (2) Distribute them as directed.
- (3) If needed, will oversee personnel hired to help with bookkeeping.

(4) Report to the local Church Council.

¶719. Lay Leader and Assistant Lay Leaders

a. The local church shall elect a Lay Leader or, if deemed advisable, a team of Lay Leaders in each local church to support the ministers of the local church in the performance of their pastoral duties.

b. Qualifications:

- (1) They should be people who pursue a Christlike character and lifestyle. They should diligently build up their faith through use of the spiritual disciplines and actively pursuing a life of inward and outward holiness. They should be an “example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity (1 Timothy 4:12b).
- (2) They should be able to provide spiritual leadership in the local church, supporting, defending and promoting the Articles of Faith (Chapter 1) and the Spiritual and Moral Values (Chapter 2) of The Evangelical Church as set forth in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.
- (3) They should be regular in their attendance providing for the members of the local church a good example of service for Christ supporting the work of the church, the Annual Conference and denomination.
- (4) They should endeavor to be used of God in fulfilling the Great Commission.
- (5) They shall have been a member of the local Evangelical Church for at least one year.

c. Elections:

- (1) They shall be elected annually by the local congregation at the Annual Congregational meeting upon nomination by the Personnel Committee.
- (2) They shall be elected for a term of one year unless there is more than one Lay Leader elected, in which case the Local Church Council can determine the length of each term.
- (3) Any vacancy may be filled by election of the Local Church Council upon nomination by the Personnel Committee to fill the unexpired term.

d. Duties:

- (1) They are to assist the ministers of the local church at their request in the ministry of pastoral care and discipleship to those attending the local church.
- (2) They are to assist the ministers of the local church in encouraging the members of the church in their use of the spiritual disciplines.
- (3) They are to assist the ministers of the local church at their request in efforts to reach the lost of their community.
- (4) They may provide counsel to the ministers of the local church on any matters related to the life of the church.
- (5) They may be used by the ministers of the local church to help bring resolution to conflicts between members in the church.
- (6) They are to especially support the ministers of the local church through prayer and encouragement.

¶720. Other Church Officers

The Local Church Council may elect any other officers considered to be advantageous to effectively accomplish the mission of the church.

5. Hiring and Dismissal of Church Ministry Staff

¶721. Hiring Church Staff

- a. The Local Church Council may hire any Church Ministries Staff considered advantageous to effectively accomplish the mission of the church upon the nomination by the pastor following consultation with the Conference Superintendent and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.
- b. The Local Church Council may dismiss any Church Ministries Staff after following the policies of the church and consultation with the pastor, the Conference Superintendent, and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.

6. Congregational Meetings

¶722. Annual Congregational Meetings

There shall be held in every local church an Annual Congregational Meeting, composed of the members of that local church.

a. Governing Rules

- (1) The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held at the call of the pastor.
- (2) Public announcement of this meeting shall be made at the worship services on two (2) Sundays preceding such Annual Congregational Meeting.
- (3) The members present at the Annual Congregational Meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- (4) The minimum voting age for members shall be 13 years except in the case of the election of the members of the Board of Trustees, in which case the minimum voting age shall be the legal voting age.
- (5) The pastor shall preside at the Congregational Meeting, and the Secretary of the Local Church Council shall serve as its secretary.

b. Purpose

- (1) To review the work of the year;
- (2) To consider local opportunities and needs;
- (3) To elect Trustees, Lay Leader(s) and any other officers as determined by the Local Church to be elected by the congregation whose election has not been provided for elsewhere in The Discipline.
- (4) To hear reports concerning the work, present status, and future ministries of the local church and of its organizations and boards;
- (5) To make recommendations to the Local Church Council; and
- (6) To transact such other business as a Congregational Meeting may be called upon to do.

¶723. Special Congregational Meetings

The Local Church Council may authorize Special Congregational Meetings of the local church members on record to transact special items of business or handle matters that require the consent of the congregation according to the following rules:

- a. Special Congregational Meetings may be called by the pastor upon authorization by the Local Church Council.
- b. Public announcement of this meeting shall be made at the worship services on two (2) Sundays preceding such Special

- Congregational Meetings, or by mail to all members on record, at least seven (7) days before the date of the meeting.
- c. The reason(s) for the meeting must be stated in the announcement.
 - d. The only business that can be transacted is the business stated in the announcement.
 - e. The voting age is the same as for the Annual Congregational Meeting.
 - f. The members present at any Special Congregational Meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

D. Property, Building and Finances

1. Holding and Conveying Property

¶724.

- a. Title to all property of a local church shall be held in the name of the corporation organized for that purpose.
- b. In order to secure the right of property with the appurtenances thereof, of the churches and parsonages and other real properties of The Evangelical Church, care shall be taken that all conveyances and deeds be drawn and executed in due conformity to the applicable laws and also in due conformity to The Discipline of The Evangelical Church. Deeds shall be registered or recorded directly upon their executing.
- c. The Trustees of the local church shall have power to purchase, sell, convey, and encumber any real estate, title to which is held by the local church corporation, upon the authorization of the local church, except in those instances when grants, appropriations, or loans have been made by The Evangelical Church, its agencies and institutions, and/or the Annual Conference Board of Trustees has guaranteed loans in behalf of said local church. In such instances authorization must also be secured from the Annual Conference within whose bounds such local church is situated, or the Council of Administration of the Annual Conference between sessions of the Annual Conference.

2. Erection and Reconstruction of Buildings

¶725.

Authorization from the Local Church Council:

- a. Any congregation desiring to relocate, purchase, erect, enlarge or reconstruct a house of worship, parsonage, or other building for the local church or charge shall first secure the consent of the local Church Council, in consultation with the Conference Superintendent.
- b. Project Committee:
The Local Church Council may appoint a Project Committee to develop preliminary plans which includes design, equipment, financial and building proposals. The committee may appoint any subcommittees as necessary to make the appropriate plans.
- c. Authorization from the Local Church:
Upon completion of the preliminary plans, both as to construction and finance, these plans shall be submitted for approval to the local church at a Special Congregational Meeting called for that purpose. Final approval of the entire project rests with the body that holds title to the property or for which the property is held in trust.
- d. Vote of Approval;
Approval is dependent upon a 2/3 (two thirds) vote of the members present at the Special Congregational meeting.
- e. Construction Oversight:
The Project Committee shall serve as the committee to provide oversight for the construction and completion of the project.

3. Leasing Property for Mineral Production

¶726.

- a. Authorization:
Subject to and in accordance with the applicable laws, the Board of Trustees of a local church, with the approval of the Local Church Council, may lease the lots and lands held in trust by it for the production of oil, gas, coal and other minerals, upon such terms as may be deemed best, provided, however, that such production shall not interfere with the purpose for which said lots and lands are held.
- b. Use of Funds:
The funds received from such leases as rentals, royalties, or otherwise, shall be used by the Local Church Council in accordance with the financial plan of the local church for

support of local church, Annual Conference and denominational ministries.

4. Financial Plan

¶727.

a. Annual Budget:

The Local Church Council in consultation with the Stewardship and Finance Committee shall adopt an Annual Budget which shall be presented to the local church at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

b. Financial Partnership with the Annual Conference:

Each local church shall financially support the ministry of the Annual Conference according to the procedures adopted by the Annual Conference.

E. Dissolution and Discontinuance of the Local Church

1. Dissolution of Local Church Relationship

a. Initiated by the Local Church:

¶728. A congregation may dissolve its relationship with The Evangelical Church in the following manner:

- (1) Congregational action dissolving or changing, or intended to dissolve or change, the ecclesiastical relationship or relation of the congregation must be taken at least six months prior to the opening date of the regular Session of the Annual Conference of The Evangelical Church within whose geographical area the congregation and its property are located. During this six month period a Congregational Meeting may be called by the local Church Council only if one-fourth of the members of the local church in good standing request, by petition, such a meeting, and said call to contain an announcement of the purpose of such a meeting.
- (2) At least ten (10) days written notice of such a meeting shall be given to all members of the congregation entitled to vote by mailing a copy of the call to the members shown on the membership records, and the said meeting shall be announced on two (2) Sundays in the regular services of the congregation immediately prior to said meeting. The announcement shall state the time, place and purpose of the meeting.

- (3) All members who are of legal age whose names are enrolled at the time the meeting is convened and whose names have been enrolled at least one year prior thereto, are entitled to vote.
- (4) At a meeting thus convened, the congregation by a three-fourths vote of those present rather than total possible of resident membership of the congregation appearing on the church membership record and entitled to vote as heretofore set forth, may vote to dissolve the ecclesiastical relationship with The Evangelical Church.
- (5) No such dissolution of a congregation's relationship with The Evangelical Church shall become effective unless and until formal written notice of such action shall be delivered to the Annual Conference of The Evangelical Church at the forthcoming session.
- (6) Members entitled to vote at the aforesaid Congregational Meeting who, in the event of a decision to dissolve the relationship with The Evangelical Church, shall decide to remain with The Evangelical Church shall be entitled to a pro-rata share of the appraised value of the property of the congregation on the effective date of such dissolution; provided, however, that such dissenting members shall agree by majority vote, to use and shall use such money in providing and maintaining a place of worship in connection with The Evangelical Church with which they shall come into relationship.
- (7) If any financial assistance shall have been made by the Annual Conference of The Evangelical Church or any of the agencies of the Conference toward the building, rebuilding, purchasing, or development of its property, the amount of such assistance shall constitute a non-interest-bearing obligation chargeable against the property of the congregation, such debt to become payable and collectable from the congregation which shall separate from or dissolve its relationship with The Evangelical Church.

b. Initiated by the Annual Conference

¶729. An Annual Conference may initiate to release a local church from its relationship to the Annual Conference according to the following rules:

(1) Reason for Release:

When in the opinion of the Conference Superintendent in consultation with the General Superintendent, a local church no longer is in conformity to the Articles of Faith or the Values of The Evangelical Church as expressed in The Discipline, or fulfills the Essential Elements of the local church (§§701-704) or supports the ministries of the Annual Conference or denomination he may take the appropriate steps to release that local church from membership in The Evangelical Church.

(2) Procedure:

- (a) After consultation with the General Superintendent, the Conference Superintendent may submit a request to the Conference Council of Administration, to release a local church from membership in The Evangelical Church.
- (b) After due consideration (with possible reference to an appropriate Conference Board for study), the Conference Council of Administration may submit a recommendation to the Annual Conference for the release of the local church.
- (c) The Annual Conference may release a local church from membership in The Evangelical Church upon a 2/3 majority vote approving the recommendation from the Conference Council of Administration.
- (d) When by action of the Annual Conference a local church is released from membership in The Evangelical Church, individual members who desire to remain in The Evangelical Church shall be transferred by the Minister or the Conference Superintendent to the nearest Evangelical Church or such church or churches as the members concerned may request.
- (e) The official relationship between the local church and the denomination shall cease immediately upon the affirmative vote of the Annual Conference. All rights and privileges of membership in The Evangelical Church shall be discontinued, which includes, but is not limited to, IRS protection as a non-profit organization under the denomination's status as a non-profit organization.

2. Discontinuance of Local Church

¶730. Discontinuing Churches

a. The Responsibility of the Conference Superintendent

It is the responsibility of the Conference Superintendent, in consultation with the Conference Council of Administration, to explore a variety of ways to help struggling churches become healthy churches fulfilling the Essential Elements of the Local Church (¶¶701-704) before discontinuance is considered.

b. Discontinuance Initiated by the Local Church

A local church may petition the Annual Conference for permission to discontinue operating as a local church according to the following procedures:

- (1) The Local Church Council shall contact the Conference Superintendent to consult with him concerning the future of their church.
- (2) If after other options for continued operation have been considered, the Local Church Council is convinced that it should discontinue they shall, with the approval of the Conference Superintendent, call for a Special Congregational Meeting for the purpose of approving a petition to the Annual Conference for discontinuance.
- (3) The Special Congregational Meeting shall follow the rules governing such meeting as prescribed in ¶723.
- (4) The petition to discontinue must be approved by a two-thirds majority.
- (5) The approved petition to discontinue shall be presented by the Conference Superintendent to the Annual Conference. A church shall not be considered to be officially discontinued until that Annual Conference approves the petition. (While the church is not considered officially discontinued until approved by the Annual Conference, a church with the approval of the Conference Superintendent, may discontinue holding services and performing ministries.)

c. Discontinuance of a Non-functioning Church

A local church shall be adjudged to be discontinued when religious services have not been held in that church for at least two consecutive years by a minister under appointment by an Annual Conference of The Evangelical Church or in

agreement with a Conference of The Evangelical Church in whose boundaries that church is located and a resolution declaring such local church to be discontinued has been adopted by the Annual Conference.

3. Restarts

¶731.

It is the responsibility of each Annual Conference to establish policies which govern the process of restarting a local church for the purpose of renewed ministry. These policies should include the process of restarting a church, the transfer of members who wish to remain with the new church and matters related to holding and conveying of all church property and assets.

4. Property and Membership Transfer Related to Discontinued Churches

¶732.

- a. In case a congregation whose property is not held in trust for The Evangelical Church is transferred to another field or denomination, or is discontinued, all grants or appropriations made by The Evangelical Church, its agencies and institutions, shall be a first lien on the property and on the proceeds derived from the sale thereof.
- b. When a field having a parsonage, or other property, is divided, the claims of the local church of said field shall be equitably adjusted by the Local Church Council of the original field, or by the Annual Conference. In case of disagreement, the decision of the Annual Conference shall be final.
- c. Upon the discontinuance of the organization of any local church all properties, real and personal, the title of which is held in trust by the local church Trustees for the congregation, the local Trustees and remaining members of the congregation shall immediately dispose of all assets in keeping with the local church, charitable and non-profit corporations chartered and shall immediately cease the use of the corporate name of The Evangelical Church.
- d. When the organization of a local church is discontinued the remaining members shall be transferred by the Minister, or the Conference Superintendent, to the nearest Evangelical

Church or to such church or churches as the members concerned may request.

CHAPTER 8: THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

A. Organization of the Annual Conference

1. Membership

¶800. The membership of the Annual Conference Session shall consist of all its Itinerant Ministers, its Lay Members having been elected from the member churches of The Evangelical Church within the boundaries of the Annual Conference and according to the provisions of The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, the Conference Secretary, the Conference Treasurer, the Conference Statistician, lay members of the General Church Council and of the Commission on The Discipline, the President of the Conference Evangelical Men, the President of the Conference Evangelical Women, the President of the Conference Evangelical Youth, and such other officers as the Annual Conference may designate.

The Lay Member(s) (¶716) from each local church shall be elected on the following basis of resident membership. A resident member is a member in good standing and actively fulfilling their membership vows including attendance, service and financial support. ``

1-150:	1 Lay Member
151-500:	2 Lay Members
500 and over:	3 Lay Members

2. Boundaries

¶801. The boundaries of the Annual Conference shall be determined by the General Church Council upon recommendation of the Council of Superintendents of The Evangelical Church and ratification by the General Conference (¶¶914.m.; 928.g.).

3. New Conferences

¶802. Upon application by a group of churches for membership as a conference in The Evangelical Church, the General Church Council shall make inquiry concerning agreement with the doctrine and polity of The Evangelical Church, and may effect the organization of those churches into an Annual Conference in

agreement with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

4. Dissolution of an Annual Conference

¶803.

- a. An Annual Conference may dissolve its relationship with The Evangelical Church in the following manner: Annual Conference action dissolving or changing, or intended to dissolve or change, the ecclesiastical relationship or relation of the Annual Conference, can be taken only during the second Annual Conference Session preceding the regular quadrennial session of the General Conference of The Evangelical Church. This action must be by a three-fourths ballot vote.
- b. All Ministers and Lay Members of the Annual Conference shall be notified in writing at least sixty (60) days prior to the beginning of the Annual Conference Session wherein such action is anticipated. No action on dissolution may be voted in an Annual Conference Session without this provision.
- c. All members of the Annual Conference, ministerial and lay, are entitled to vote as provided for in The Discipline.
- d. The Annual Conference may, by a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting, vote to dissolve the ecclesiastical relationship with The Evangelical Church. No such dissolution of an Annual Conference's relationship with The Evangelical Church shall become effective unless and until in the Annual Conference Session immediately preceding the regular quadrennial session of the General Conference of The Evangelical Church the action voted at the Annual Conference Session one year previous is ratified by a three-fourths ballot vote of the members of the Annual Conference present and voting, and further that formal written notice of such action shall be delivered to the General Conference at its quadrennial session.
- e. If any financial assistance shall have been made by the Denomination, its agencies, or another Annual Conference of The Evangelical Church, to the Annual Conference desiring dissolution, its agencies or any of its local churches, for building, rebuilding, purchasing, or development of property, the amount of such assistance shall constitute a non-interest-bearing obligation chargeable against the Annual

Conference, such debt to become payable and collectable from the Annual Conference which shall separate from or dissolve its relationship with The Evangelical Church.

Meetings and Procedures of the Annual Conference Session

5. Annual Business Session

¶810. The Annual Conference shall meet annually at the time and place fixed by the previous session of the Annual Conference. If the time and/or place of the meeting of the Annual Conference is not fixed at the previous session, or if it should be necessary to change the time and/or place, the Conference Council of Administration and the Conference Superintendent(s) shall determine the same and make due announcement thereof.

6. Special Sessions

¶811. Special sessions of the Annual Conference, possessing the authority and exercising all the powers of the Annual Conference, may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been determined by the Annual Conference or may be called by the Conference Council of Administration to meet at such time and in such place as may be determined by the Conference Council of Administration and the Conference Superintendents(s). The purpose of such special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purpose stated in such call.

7. Attendance

¶812. It is the duty of every member of the Annual Conference Session to attend its sessions. Any member unable to attend the Annual Conference Session shall report by letter setting forth the reason for his absence. Should any Minister in active service absent himself from the session of the Annual Conference without a satisfactory reason for his absence, he shall be dealt with as one disobedient to The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

8. Lay Members' Rights

¶813. The Lay Members of the Annual Conference Session shall participate in all deliberations and vote upon all measures, except on the granting or validation of license, ordination, reception into

the itinerancy, or any question concerning the character and official conduct of Ministers. The Lay Members of the Annual Conference Session may serve on all committees except Ministerial Relations and the Judicial Committee (§§631, 716, 819.k.).

9. Seating of an Alternate Lay Member

¶814. When at any time a Lay Member is excused by the Annual Conference Session from further attendance during the session, the Alternate Lay Member may be seated in his stead. The Lay Member or Alternate, whoever was last seated in the Annual Conference Session, shall be the Lay Member of the Annual Conference Session from his local church (§716).

10. Chair

¶815. At the invitation of the Annual Conference the General Superintendent may preside at the Annual Conference Sessions and any special sessions that may be called. He and the Conference Superintendent(s) shall officiate in the ordination of Ministers (§921.k-1.).

11. Conference Secretary

¶816. The Annual Conference Session shall elect quadrennially by ballot a Secretary who may appoint one or more assistants. The Conference Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of the Annual Conference Session, and unless otherwise provided for, shall edit the same for publication. The Conference Secretary shall also serve as Secretary for the Conference Council of Administration. In case of a vacancy in the office of Secretary between annual sessions, the Conference Superintendent(s) shall appoint an acting Secretary.

12. Agenda

¶817. The Annual Conference Session, to expedite the transaction of its business, shall adopt an agenda as a basis of its procedure; a suggested agenda shall be prepared by the Conference Superintendent(s) and such others as the Annual Conference Session may name, and be submitted to the Annual Conference Session for adoption.

13. Committees

¶818. The Annual Conference Session may appoint those committees that are necessary to conduct its business, such as: Appropriations, Audit, Boundaries, Christian Education, Christian Social Concerns, Church Extension, Courtesies, Evangelism, Letters and Documents, Memorials, Ministerial Relations, Missions, Statistics and Analysis, Stewardship, Ways and Means, Worship.

14. Powers and Duties

¶819.

a. Rules and Regulations

The Annual Conference Session for its own government may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

b. Official Procedure

In all matters of parliamentary procedure *Robert's Rules of Order (Revised)* shall constitute the standard.

c. Election Procedure

All voting shall be by majority vote unless otherwise provided for in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church. On matters relating to finances and/or election an Annual Conference Session shall have the right, by a majority ballot vote, to limit the voting of its Itinerant Elders to those who are serving a church that is a member of the Annual Conference, to retired Itinerant Elders and to Itinerant Elders who are officers of the Annual Conference Session.

d. Inquiries

- (1) The Annual Conference Session shall make inquiry into the status of the local churches, and where there is a deficit in finances, the Minister and Lay Member shall appear before the Committee on Ways and Means, and make explanation (¶586).
- (2) Where there have been no conversions reported during the year, the Minister and Lay Member shall appear before the Committee on Evangelism and make explanation (¶¶560; 586).
- (3) The Annual Conference Session shall make inquiry into the moral and official conduct of its Ministers. Any case

requiring special consideration may be referred to the Committee on Ministerial Relations.

e. Petitions

Local churches, boards, and other denominational organizations may submit petitions to the Annual Conference Session. These shall be sent either to the Conference Superintendent or to the Conference Secretary, and when properly presented on the conference floor may be delegated to the proper committee(s) for recommendation and action.

f. Reports

The Annual Conference Session shall receive and act upon reports from its Conference Superintendent(s), the Conference Council of Administration, other conference officials, boards, auxiliaries, agencies, commissions, standing and special committees.

g. Financial Plan and Budget Apportionment

The Conference Council of Administration, prior to the session of the Annual Conference, shall make a study of the financial needs of the Annual Conference and all other causes. On recommendation of the Conference Council of Administration, the Annual Conference Session shall establish an Annual Budget and shall apportion the budget in full to the local churches according to the financial policy for determining apportionments established by and written into the Business Rules and Standing Resolutions of the Annual Conference (§826.f.).

The Conference Council of Administration shall study and grant approval for, if found appropriate and in harmony with the purposes and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, campaigns for special gifts as presented by any department, agency, auxiliary or institution of The Evangelical Church (§§826.e.; 834.f.(6); 943).

h. Ministerial Support

The Annual Conference Session shall provide for the salary, residence, travel, and moving expense of the Conference Superintendent(s), set a standard of minimum salary for its Ministers (§§592, 593), and provide compensation for Annual Conference officials. The Annual Conference Session shall also inquire into the needs of its ministerial members who are incapacitated for active service, and of widows and orphans of Ministers, and provide such financial

aid as its resources permit (§594).

i. Assignment of Fields of Labor

- (1) The Annual Conference Chair shall read all assignments of fields of labor annually, as provided for in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (§§502; 525; 528; 529; 563; 564; 711.h.(5)).
- (2) When any local church desires that an assignment be made to a man on the basis of an Assistant Minister, that church through its Senior Minister, shall submit a request to the Conference Superintendent(s) for such assignment; the request to include plans, job analysis, desired credentials. The Conference Chair and the Conference Superintendent(s) may make such assignments in accordance with the disciplinary provisions governing the assignment of Ministers.
- (3) In the event of a change of Senior Ministers, any Assistant Minister having been assigned by the Annual Conference shall have his assignment to that field terminated.
- (4) Any church desiring to hire or appoint special ministries personnel, shall do so through its Senior Minister in consultation with the Conference Superintendent (§721).

j. Election of Conference Personnel

The Annual Conference Session shall elect administrative and program personnel, members of boards, committees, commissions and agencies as provided for and according to the provisions in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church. The Annual Conference Session, upon majority vote, and for the purpose of adjusting tenure only, may elect a certain number of members of its boards, committees, commissions and agencies for a term of less than four years, providing such adjustment is not in conflict with the constitutional provision or corporation law governing any such board, committee, commission or agency, or in conflict with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

k. Voting on Credentials and Licenses by Itinerant Elders

Only the Itinerant Elders of the Annual Conference Session shall vote on the granting of License to Preach, validation of License to Preach, advancement to Order of Elder, reception into the itinerancy, reception of Ministers from another denomination, and the transfer of a Minister to another

denomination, according to the provisions of The Discipline relating to these matters, and other designated responsibilities identified in The Discipline as delegated only to the Itinerant Elders (§§535-555; 813).

1. Other Business

The Annual Conference Session shall have authority to exercise all the powers ascribed to it for the transaction of any other necessary business, as identified and/or provided for in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

B. Administration of the Annual Conference

¶820.

1. Conference Superintendent

a. Electing and Stationing Conference Superintendents

- (1) The Annual Conference Session shall elect by open ballot one or more Conference Superintendents for a term of four years, from among the active Itinerant Elders who have been elders of The Evangelical Church for at least five years immediately preceding the time of such election. If a voting member of the Annual Conference wishes to vote for a qualified elder from another Annual Conference, he must first obtain permission in writing from that elder.
- (2) Conference Superintendents shall be eligible for re-election at the expiration of their term of service except in those Annual Conferences whereby a two-thirds vote of all votes cast for the tenure of office has limited the office to two or more consecutive four-year terms of service.
- (3) Upon two-thirds majority vote of an Annual Conference Session and only for the purpose of adjusting the tenure of office of Conference Superintendent in conferences having more than one Superintendent or to fill an unexpired term, such Conferences may elect one or more Conference Superintendents for a term of less than four years.
- (4) The Annual Conference Session shall annually station the Conference Superintendent(s) and determine the district of each. Where there is but one Superintendent in an Annual Conference, the election of such Conference Superintendent shall automatically station

him within that Annual Conference and determine its boundaries as his district.

b. Duties of a Conference Superintendent

The duties of a Conference Superintendent are as follows:

- (1) He shall travel and preach within the boundaries of the district assigned him, to have charge of all Ministers and officials, and oversee the spiritual and temporal interests of all churches in his district.
- (2) He shall take special care that The Discipline of The Evangelical Church is known, understood, and observed in all its parts within the boundaries of the Annual Conference.
- (3) With the Conference Council of Administration, he shall seek to develop methods most efficient for acquainting the people of the churches within the boundaries of the Annual Conference with the work and needs of The Evangelical Church, and of the Annual Conference, and shall cooperate with the ministers where necessary, in securing the full budgetary apportionment assigned to the churches, for carrying out the united task of the Annual Conference program.
- (4) In a very special manner it shall be the duty of the Conference Superintendent to cherish and encourage young ministers, and always be concerned for those whom God has called to preach, encouraging them in making the fullest possible dedication in preparation for the work of the Gospel ministry.
- (5) He shall bear the responsibility of filling all ministerial vacancies in the churches of his district, according to the provisions of The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.
- (6) All assignments of fields of labor shall be made by the Conference Superintendent, and shall be read annually by the Chair of the Annual Conference Session (§§502.1.c.; 819.i.).
- (7) Should it become necessary to assign leadership to any church within the boundaries of his district by employing a minister not regularly licensed and authorized by the Annual Conference to administer the holy sacraments, it shall be the duty of the Conference

Superintendent, or his appointed representative to preside at such services in which the administration of the holy sacraments is scheduled. His appointed representative must be one authorized by The Evangelical Church to administer the holy sacraments (§§528; 529).

- (8) In case of necessity he has the authority in consultation with the General Superintendent in the interval of Annual Conference Sessions to remove those guilty of immorality within the bounds of the Annual Conference, and to change or transfer ministers. Such removals, changes or transfers shall be made in accordance with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, in consultation with the General Superintendent (§§615; 921.m.).
- (9) In case a minister's license is revoked, or he is expelled from the Church, or he withdraws either under charges or in an irregular manner, his license as a minister shall be revoked and ordination papers shall be annulled, and he shall surrender them to the Conference Superintendent (§634).
- (10) He shall be responsible for circulating a statement of annual affirmation by ministers to question 11 of the Doctrinal Examination (§831.e.(12)) and adherence to the polity, spiritual culture, and moral standards of The Evangelical Church (§§201-220; 562).
- (11) If a Minister expresses reservations about the doctrines, polity, spiritual culture and moral standards of The Evangelical Church, (§§562; 831.e.(12)) the Conference Superintendent shall be responsible for the following procedure:
 - (a) He shall meet with the minister who expresses reservations about the doctrines, polity, spiritual culture and moral standards of The Evangelical Church and/or does not affirm the doctrines, polity, spiritual culture, and moral standards of The Evangelical Church to clarify the minister's reasons (§§201-220; 562).
 - (b) If the minister remains adamant in not affirming the doctrines, polity, spiritual culture, and moral standards of The Evangelical Church, then the

minister shall meet with the Conference Board of Ministry (§831.e.(2)(g)).

- (c) If the minister continues to refuse to affirm the doctrines, polity, spiritual culture, and moral standards of The Evangelical Church, then the Board of Ministry shall recommend to the Conference Superintendent the establishment of a Committee on Investigation (§§629.1-3; 831.c.).
- (12) Where churches do not have ministerial supervision, it shall be the duty of the Conference Superintendent to exercise direct oversight of such churches, and to make report of the same to the Annual Conference in its annual session.
- (13) He shall authorize a Minister of The Evangelical Church to organize a local church according to The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, should such an occasion arise. He shall give adequate counsel and guidance in the establishing and organizing of a local church, and shall likewise give adequate and proper counsel to any congregation desiring to become a member church of The Evangelical Church (§§572.d.(1); 573-574; 706-708).
- (14) He shall contact a local congregation having expressed its desire to unite with The Evangelical Church regarding its position on the doctrine and polity of The Evangelical Church (§706.a.).
- (15) He shall contact, consult with and give adequate and proper counsel to any congregation desiring to become an Affiliate Church of The Evangelical Church (§707).
- (16) He shall not be remiss in attending his appointed meetings, and ever be mindful to set his brethren in the ministry a good example in faithful service.
- (17) He shall prepare a schedule of meetings with the Local Church Councils and preside over them whenever practicable. He shall in each church of his district, at least sixty days prior to the Annual Session of the Annual Conference, call and set the time for a meeting of the local Church Council*, at a place designated by the Minister of the local church, for the purpose of electing Lay Member(s) and Alternate Lay Member(s)

of the Annual Conference Session, according to The Discipline of The Evangelical Church. This election shall be presided over by the Conference Superintendent or his appointed representative. At this meeting, or another when the Conference Superintendent is present and presiding, the proceedings of the Local Church Council shall be submitted to him for review, and shall be ratified at that session of the Local Church Council. In counsel with the Minister of the local church, the Conference Superintendent may call special sessions of the Local Church Council. **See editorial note at ¶578-*

- (18) The Conference Superintendent or his appointed representative shall preside at the election of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations of each local church on his district. The Conference Superintendent shall meet periodically with the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations of each local church on his district, at his own request, the request of the Minister, or at the request of the Chair of the committee (¶711.f.).
- (19) In the event any church located within the boundaries of his district believes that erection of a church edifice is necessary and there are reasonable prospects that it can be erected, it is the responsibility of the Conference Superintendent to give counsel and guidance to that church, so that the proper location, suitable plans, and an adequate program of finance are assured (¶¶580; 725.a.).
- (20) Where a minister, congregation or conference agency desire to employ evangelistic help other than persons recognized as evangelists by the Conference Board of Evangelism, it shall be the responsibility of the Conference Superintendent to make adequate inquiry into such a matter in order to preserve the doctrines and interests of The Evangelical Church, and upon assurance that such shall be the case he may then grant consent in writing to the minister, congregation or conference agency (¶834.(6)(d)).
- (21) He shall present to the Annual Conference Session a written report of his official activities and of the affairs of his constituency.
- (22) The Conference Superintendent and the Chair of the

Annual Conference Session shall nominate, for election by the Annual Conference Session, the Conference Historian, and the following Program Directors: Christian Education, Christian Social Concerns, Church Extension, Communications, Evangelism, Missions and Stewardship.

- (23) The Conference Superintendent shall be the Chair of the Program Directors' Council, if the Annual Conference Session establishes such a Council (§832.a.(3)).
- (24) He shall be an ex officio member of all program and administrative boards, commissions, standing and special committees of the Annual Conference.
- (25) He shall be a member of the Conference Board of Trustees within the provisions of the policies governing the membership of the Conference Board of Trustees as stated in the Articles of Incorporation.
- (26) He shall serve as the Chair of the Conference Council of Administration. Where an Annual Conference has more than one Conference Superintendent, the Senior Superintendent shall serve as the Chair of the Conference Council of Administration.
- (27) He shall provide for camp and district meetings and group rallies within the boundaries of the Annual Conference.
- (28) He shall serve as the Chair of the Trial Committee for an Itinerant Elder, a Probationer or a Local Elder under appointment, or a missionary under appointment by The Evangelical Church (§§624; 625; 628; 684; 831.c.).
- (29) He shall appoint a Committee on Investigation in the instance of an Itinerant Elder, or a Local Elder or a Probationer under appointment being accused of immorality, trespass, imprudent and un-Christian conduct, or disobedience to the order and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (§664).
- (30) It shall be the duty of the Conference Superintendent to effect penalties imposed on a minister by a Judicial Committee (§631).
- (31) If in trying a case a vacancy in the Judicial Committee should occur by right of challenge, or for any other

reason, the Conference Superintendent, as Chair of the Committee, shall fill the vacancy (§§629.1-2; 631; 831.c.).

- (32) The Conference Superintendent shall perform such other duties as assigned him by the Annual Conference Session, the Conference Council of Administration, and such other administrative agencies as the Annual Conference Session may designate.
- (33) He shall represent the Annual Conference and The Evangelical Church outside the boundaries of the Annual Conference at the direction of the Annual Conference Session, the General Church Council, and the General Conference.
- (34) He shall be a member of the Commission on The Discipline (§930), the General Church Council (§911), the General Conference (§901), the Council of Superintendents (§925), and of the General Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries (§955). He shall serve as the chief liaison officer between these denominational commissions, councils and boards and the Annual Conference in which he serves as Conference Superintendent.
- (35) At all times and in all places, the Conference Superintendent shall exercise great care to properly represent The Evangelical Church, promote and defend its doctrines, practices, standards, and interests, and to sincerely seek to advance the Kingdom of God.

2. Conference Council of Administration Constitution

Article I - Name and Purpose

§821. There shall be a Council of Administration in each Annual Conference of The Evangelical Church to be known as the Conference Council of Administration, to coordinate and advance the program and work of the Annual Conference, and to promote the total program of The Evangelical Church within the Annual Conference.

Article II - Membership

§822. The Conference Council of Administration shall consist of the Conference Superintendent(s), Conference Secretary, Program Directors (Christian Education, Christian Social

Concerns, Church Extension, Communications, Evangelism, Missions, Stewardship), Conference Historian, Conference Statistician, Conference Treasurer, a representative of the following: Board of Ministry, Board of Trustees, Board of Pensions and Insurance, President of Conference Evangelical Men, President of Conference Evangelical Women, President of Conference Evangelical Youth, and such additional persons as the Annual Conference may elect.

Article III - Officers

¶823. The Conference Superintendent and the Conference Secretary shall be the Chair, and the Secretary, respectively, of the Conference Council of Administration. (Where an Annual Conference has more than one Conference Superintendent, the Senior Superintendent shall serve as the Chair.) The Vice-Chair shall be elected from its own membership.

Article IV - Meetings

¶824. The Conference Council of Administration shall meet annually at such time and place as it may determine. Special meetings of the Council may be held at the call of the Chair. A majority of the members of the Conference Council of Administration shall constitute a quorum.

Article V - Standing Committees

¶825. The Conference Council of Administration shall elect an Executive Committee and have power to elect such other committees as may be needed to promote its work.

Article VI - Duties

¶826. The duties of the Conference Council of Administration shall be:

- a. To study the total policy and program of the Annual Conference as reflected in its various agencies;
- b. To integrate the programs and activities of the several agencies of the Annual Conference into a comprehensive conference program;
- c. To give counsel and guidance to the various boards and agencies of the Annual Conference as the need may arise;
- d. To promote Christian stewardship and systematic giving;

- e. To advance the interests of the budget and endeavor to secure regular and adequate financial support for the interests of the Annual Conference (§943.2.);
- f. To recommend to the Annual Conference Session the apportionments of the budget to the several local churches (§819.g);
- g. To present to the Annual Conference Session for approval the record of its transactions and such recommendations as it deems wise for the advancement of the Annual Conference and the interests of the Kingdom;
- h. To provide for a complete audit of all the financial records of the Annual Conference and its related agencies, and submit a report and recommendations thereon to the Annual Conference Session;
- i. On recommendation of the Conference Superintendent(s) and the Board of Ministry, between Annual Conference Sessions, to grant the status of retired Itinerant Elder to an active Itinerant Elder who, because of impaired health or other sufficient reasons, is considered totally and presumably permanently disabled to fulfill the duties of an active Itinerant Elder (§511.(3));
- j. The Council of Administration is empowered to act for the Annual Conference between Annual Conference Sessions;
- k. The Council of Administration shall be responsible for approving requests received from departments, agencies, auxiliaries or institutions, for financial campaigns within the Annual Conference (§819.g);
- l. The Council of Administration shall provide for the nomination of Conference administrative and program personnel, (other than the Conference Superintendent), and unless provided for in The Discipline (§§819.j; 830-831).

Article VII - Amenability

§27. The Conference Council of Administration is amenable to the Annual Conference Session.

Article VIII - By-Laws

§28. By-laws in harmony with the forgoing constitution and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church may be adopted by the Annual Conference Session to facilitate the work of the Conference Council of Administration. Such by-laws may be

amended at any regular session of the Annual Conference by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting thereon.

Article IX - Amendments

¶829. This constitution can be amended only by the procedure for amending The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (¶¶932-936).

3. Other Administrative Personnel

¶830.

a. Conference Historian

The Annual Conference Session, upon nomination by the Conference Superintendent and the Chair of the Annual Conference Session, shall elect quadrennially a member of The Evangelical Church within the Annual Conference, to serve as Conference Historian, and, who shall be:

- (1) A member of the Conference Council of Administration;
- (2) Custodian of all historical materials and objects. As such the Historian shall gather, organize, arrange for proper preservation and storage, historical data, records, books, literature, and relics related to the organization, history and personnel of the Annual Conference, to keep an accurate record of current affairs within the denomination that are of historical value and interest, stimulate and encourage historical research and appreciation on the part of ministers and lay people of the Annual Conference, and, if feasible, arrange for a display of historical material and objects;
- (3) Amenable to the Annual Conference.

b. Conference Treasurer

The Annual Conference Session shall elect quadrennially by ballot a Conference Treasurer (¶826.1.), a member of The Evangelical Church within the Annual Conference, who, upon election, shall be a member of the Conference Council of Administration, and shall, under the direction of the Annual Conference make provision for, or oversee the financial operation of the finances of the Annual Conference, which shall include the following:

- (1) Administer the funds of the Annual Conference;
 - (2) Receive and give receipt for all funds that are to be credited to the apportionments allocated to the respective local churches;
 - (3) Disburse funds according to the allocation made and direction given by the Annual Conference Session;
 - (4) Annually present a report to the Annual Conference Session reflecting the transactions of the treasury of the Annual Conference;
 - (5) Submit his books to be properly audited at the end of each fiscal year and present an audit report to the Annual Conference at its annual session;
 - (6) Be amenable to the Annual Conference.
- c. Conference Statistician

The Annual Conference Session shall elect quadrennially by ballot a Conference Statistician who is a member of The Evangelical Church within the Annual Conference, and who shall compile the statistics of the Annual Conference and report the same to the Annual Conference Session. The Statistician, upon election, shall be a member of the Conference Council of Administration.

4. Administrative Boards and Agencies

¶831.

a. Board of Trustees

- (1) There shall be for each Annual Conference a Board of Trustees consisting of three or more persons who are at least thirty (30) years of age and have been members of The Evangelical Church in good standing three years immediately preceding their election. They shall be elected by ballot by the Annual Conference Session to serve for three years, or until their successors have been elected, and it shall be arranged so that one or more Trustees shall be elected annually. A vacancy occurring in the Board of Trustees shall be filled by the Annual Conference Session for the unexpired term. There shall be both ministerial and lay representation on the Conference Board of Trustees. These Trustees shall be the Trustees of the Annual Conference corporation, and under the direction of the Annual Conference Session shall hold and administer all the real and personal

- property of the Annual Conference.
- (2) The Board of Trustees shall organize and elect officers according to the laws of the corporation and shall perform duties usually pertaining to such office. The officers shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be bonded. The Conference Superintendent shall be a member of the Conference Board of Trustees within the provisions of the policies governing the membership of the Board of Trustees as stated in the Articles of Incorporation.
 - (3) The Board of Trustees shall give care and attention to the security of its funds, make report, and submit its proceedings for ratification to the Annual Conference Session to which it is amenable.
 - (4) Annual Conferences shall become incorporated bodies, and the Board of Trustees of an Annual Conference shall be the Trustees of the Annual Conference Corporation. As such, the Board of Trustees shall exercise care that the title to all property of an Annual Conference shall be held in the name under which the Conference is incorporated.
 - (5) In order to secure the right of property with the appurtenances thereof, care shall be taken that all conveyances and deeds be drawn and executed in conformity to the applicable laws. Deeds shall be registered or recorded immediately upon their execution (§§728.a.(7).; 732.b.).
 - (6) The Trustees of an Annual Conference shall have power to purchase, to sell and convey, and encumber any real estate, title to which is held by the corporation of the Annual Conference, upon authorization of the Annual Conference or the Conference Council of Administration. The President and Secretary shall sign necessary documents, except where other members of the Board of Trustees are authorized to do so.
 - (7) The Board of Trustees shall elect one of its members other than the Conference Superintendent, to represent the Board of Trustees on the Conference Council of Administration.

b. Board of Pensions and Insurance

Each Annual Conference of The Evangelical Church shall provide a pension program for its Ministers sufficient to provide for their retirement and a program of life insurance, health insurance and other insurance as may be deemed advisable by the Annual Conference. These programs may be administered by either the Conference Council of Administration or a duly elected Board of Pensions and Insurance, elected for such purposes, and according to the provisions for such election as stated in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church and according to a constitution and by-laws created to govern such a board in its work.

c. Judicial Committee

In each Annual Conference there shall be a Judicial Committee consisting of five Itinerant Elders elected by ballot from the ministerial members for a period of five years, one to be elected each year. This committee, in addition to its Chair, shall serve as a Trial Committee in all cases where charges are preferred against an Itinerant Elder or Probationer or Local Elder under appointment. Only those who are Itinerant Elders in The Evangelical Church in good standing are eligible to serve as members of the Judicial Committee.

The Conference Superintendent shall serve as Chair of the Trial Committee in cases of charges preferred against any minister, but he shall not be entitled to vote (§§631; 820.b.(28)).

The Judicial Committee shall elect from its own members a Secretary, who shall receive and hold all documents and records pertaining to any trial. He shall keep a true record of all proceedings of the Committee, and shall submit a certified copy thereof signed by the Chair and himself to the Annual Conference Session. He shall furnish the accused a certified copy of the proceedings if he demands it (§631).

If in trying a case a vacancy in the Judicial Committee should occur by right of challenge, or for any other reason, the Chair of the Trial Committee shall fill the vacancy (§631).

The expenses of the Judicial Committee in any of its official responsibilities shall be paid by the Annual

Conference.

All procedures of the Judicial Committee shall be in conformity with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church and according to the provisions governing Judicial Administration in Chapter 6 of The Discipline.

d. Court of Appeals

There shall be in each Annual Conference a Court of Appeals elected by ballot from among the Itinerant Elders of the Annual Conference Session, who shall hold office for three years. The Annual Conference Session shall determine the number of persons to be elected to the Court of Appeals.

e. Board of Ministry

(1) The Annual Conference Session shall quadrennially elect by ballot for a term of four years, a Conference Board of Ministry, consisting of not fewer than three and not more than seven of its Itinerant Elders.

(2) The duties of the Conference Board of Ministry shall be:

(a) To seek through the cooperation of the Conference Superintendent and the Ministers of the Conference to enlist suitable persons for the Christian Ministry, and to provide contact with, and counsel for, all Ministerial Students while in preparation for the ministry;

(b) To urge and encourage in every practical way all Ministerial Students to attend colleges and theological schools acceptable to The Evangelical Church (§§537; 995.1; 996.1);

(c) To inquire into the qualifications of each candidate for the ministry, of each Probationer to be advanced to the Order of Elder, and of each Minister from another church seeking entrance into The Evangelical Church, according to the provisions of The Discipline, and to report its findings to the Annual Conference (§§546; 550; 553; 555);

(d) To receive annual reports on the progress made by each Probationer enrolled in a college or theological school, and to grant him credit for work satisfactorily completed in terms of those requirements for entrance into the ministry as stated in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (§§537; 553);

- (e) To guide the Probationer who is not enrolled in a theological school and who is pursuing the Course of Study for Probationers, give examinations on the books studied, receive reports on the books to be read, and report to the Annual Conference the progress made by each Probationer (§§538; 553; 555.c.(2));
 - (f) To examine each Probationer ready for advancement to the Order of Elder as provided in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church and report to the Annual Conference Session the result of the examination (§§555.d.; 831.c.(12));
 - (g) To study and implement strategies pertaining to the care, status and relationships of Ministers in the Annual Conference, and to interpret the high ethical standards of the ministry as set forth in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church in cooperation with the Conference Superintendent and/or in cooperation with the General Superintendent.
- (3) Officers of the Board of Ministry shall be: a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary who shall be the executive officers of the Board. These officers shall be elected at the first meeting of the Board following the quadrennial election of the members of the Board.
- (4) The duties of the Chair are such as normally pertain to this office.
- (5) The duties of the Secretary shall include the following:
- (a) Keeping accurate and detailed records of the proceedings of the Board;
 - (b) Keeping an accurate list of the Ministerial Students and Probationers of the Annual Conference;
 - (c) Maintaining the educational and service record of each Minister serving in the Annual Conference if not otherwise provided for;
 - (d) Keeping an accurate record of the standing and progress of each candidate for the ministry and of each Probationer;
 - (e) Submitting annually to the Board of Ministry the statistics relating to the service and training of Ministers, if so requested;
 - (f) Faithfully executing other responsibilities as the Board of Ministry may assign him under the direction

of the Annual Conference and according to The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

- (6) The Board of Ministry shall meet as often as circumstances require at a time and place determined by the Board, in cooperation with the scheduled programs of the Annual Conference.
- (7) The Board shall be directly amenable to the Annual Conference Session for its actions.
- (8) The Board may adopt by-laws in harmony with the disciplinary provisions for the Board of Ministry and not in conflict with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.
- (9) The Board shall receive from every candidate for the ministry a written autobiographical statement, a transcript of credits earned to date in the educational institutions he has attended, and a satisfactory health certificate from a competent physician (§§540; 550).
- (10) Each Annual Conference through its Board of Ministry shall prepare:
 - (a) A Course of Study for Candidates for License to Preach;
 - (b) A Course of Study for Probationers who have been deemed exceptional cases (§§538; 553); and
 - (c) An alternate graduate level study program (§555.c.(2)), each of which on approval of the Annual Conference shall be submitted to the General Conference for final approval, and in the interim between General Conference meetings shall be submitted to the General Church Council for final approval.
- (11) The Board shall report annually to the Annual Conference Session and shall present the Candidates for License to Preach and the Candidates for advancement to the Order of Elder to the Annual Conference, together with those whose licenses are to be validated and those to be listed as Ministerial Students, for vote by the Itinerant Elders, according to the provisions of The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (§§545; 546-549; 550; 555).
- (12) The Board of Ministry shall be responsible for

administering the Doctrinal Examination to all candidates for advancement to the Order of Elder. This examination shall also be given by the Board of Ministry to ordained ministers seeking to transfer their credentials from another denomination into The Evangelical Church (§§520.b.(4); 550; 555.d.)

**THE DOCTRINAL EXAMINATION
for All Candidates for Advancement to the Order of
Elder and Ordained Ministers Transferring their
Credentials into The Evangelical Church**

1. Do you believe in the Holy Trinity? Define your belief. What are your reasons for such belief?
2. Do you believe the Holy Scriptures are the divinely inspired Word of God, written, and that they are authoritative, normative and binding? Why?
3. What is your belief concerning depravity, and the need of divine salvation? What evidence do you give in support of your position?
4. What is your belief concerning the person of Jesus Christ and the divine atonement through Him?
5. What is your belief concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit?
6. What are your beliefs concerning (i) repentance, (ii) faith, (iii) justification, (iv) regeneration and (v) sanctification?
7. What is your belief concerning the immortality of the soul, and man's future state?
8. What is the significance of the two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper?
9. What do you believe to be the mission of the Church? How do the following relate to this: (i) evangelism, (ii) missions, (iii) Christian education and (iv) social action?
10. What is your dominant motive as a Christian Minister?
11. Have you carefully studied the doctrines of The Evangelical Church, as set forth in The Discipline, and are you in harmony with them? Will you preach and maintain them?

- f. Other Administrative Boards and Agencies
An Annual Conference may establish other administrative

boards, committees, commissions and agencies for the promotion of its programs, according to the provisions of and not in conflict with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

5. Program Boards, Agencies, and Personnel

¶832.

a. Program Directors' Council

- (1) By authorization of an Annual Conference Session, there may be a Program Directors' Council consisting of the Conference Superintendent(s), the Director of Christian Education, the Director of Christian Social Concerns, the Director of Church Extension, the Director of Communications, the Director of Evangelism, the Director of Missions, and the Director of Stewardship.
- (2) The purpose of the Program Directors' Council shall be to expedite the coordination and implementation of the programs of the Annual Conference related to the work of the program agencies.
- (3) A Conference Superintendent shall be Chair of the Program Directors' Council (¶820.b.(23)).
- (4) The Directors of the program agencies from all the Annual Conferences may constitute a resource committee for the General Conference (¶903.d.).

b. Program Boards

An Annual Conference may establish program boards for the promotion of its programs (¶831).

Article I - Name

¶833. The name of each program board shall reflect the focus of ministry related to that board, such as, but not limited to, the Board of Christian Education, Board of Christian Social Concerns, Board of Church Extension, Board of Evangelism, Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries, Board of Stewardship, Board of Pensions and Insurance.

Article II - Purpose and Function

¶834. The purpose of each program board shall be:

- a. To study the need for, develop, recommend, implement, promote, direct, and continually evaluate and revise ministry programs of the Annual Conference that are in harmony with and that positively teach, enhance, support, promote and encourage and that are in no way contradictory to the vision and purpose, doctrinal position, spiritual culture and moral standards, and ministry opportunities of The Evangelical Church;
- b. To promote and direct those ministry programs adopted by the Annual Conference germane to the identifiable focus of ministry for that specific board;
- c. To survey the related programs of the church in general throughout the world to discover, develop and recommend possible ministry programs for the Annual Conference and the local churches of the Annual Conference;
- d. To evaluate and make recommendations for revision, continuing or discarding present ministry programs of the Annual Conference;
- e. To serve as a resource body for the local churches of the Annual Conference in the development and implementation of program ministries as a part of but not in conflict with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, the Standing Resolutions and the programs of the Annual Conference.
- f. Specifically, the Program Boards are responsible as follows:
 - (a) The **Board of Christian Education** shall be responsible to study, supervise, strengthen and extend the ministry of Sunday Schools, catechetical training, Christian service training, vacation or summer church schools, summer family, youth and children's camps, and other ministries related to and involving the general field of Christian education.
 - (b) The **Board of Christian Social Concerns** shall be responsible to study and evaluate the social issues of the day as these affect the overall social climate of the nation and state and make recommendations regarding possible positional statements and positive approaches to these issues by the churches of the Conference.
 - (c) The **Board of Church Extension** shall be responsible for surveying, studying, and analyzing population centers within the boundaries of the Annual Conference with a view to recommending possible church planting

opportunities and cooperating with the Conference Superintendent in establishing new churches under the direction of the Annual Conference through counsel and guidance as to feasible locations, suitable building projects and plans and adequate financing, and evaluating the statistics, location, facilities, and potential growth opportunities of existing churches in the Annual Conference and making recommendations for possible assistance, giving advice on building locations, plans and financing and such other matters as may come before the Board.

- (d) The **Board of Evangelism** shall be responsible to promote a sound, Biblical spirit of evangelism, develop methodological programs of evangelism for the local churches of the Annual Conference and recommend the same to the Annual Conference, encourage intercessory prayer, private and family devotions, consistent attendance at the service of the local church, keep the ministers and congregations of the Annual Conference aware of The Standards for Evangelists of The Evangelical Church, and cooperate with the Conference Superintendent in maintaining a list of approved evangelists.

THE STANDARDS FOR EVANGELISTS

1. An evangelist shall be an itinerant, ordained Minister of the Christian Gospel who is known to be of unimpeachable Christian character and real evangelistic passion, who has proved in practice his ability in evangelistic work, and who gives his full time to evangelism.
2. He must have a comprehensive conception of what evangelism means.
3. He must have the ability and the willingness to work with the Minister always recognizing that the Minister is the evangelist-in-chief of his own field of labor, and that he, the evangelist, is not the Minister of the field, neither during nor after the evangelistic meeting.
4. All his teaching and preaching must be in harmony with the doctrines and spirit of The Evangelical Church as set

forth in the Declaration of Faith, the catechisms, and the action of the Denomination.

5. His plan of financing a given meeting shall be in harmony with the standards of Christian stewardship and in keeping with methods recommended by the Conference Board of Evangelism, and approved by the church he is to serve.

6. An elder of The Evangelical Church certified and assigned as an evangelist shall conform to the following procedure: When a minister receives assignment as an evangelist, he shall submit a complete annual report of his work in duplicate, one for his Conference Superintendent and one for the Board of Evangelism. These forms shall be prepared by the Conference Superintendent and the Board of Evangelism.

- (e) The **Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries** shall be responsible to promote the total program of missions, with special emphasis on the mission fields of The Evangelical Church, foster missionary education in the local churches through encouraging the distribution of literature relating to missionary work, promote and give counsel and guidance in the development of missionary conferences, rallies, conventions and other types of meetings designed to inform challenge and involve the people of our churches in the prayer and financial support of missions, review and make recommendations regarding policy regarding the selection of missionaries and/or mission fields and projects for local church mission programs, and develop special Annual Conference programs designed to create enthusiasm for missions in the local churches.
- (f) The **Board of Stewardship**, which may include also Pensions and Insurance as determined by the Annual Conference, shall be responsible to study the financial needs of the Annual Conference, prepare an annual budget for allocation to the local churches of the Annual Conference, supervise the budgetary process of the Annual Conference, study, evaluate and make program recommendations to the Annual Conference regarding

adequate provision for the health and life insurance needs and retirement programs for the Ministers and their families of the Annual Conference, and supervise the same under the direction of the Annual Conference (§§826.e.; 943.2-3.).

Article III - Membership

¶835. The Program Boards of the Annual Conference shall consist of:

- a. The Conference Superintendent;
- b. The Conference Program Director for that focus of ministry, having been elected quadrennially according to the provision of The Discipline of The Evangelical Church;
- c. A representative from each of the Auxiliaries of the Annual Conference (Evangelical Men, Evangelical Women, and Evangelical Youth);
- d. Conference personnel as determined by the Annual Conference; and
- e. Four to twelve other persons elected by the Annual Conference for a term of four years with approximately twenty-five percent (25%) elected annually. Each member of a Conference Program Board shall be a member of The Evangelical Church within the Annual Conference.

Article IV - Organization and Officers

¶836. Each program board shall be organized annually under the leadership of the Conference Superintendent, and shall elect a Chair and Secretary from among its members. The Chair shall preside at the meetings of the board. The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of the board and file all papers related to its transactions, and make provision for the circulation of the minutes of the meetings of the board to every member of the board. The conference director of the program shall serve as the major resource person for the board.

Article V - Meetings

¶837. Each Program Board shall meet annually at such time and place as it may designate, or as designated by the Annual Conference. Special meetings of a board may be held at the call

of the Chair, the Program Director and the Conference Superintendent.

Article VI - Responsibilities of the Program Directors

¶838. For each program board, the Conference Director of that area of ministry shall:

- a. Serve as the executive officer of the board and serve under its direction;
- b. Be the major resource person for the work of the board in its program study, evaluation and development;
- c. Conduct the correspondence of the board unless otherwise directed by the board;
- d. Gather and analyze statistics, information, studies, and other materials helpful to the possible development and recommendation of program ministries for the Annual Conference and the local churches of the Annual Conference, and in consultation with the Conference Superintendent, present program recommendations to the board for appropriate study, evaluation and action;
- e. Develop, cause to be distributed, and encourage the use of promotional materials for approved programs of the Annual Conference for the local churches of the Annual Conference;
- f. Prepare and submit reports to the Conference Superintendent, the Conference Council of Administration, the program board, and the annual report of the board to the Annual Conference.

Article VII - Amenability and Accountability

¶839. Each program board is amenable to and accountable to the Annual Conference to which it shall make an annual report of its work, and to which its proceedings, budget, and financial reports shall be submitted for review and ratification, shall work in consultation with the Conference Superintendent in all its program development, promotion, and implementation, and shall report to the Conference Council of Administration as directed by the Annual Conference and/or the Conference Council of Administration.

Article VIII - By-Laws

¶840. By-laws consistent with this Constitution and designed to meet the specific needs of a Conference Program Board may be

adopted by the Annual Conference, providing no by-law is inconsistent with or in contradiction to any part of The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

Article IX - Amendments

¶841. This Constitution can be amended only by the procedure for amending The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (¶¶932-936).

C. Other Program Agencies

¶850. An Annual Conference may establish other program boards, agencies, committees, and commissions for the promotion of its programs, consistent with and in harmony with The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

D. Auxiliaries of the Annual Conference

1. Preamble

¶860. The Conference Evangelical Men and Conference Evangelical Women (above high school age) and Conference Evangelical Youth (grade 7 through grade 12) are the auxiliaries of an Annual Conference of The Evangelical Church through which the programs of instruction, promotion and activities shall find expression in the lives of the people of The Evangelical Church. In a sense these organizations on a Conference level are the parent organizations of their counterparts in the local churches of an Annual Conference.

¶861. Organization is a means, not an end. Auxiliary groups in an Annual Conference are not to be considered as being separated by organizational structures, but rather, are to be thought of as a part of a fellowship working together in the life and program of the Annual Conference, and in a larger context, in the life of The Evangelical Church. It is through such auxiliary organizations that the distinctive of Christian fellowship, nurture, spiritual life, and programmatic opportunities are developed, promoted, and carried out for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

2. Constitution

Article I - Organization

¶862. The men and women (above high school age) and youth (grades 7 through 12) of the churches of an Annual Conference

may be formed into separate organizations according to the provision of this Constitution.

Article II - Names

¶863. The names of these organizations shall be, respectively, The Evangelical Men, The Evangelical Women, and The Evangelical Youth of the Conference of The Evangelical Church.

Article III - Purpose

¶864. The purpose of each auxiliary of the Annual Conference in The Evangelical Church shall be to promote their respective organizations, programs, and activities, and the programs of the Annual Conference and the Denomination in and through the local churches of the Annual Conference, and specifically to

- a. Promote the importance of personal holiness as the norm for positive Christian living;
- b. Promote the disciplines of prayer, Bible study, evangelism and stewardship in the lives of the people of the churches of the Annual Conference;
- c. Make people aware of the fact that the real test of one's Christian walk is found in one's personal choices and witness at home and at work;
- d. Unite the men, women and youth of the Annual Conference through Conference-wide auxiliary conventions, conferences, retreats, rallies or other such gatherings in a Christian fellowship to make Jesus Christ known throughout the world, and to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the ministry of the Church;
- e. Create opportunities through Conference-wide auxiliary conventions, conferences, retreats, rallies or other such gatherings for teaching the people of The Evangelical Church the historic and doctrinal distinctive of The Evangelical Church;
- f. Serve as Conference-level resource agencies for the churches of the Annual Conference through suggested programs for local church Evangelical Men, Evangelical Women and Evangelical Youth for the purpose of achieving the goals, aims and purposes of the Annual Conference and Denominational programs germane to the specific auxiliaries;
- g. Encourage and promote consistent support for the work of The Evangelical Church's programs of Christian education,

Christian social concerns, Church Extension, evangelism, missions, and Christian stewardship;

- h. Promote on a Conference level, and through suggested programs for the local churches of the Annual Conference, a conscious loyalty to the total program, vision and purpose of The Evangelical Church in its world-wide ministries;
- i. Encourage and foster programs of evangelistic outreach into the communities represented by the local churches of the Annual Conference;
- j. Encourage inter-church fellowship and ministries activities consistent with the standards of The Evangelical Church in the churches of the Annual Conference wherever geography makes that possible, and encourage interdenominational activities designed to promote a sense of Christian community;
- k. Encourage positive, Biblically-supported involvement in community, state, national and world affairs as Christian citizens.

Article IV - Membership

¶865. The Conference Evangelical Men, Conference Evangelical Women, and Conference Evangelical Youth, respectively, of the Annual Conference shall consist of the Evangelical Men, Evangelical Women and Evangelical Youth of the local churches of the Annual Conference, as constituted according to the provisions of The Discipline of The Evangelical Church governing local church auxiliary organizations (¶701.b.).

Article V - Officers

¶866. The officers of each Conference auxiliary shall be a President, one or more Vice Presidents, a Secretary and a Treasurer, and such other officers as deemed necessary by the auxiliary, each of whom shall be members of The Evangelical Church, and of one of the local churches within the boundaries of the Annual Conference. Officers shall be elected annually, having been nominated by a Committee on Nominations appointed by the Executive Committee of the auxiliary.

The Conference Superintendent or someone designated by him shall preside at the elections of Conference auxiliary officers.

No person shall be eligible to serve in the same office for more than four consecutive years. Duties of officers shall be such as usually pertain to their respective offices.

Article VI - Executive Committee

¶867. The Executive Committee of each Conference auxiliary shall be composed of the elected officers and the Conference Superintendent. The Conference Superintendent may designate someone else to serve in his place on the Executive Committees of the Conference auxiliaries. The Conference Director of Evangelical Youth shall serve on the Executive Committee of the Conference Evangelical Youth.

Article VII - Meetings

¶868. A convention, conference, retreat or rally for the purposes of inspiration, study, planning and the transaction of business germane to the particular auxiliary, shall be held annually at a time and place designated by the auxiliary or, if so determined, by its Executive Committee. The voting members of such annual convention, conference, retreat or rally shall be the officers of the Conference auxiliary, and one or more delegates from each local Evangelical Church auxiliary, as the Conference auxiliary may determine, providing however, that all voting members of the annual business meeting shall be members of The Evangelical Church and of a local Evangelical Church within the boundaries of the Annual Conference.

Article VIII - Finances

¶869. Funds for the work and program of a Conference auxiliary shall be brought in through regular and special offerings as determined by the auxiliary, and in harmony with the general teachings of The Evangelical Church relating to financial responsibility and within any guidelines established by the Annual Conference governing the fiscal management of any auxiliary, board, or agency of the Annual Conference.

Article IX - Relationships and Amenability

¶870. The auxiliaries of an Annual Conference are amenable to the Annual Conference to which they shall present an annual report of their activities, finances, actions, budgets, and plans for ratification, approval, and adoption, and as requested, to the Conference Council of Administration.

Article X - By-Laws

¶871. By-laws consistent with this Constitution and designed to meet the specific needs of the Conference auxiliary may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting thereon at the annual convention, conference or rally designated as the Annual Business Meeting, providing the proposed by-laws have been presented at the Annual Business Meeting one year previous, or mailed to each applicable local auxiliary at least three (3) months prior to the Annual Business Meeting. No by-law may be presented or adopted which is inconsistent with or in contradiction to the Declaration of Faith, Spiritual Culture and Moral Standards, and polity procedures outlined in The Discipline. By-laws shall be presented to and approved by the Annual Conference in order to be valid.

Article XI - Amendments

¶872. This Constitution can be amended only by the procedure for amending The Discipline of The Evangelical Church (¶¶932-936).

CHAPTER 9: THE GENERAL CHURCH

A. The General Conference

1. Name and Purpose

¶900. There shall be a General Conference of The Evangelical Church. Its purpose shall be to conduct the quadrennial business of The Evangelical Church as stated in the Book of Discipline.

2. Membership

¶901. The membership of the General Conference shall consist of the General and Conference Superintendents emeriti and retired, the Denominational Secretary, the Denominational Treasurer, the Denominational Statistician, the Executive Director of Denominational Missions, and voting delegates as follows:

- a. All Active and Retired Elders of The Evangelical Church;
- b. All Probationers currently under assignment, and who have been under assignment for one year;
- c. One Lay Delegate per local Evangelical Church, elected by ballot by the local Church Council at a meeting called by and presided over by the Conference Superintendent or his appointed representative, and to be held at least sixty (60) days prior to the convening of the General Conference. Each lay delegate shall be at least of legal voting age, and shall have been a member in good standing of The Evangelical Church for at least two years, and of the local church from which he or she is elected for at least one year, excepting in a newly organized church which shall have the privilege of representation by a lay delegate who is a member of that local Evangelical Church;
- d. The Presidents of the Conference Evangelical Men, Evangelical Women and Evangelical Youth from each Annual Conference.

3. Powers and Duties

¶902. The powers and duties of the General Conference shall be:

- a. The General Conference shall receive and act upon reports from the General Superintendent(s), general officers, boards,

and institutions.

- b. The General Conference shall make provision for the examination of the proceedings of the Annual Conferences.
- c. The General Conference shall determine the number and the boundaries of the Annual Conferences. Changes in boundaries shall require a three-fourths vote (§928.g.).
- d. The General Conference shall review the proceedings of the General Church Council and take action upon the ad interim decisions of the General Church Council.
- e. The General Conference shall elect the General Superintendent(s), the Denominational Secretary, the Denominational Treasurer, the Denominational Statistician, and other officers as deemed necessary, who shall hold office until the final adjournment of the next General Conference and/or until their successors are elected and qualified (§904; 920).
- f. The General Conference shall elect the General Church Council (§911), to serve until the final adjournment of the next General Conference and/or until their successors are elected and qualified.
- g. The General Conference shall elect the Denominational Boards of Trustee as provided for in The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, to serve until the final adjournment of the next General Conference and/or until their successors are elected and qualified (§941.d.).
- h. The General Conference shall receive and act upon the reports of special committees as deemed necessary (§921.g.).
- i. The General Conference shall set the time and place of its next session. Should it become necessary to change the time and/or place, the General Church Council shall determine the same and make due announcements thereof.

4. General Conference Meetings

§903. Meetings of the General Conference shall be as follows:

- a. The General Conference shall be held quadrennially at the time and place fixed by the previous session of the General Conference, or if it is necessary to change the time and/or place, by the General Church Council (§914.i.).
- b. A special session of the General Conference, possessing the authority and exercising all the powers of the General Conference, may be called and held at such a time and in

such a place as shall be determined by the General Church Council. Such special session of the General Conference thus held and called shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding General Conference. In special cases, alternate lay delegates may be elected in consultation with the respective Conference Superintendent. Such a person shall remain as the duly elected delegate until the next General Conference. The purpose of such special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purpose stated in such call.

- c. All members of the General Conference present shall constitute the voting quorum.
- d. The Annual Conference Directors of Program Agencies may constitute a resource committee for the General Conference in program areas germane to their focus of service (§832.a.(4)).

5. Officers

¶904.

a. Chair

The General Superintendent shall be Chair of the General Conference. If deemed advisable, however, he may delegate this duty to one of the Conference Superintendents.

b. Denominational Secretary

The General Conference shall elect quadrennially the Denominational Secretary from among its membership, who may appoint necessary assistants. The Denominational Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of the General Conference and the General Church Council, and shall edit and publish these proceedings and at the end of the quadrennium shall have bound the quadrennial proceedings of each of these bodies and provide for their preservation.

c. Denominational Treasurer

The General Conference shall elect quadrennially a Denominational Treasurer who shall be a qualified layman or Itinerant Elder. The Denominational Treasurer shall receive, disburse and account for funds, as determined by the General Conference. He shall report regularly to the General Superintendent as determined by the General Superintendent and the General Church Council, and shall be amenable and

report to the General Church Council, and the General Conference. The Denominational Treasurer shall be a member of the Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance (§941.c.).

B. The General Church Council

1. Name and Purpose

§910. There shall be a General Church Council in The Evangelical Church to coordinate and promote the interest and goals of the Church, and to make recommendations in these areas to the Annual Conferences and the General Conference.

2. Membership

§911. The membership of the General Church Council shall consist of the Council of Superintendents, the Denominational Secretary, the Denominational Treasurer, the President of the Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance, and two representatives, one Itinerant Elder and one layperson or Special Commissioned Minister, from each Annual Conference elected by the Annual Conference on a quadrennial basis.

3. Officers

§912. The General Superintendent shall be the Chair of the General Church Council and the Denominational Secretary shall be the secretary of the General Church Council. Other officers shall be elected by the General Church Council as deemed necessary.

4. Meetings

§913. The General Church Council shall meet at least annually at the call of the Chair or at the call of the majority of the remaining members of the General Church Council, provided that due notice of at least two weeks is given.

5. Powers and Duties

§914. The powers and duties of the General Church Council shall be:

- a. To plan for and provide spiritual leadership and to foster inter-conference inspiration and fellowship (§922);
- b. To study, coordinate, and provide for the implementation of

- the total goals of the Church;
- c. To give guidance and counsel to the Annual Conferences and other agencies of the Church;
 - d. To promote the principles of Christian stewardship, and to provide for its implementation;
 - e. To present to the General Conference a full record of its proceedings, for the approval of the General Conference;
 - f. To develop and approve plans for the General Conference and prepare materials necessary to the proper functioning of the General Conference and distribute them at least sixty (60) days before the General Conference convenes;
 - g. To serve as an advisory board to the editor and publisher of denominational publications;
 - h. To make recommendations to the General Conference as to the persons who shall represent The Evangelical Church to the governing bodies of interdenominational, ecumenical, and missionary agencies and fill vacancies in these positions in the interim of the General Conference Sessions (§921.b.);
 - i. To act for the General Conference in all matters requiring action in the interim of the General Conference Sessions (§903.a.);
 - j. To interpret The Discipline upon request (§936);
 - k. To provide within the agenda strong emphasis on the inspirational values important to proper motivation in the things of the Gospel, within the areas of evangelism, missions, Christian education, stewardship and Christian social concerns; and to place on the agenda presentations by personnel from within and from outside The Evangelical Church who have significant spiritual contributions to make to the spiritual life and excellence of The Evangelical Church.
 - l. To approve a uniform local church membership book (§576);
 - m. To approve the boundaries of the Annual Conferences (§§801; 928.g.);
 - n. To determine the number of representatives of each Annual Conference to the Commission on The Discipline (§930)
 - o. To adopt an annual budget, allocating to each Annual Conference a minimum annual quota for the general budget.

6. Amenability

¶915. The General Church Council shall be amenable to the

General Conference.

C. General Superintendent

1. Election of a General Superintendent

¶920. The General Conference in its regularly scheduled quadrennial session shall elect by open ballot one or more General Superintendents of The Evangelical Church for a term of four years, from among the active Itinerant Elders who have been elders of The Evangelical Church for at least five years preceding the time of such election, and who shall hold office until the final adjournment of the next General Conference and/or until their successors are elected and qualified (¶902.e.).

In case of a vacancy in the office of General Superintendent, the Council of Superintendents shall recommend to the General Church Council that a special session of the General Conference be called for the purpose of electing a General Superintendent to fill the unexpired term (¶¶903.b.; 928.h.).

2. Duties of the General Superintendent

¶921. The General Superintendent shall:

- a. Provide spiritual leadership in The Evangelical Church and be available as his responsibilities allow for evangelistic meetings, rallies, inter-conference gatherings, convocations, and activities within the Conference boundaries as authorized by the specific Conference;
- b. Be a representative of The Evangelical Church to various inter-denominational boards and agencies as directed by the General Conference, or provide for suitable alternate representatives to be approved by the General Church Council (¶914.h.);
- c. Serve as the Chair of the General Conference, the General Church Council and the Commission on The Discipline (¶904.a.);
- d. Assume responsibility in the area of public relations for The Evangelical Church;
- e. Help to promote the development of home missions and Church Extension;
- f. Assist in the organizing of new Conferences and new congregations of The Evangelical Church;
- g. Promote inter-conference relationships, gatherings, rallies and other activities as authorized by the Annual Conferences;

- h. Serve as an ex officio member of all program and administrative boards, commissions, standing and special committees of the General Conference and General Church Council of The Evangelical Church. He shall be a member of the Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance within the provisions of the policies governing the membership of the Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance as stated in the Article of Incorporation, and in conformity with the laws of the State in which the Denomination is incorporated (§§930; 941.b; 955);
- i. Maintain contact with students who are members of The Evangelical Church and especially with those who are called to the ministry;
- j. Make an annual report to each of the Annual Conferences;
- k. Serve as Chair of an Annual Conference Session upon request by the Annual Conference (§815);
- l. With the Conference Superintendent of the Annual Conference, officiate at the ordination service for men advanced to the Order of Elder (§815);
- m. Be a consultant to the Annual Conferences, Conference Councils of Administration, and the Conference Superintendents (§820.b.(8));
- n. When necessary, suspend a Conference Superintendent under accusation (in consultation with The Council of Superintendents minus the Conference Superintendent under accusation) and serve as Chair of the Trial Committee in the instance of the trial of a Conference Superintendent; (§631).
- o. Be amenable to the General Conference of The Evangelical Church.

3. Provision in Case of Inability to Fulfill Duties

¶922. In the event that it is determined by the General Church Council that the General Superintendent is unable to perform the duties of his office, the General Church Council shall provide for the carrying on of his duties until his successor can be elected for the remainder of his term according to the procedures for electing a General Superintendent.

D. The Council of Superintendents

1. Name and Purpose

¶924. There shall be a Council of Superintendents in The Evangelical Church to facilitate the implementation, coordination and promotion of the goals, purposes, programs and inter-conference relationships and events of the Church. The Council of Superintendents shall not be considered a legislative body.

2. Membership

¶925. The membership of the Council of Superintendents shall consist of the General Superintendent and all the Conference Superintendents of The Evangelical Church.

3. Officers

¶926. The General Superintendent shall serve as the Chair of the Council of Superintendents; the Council shall elect a Secretary from among its membership.

In the event the General Superintendent is unable to serve as the Chair, the Council shall elect a Chair from its membership.

4. Meetings

¶927. The Council of Superintendents shall meet at least annually at the call of the Chair or at the call of a majority of the remaining members of the Council of Superintendents provided that due notice of at least two weeks is given except in a situation deemed an emergency by the Chair or at least two of the remaining members of the Council.

5. Powers and Duties

¶928. The duties and functions of the Council of Superintendents shall be:

- a. To promote and defend the doctrines, spiritual culture, moral standards, practices and interests of The Evangelical Church;
- b. To serve as an advisory council to the General Superintendent(s);
- c. To provide spiritual leadership in the coordination of denominational and inter-conference programs;
- d. To provide spiritual support, encouragement and fellowship for the Conference Superintendents;
- e. To be a resource for the interchange of leadership, administrative and programmatic ideas for the work of the Annual Conferences;
- f. To present to the General Church Council a record of its proceedings;

- g. To recommend the boundaries of the Annual Conferences to the General Church Council (§§801; 914.m);
- h. In the instance of a vacancy in the office of General Superintendent, to recommend to the General Church Council a special session of the General Conference for the purpose of electing a General Superintendent (§§903.b.; 920).

6. Amenability and Accountability

¶929. The Council of Superintendents shall be amenable to the General Church Council in those matters referred to it, and shall at all times be accountable to the policies, procedures and provisions of The Discipline of The Evangelical Church.

E. The Commission on The Discipline

1. Membership

¶930. The Commission on the Discipline shall consist of: The Council of Superintendents, the Denominational Secretary, and two representatives from each Annual Conference elected quadrennially by the annual conferences they represent, on the basis of one Itinerant Elder and one layperson or Special Commissioned Minister for the first 2500 or fewer members, and one Itinerant Elder and one layperson or Special Commissioned Minister for each additional 2500 members or major fraction thereof.

2. Duties

¶931. The duties of the Commission on The Discipline shall be to consider all petitions and recommended changes in The Discipline, and recommend action to the Annual Conferences according to the provisions of The Discipline.

3. Revisions of The Discipline

¶932. Petitions for the revision of The Discipline shall be referred to the Commission on The Discipline for study and recommendation by a three-fourths vote of the members of an Annual Conference, or the General Conference, or the General Church Council, or the Commission on The Discipline. Changes recommended by the Commission on The Discipline shall be ratified by a three-fourths ballot vote of the aggregate of the

members present and voting of all the Annual Conferences.

¶933. The General Superintendent(s) shall within thirty (30) days of the last Annual Conference voting, notify all Annual Conferences of the revisions of The Discipline which were ratified.

¶934. Recommended revisions of The Discipline shall be made by the Commission on The Discipline no later than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the first Annual Conference able to vote on the recommendations. Recommendations receiving the required three-fourths vote will take effect thirty (30) days after the close of the last Annual Conference to vote.

¶935. Any revision of The Discipline shall be made only through and on recommendation of the Commission on The Discipline.

¶936. The General Church Council shall be the arbiter and interpreter of The Discipline ad interim of the meetings of the Commission on The Discipline (¶914.j.).

F. The General Corporation

1. Authorization and Purpose

¶940. The Evangelical Church shall be incorporated as a non-profit corporation under applicable laws. The purposes of the corporation shall be: to promote the Christian religion through the preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the sacraments, ordinances and other means of grace, the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, the evangelization of the world, the promotion of the missionary and benevolent work of the Church, and to engage in any lawful activity for which non-profit corporations may be organized under the applicable law.

2. Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance

¶941. There shall be a Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance, which Board shall be governed by the following:

- a. The Trustees of the Corporation of The Evangelical Church shall be at least thirty years of age, and be members in good standing of The Evangelical Church. Said Trustees shall be elected in the following manner: 1) one Trustee shall be elected from each Annual Conference on a quadrennial basis, and 2) members-at-large Trustees may be elected by the General Conference at its quadrennial session. (¶902.e.)

- b. The General Superintendent shall be an ex officio member of the Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance under the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and the applicable laws of the state in which The Evangelical Church is incorporated.
- c. The denominational Treasurer shall be a member of the Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance.
- d. Trustees shall serve for four years, or until their successors have been elected.
- e. These Trustees shall be the Trustees of the General Corporation, and under the direction of the General Conference shall hold and administer all the real and personal property of the General Corporation.
- f. The Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance shall organize and elect officers according to the applicable laws governing the Corporation, and at the direction of the General Conference of The Evangelical Church. The Denominational Treasurer may be the treasurer of the Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance.
- g. The Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance shall report and submit the board's proceedings for ratification to the General Conference of The Evangelical Church.
- h. In order to secure the right of property with the appurtenances thereof, care shall be taken that all conveyances and deeds be drawn and executed in conformity to the applicable laws. Deeds shall be registered or recorded immediately upon their execution. The Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance shall have power to purchase, sell, convey and encumber any real estate, title to which is held by the General Corporation, upon authorization of the General Conference. The President and Secretary of the Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance shall sign necessary documents, except where other members of the General Conference are authorized to do so.
- i. The Denominational Board of Trustees and Finance shall prepare an annual denominational budget for presentation to the General Church Council.
- j. The President of the Denominational Board of Trustees and Finances shall be a member of the General Church Council.

G. Finances

¶943.

1. The General Church Council shall make a study of the financial needs of the denomination and recommend a budget to the General Conference and the Annual Conferences.
2. The denominational budgetary requests to an Annual Conference shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of that Annual Conference's income, not including missions, benevolences and capital improvements (¶¶826.e-f.; 834.(6)(f)).
3. The Annual Conferences shall be encouraged to remit their funds to the General Church Treasurer on at least a monthly basis in order to assure a stable cash flow at a general level (¶830.b.(3)).
4. Travel expenses for members of the General Church Council, the Commission on The Discipline, and other bodies of the Denomination shall be paid by the respective Annual Conferences on an equalized basis.

H. The General Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries

¶950. There shall be a Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries of The Evangelical Church, which Board shall function under the provisions of a Constitution of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries.

1. Constitution

¶951.

a. Preamble

WHEREAS we are deeply grateful to God for the great salvation which has come to us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord, and

WHEREAS the demand is urgent for organized missionary effort in order that

- (1) The appalling spiritual need of the world may be met by bringing the lost to Christ;
- (2) Converts may be reached with the message of the experience and life of holiness;
- (3) Those desiring to serve and support denominational missionary work may be provided a means through which service and gifts may be effectively channeled, and

WHEREAS organization under written regulations will both expedite and unify our efforts to meet these responsibilities, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we adopt the following Constitution and By-laws.

b. Incorporation

Article I - Name

¶952. The name of the organization shall be Evangelical Church Missions.

Article II - Purpose

¶953. The purpose of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries of The Evangelical Church shall be to promote, supervise and extend the missionary activity of the Church. The scope of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries shall be the mission fields designated by the General Conference or the General Church Council of The Evangelical Church.

Article III - Amenability

¶954. The Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries shall be amenable to the General Church Council and the General Conference to whom the record of all its proceedings and a complete exhibit of its financial management shall be submitted for examination and approval.

Article IV - Membership

¶955. The Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries membership shall be:

- a. The General Superintendent;
- b. Two Conference Superintendents elected by the Council of Superintendents;
- c. One representative from each Annual Conference elected by that conference upon nomination by the Conference Superintendent;
- d. Up to 4 members-at-large elected by the Board of Cross-cultural Ministries for a term of four years. There is no limit on the number of terms that can be served.

Article V - Powers and Duties

¶956. The administration of the responsibilities of Evangelical Church Missions shall be through the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries of The Evangelical Church which shall:

- a. Have general oversight of the missionary program of The Evangelical Church;
- b. Assist the Annual Conferences, local churches, and individuals in answering the call of God to take the Gospel to every creature;
- c. Appoint, commission, and arrange for the support of properly qualified missionaries to serve on the mission fields of The Evangelical Church;
- d. Prepare and conclude agreements with other Mission Boards recognized by The Evangelical Church (One Mission Society, World Gospel Mission, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Hope Teams International) for the accepting, approving, assigning and financing of members of The Evangelical Church who are called of God to serve on mission fields not served by The Evangelical Church;
- e. Establish the standards for determining candidacy for missionary service;
- f. Develop the procedural steps to approval for persons applying for missionary service on mission fields of The Evangelical Church;
- g. Develop, implement, and promote programs and methods of financing the work of missions of The Evangelical Church;
- h. Receive and administer all properties, permanent funds, annuity funds, and all special funds coming in any manner into its possession for missionary work;
- i. Purchase, acquire, receive by gift, devise, or bequest, property real, personal and mixed, and hold mortgage, release, sell and dispose of property, borrow money in the case of necessity for the prosecution of the work under its jurisdiction, sue and be sued;
- j. Elect officers and an Executive Committee as hereinafter provided;
- k. Employ necessary persons as staff members;
- l. Bond the Treasurer and executive officers in such sums and upon such condition as the Board may determine;
- m. Arrange for an audit of the books of the Treasurer annually

by qualified accountants, chosen by the Board or its Executive Committee;

- n. Fill vacancies occurring in its own body, its committees and sub-committees subject to the approval of the General Church Council;
- o. Establish by-laws for the regulation and conduct of the work of those departments and committees of the Board which shall be constituted from time to time. Such by-laws shall be in harmony with the Constitution of Evangelical Church Missions and The Discipline of The Evangelical Church, and shall be subject to the approval of the General Church Council and the General Conference of The Evangelical Church.

Article VI - Officers and Their Duties

¶957. The officers and duties are as follows:

- a. The Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries shall elect from among its membership the following officers: a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary.
- b. There shall be a Treasurer elected by the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries.
- c. The above officers shall serve for a term of two years; they may be re-elected to the same office.
- d. The duties of the officers are as follows:
 - (1) The Chair of the Board shall preside at the meetings of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries and its Executive Committee. He shall in general perform all the functions of the presiding officer of a legally organized body.
 - (2) The Vice-Chair of the board shall, in the absence of the Chair, or at the request of the Chair, preside at the meetings of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries and its Executive Committee. In the absence of both the Chair and the Vice-Chair, a member chosen by the Board or the Executive Committee shall fulfill the responsibilities of the Chair.
 - (3) The Secretary of the Board shall keep a full and accurate record of the proceedings of the board and its Executive Committee and submit the same to the membership of the Board as directed by the Board.
 - (4) The Treasurer of the Board shall under the direction of

the Board be the custodian of all funds and property of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries of The Evangelical Church. He shall solicit, receive, and record all contributions to the Board for general and specific purposes. He shall disburse funds according to the direction of the Board and its Executive Committee. He shall have supervision of all trust annuity, permanent, and special funds of the Board and have custody of its deeds and securities. He shall make an annual report to the Board or its Executive Committee and other regular statements of the status of the treasury to the Executive Committee.

Article VII - Executive Director of Missions

¶958. The Board may elect an Executive Director of Missions who shall serve under the direction of the Board. The term of office for the Executive Director of Missions shall not exceed four years, but may be re-elected for subsequent terms. The Executive Director of Missions shall be an advisory member of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries. He shall perform those administrative, management, and promotional duties assigned by the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries and/or its Executive Committee.

Duties

The Executive Director of Missions shall:

- a. Submit complete reports of his work to the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries on a regular basis and as requested by the Board and/or its Executive Committee;
- b. Upon approval of the Board and/or its Executive Committee, have authority to hire and supervise office personnel necessary to maintain, manage, and administer the proper and appropriate secretarial, recording and accounting responsibilities of Evangelical Church Missions;
- c. With the Chair of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries, prepare the agenda for the meetings of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries and its Executive Committee;
- d. Be responsible for the correspondence of Evangelical Church Missions unless otherwise directed by the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries or its Executive Committee;
- e. Represent the Evangelical Church Missions to the Annual

Conferences of The Evangelical Church as time and finances permit;

- f. Receive, process, and present to the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries applications for missionary service;
- g. Be responsible for preparing applicants for an interview(s) with the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries and/or its Executive Committee prior to a possible appointment as a Missionary with The Evangelical Church;
- h. Be responsible for the itinerating of and general oversight of the itinerary of newly appointed missionaries and furloughing missionaries of The Evangelical Church in their deputation ministries;
- i. Preparing and distributing missions promotional materials to the ministers and churches of The Evangelical Church, and in general, promoting the World Harvest Offering and other missions emphases of The Evangelical Church;
- j. Be the chief liaison person of The Evangelical Church to the missionaries and mission fields of The Evangelical Church;
- k. Serve as the major representative of Evangelical Church Missions to the various world missions agencies, boards, or societies.

Article VIII - Executive Committee

¶959. The elected officers and three members-at-large, elected from and by the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries, shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries. The Executive Committee of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries shall act for the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries in all matters requiring action in the interim of the regular and specially called meetings of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries. The Executive Committee shall be amenable to and report its proceedings to the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries.

Article IX - Meetings

¶960. The Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries of The Evangelical Church shall meet at least annually at a time and place determined by the Board or its Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Cross-Cultural

Ministries shall meet as deemed necessary by the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries and/or the Chair of the Board and the Executive Director of Missions.

2. Recognition of Mission Fields

¶961. The Evangelical Church may establish, work in cooperation with and/or recognize missions fields.

¶962. When The Evangelical Church has established a Denominational mission field, the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries shall have the privilege to:

- a. Appoint, commission and assign qualified missionaries who are members of The Evangelical Church;
- b. Recruit workers throughout The Evangelical Church;
- c. Distribute literature and promote Evangelical Church Missions projects, and financial and personnel needs throughout the Denomination;
- d. In cooperation with the Ministers of the local Evangelical Churches, newly appointed and furloughing itinerant missionaries of The Evangelical Church in the local churches for the purpose of promoting Evangelical Church Missions and soliciting financial support for the work of Evangelical Church Missions.

¶963. The following missionary organizations outside the denomination are recognized by The Evangelical Church:

- a. Hope Teams International
- b. One Mission Society (OMS);
- c. World Gospel Mission (WGM);
- d. Wycliffe Bible Translators

When The Evangelical Church recognizes a missionary organization outside the denomination, that organization shall have the privilege to:

- a. Distribute informational literature throughout the churches of The Evangelical Church on authorization of the Board of Cross-Cultural Ministries and the Conference Superintendents;
- b. Request representation from The Evangelical Church to serve on its governing board; and
- c. Make available its missionaries for missionary services in the churches of The Evangelical Church on authorization of the

Minister of the local Evangelical Church (§964).

§964. Selection of Missionaries for Local Churches

The policy of priority for local churches selecting missionaries for local church support and for use in local church missions services and conventions shall be as follows:

- a. Evangelical Church Missionaries on Evangelical Church Mission fields;
- b. Evangelical Church Missionaries serving under WGM, OMS, Hope Teams International and Wycliffe Bible Translators;
- c. Evangelical Church Missionaries serving under organizations not approved by The Evangelical Church;
- d. Non-Evangelical Church Missionaries serving under organizations approved by The Evangelical Church.

I. Educational Institutions

§994. The Evangelical Church may establish and recognize and/or approve educational institutions (§570).

§995. When an educational institution has been established as an institution of The Evangelical Church, it shall have the privilege to:

1. Recruit students throughout The Evangelical Church;
2. Request financial support from the Annual Conferences;
3. Solicit funds from local Evangelical Churches and individuals;
4. Request trustee relationship from supporting Conferences.

§996. When The Evangelical Church or any of its Annual Conferences recognizes and/or approves an educational institution as an approved institution for the preparation of its Ministers, it shall have the privilege to:

1. Recruit students throughout the Annual Conference and/or the Denomination;
2. Solicit funds from local churches and individual members of The

Evangelical Church;

3. Request trustee relationship from supporting Annual Conferences and/or the Denomination.

APPENDIX

OFFICIAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DISCIPLINE

¶503. *Classification of Ministers*

The Discipline approves the establishment of a variety of “Special Ministries” within the local church which may include Deacons and Deaconesses, therefore it is felt that the position of Deacon and Deaconess ought not be added as an additional category of Ministers within The Discipline.

[Commission on The Discipline, 10/12-13/1989]

¶¶520.b.(5); 539 *“Innocent Party” in Divorce*

Each Annual Conference shall have freedom to determine what decision shall be taken to judge innocence.

The question need not be discussed by the whole Conference but should be kept in as small a group as possible. If a question arises concerning an elder, the question should be brought before the elders. If a question is brought to a vote at Annual Conference, only ministerial members shall vote on the issues.

With respect to the matter of divorce before or after salvation: yes, there is a difference, as there is an area of responsibility, for “to whom much is given, much will be required.” Further interpretation is to be handled by each Annual Conference.

With regard to Ministers already licensed or ordained, ¶217 and ¶¶663-690 of The Discipline already address the procedures.

[Executive Council, 2/2/1990]

¶¶597; 598 *Surrender of Credentials*

All Conference Boards of Ministry and all Annual Conferences must record an official minute regarding the surrender of credentials.

[Commission on The Discipline, 10/22/2003]

¶¶581; 701.b *Auxiliary Groups*

Auxiliary groups are given the freedom to make name changes with regard to terminology and structure for auxiliary leadership.

[Commission on The Discipline, 10/21/2004]

Chapters 5 and 7 *Retired Elders Holding Office*

When duly elected, retired itinerant elders may hold positions in the local church which are not specifically limited to lay persons.

[Commission on The Discipline, 11/6-7/2000]

¶707 *Affiliate Membership as Affecting Local Church Members*

All members of affiliate congregations shall be recognized as members in good standing of The Evangelical Church.

[Council of Superintendents, 5/4/1973]

¶710 *Local Church Council Secretaries*

The local Church Council Secretary shall be a member of the local Evangelical Church; a local Church Council may also utilize the services of a Recording Secretary.

[Commission on The Discipline, 1/28-29/1992]

¶711.i *Pastor-Parish Information Sharing*

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee has the right of discretion in the choice of the items they will report to the local Church Council.

[Executive Council, 2/4/1989]

¶820.1.A.(1) *Election of Conference Superintendent*

The Discipline does not preclude an Annual Conference from forming a research committee to obtain written consent from qualified elders outside of its conference, whose name(s) may be added to the open ballot for Conference Superintendent.

[Commission on The Discipline, 10/14-15/1999]

¶866 *Conference Auxiliary Presidents*

A Conference Evangelical Women's President may belong to any local Evangelical Women's society, even though she is a member of a local Evangelical Church with no organized Evangelical Women's society. This will enable her to hold office in the Conference Evangelical Women.

[Commission on The Discipline, 1/28-29/1992]

¶914.e *Proceedings of the General Church Council*

The General Church Council is required to present a full record of its proceedings to the General Conference, the term "full record" means the actions of the General Church Council.

[Commission on The Discipline, 4/21/1995]

¶920 *Election of a General Superintendent*

The procedure for electing a General Superintendent which was brought by the Council of Superintendents is within the parameters of The Discipline.

[Commission on The Discipline, 10/21/2004]

¶932 *Recommendations to the Commission on The Discipline*

A three-fourths vote of any of the mentioned groups is necessary for consideration.

[Commission on The Discipline, 10/14-15/1999]

¶¶932; 935 *Votes of the Commission on The Discipline*

It is to be understood that once an item is properly before the commission, a simple majority vote of the Commission is sufficient to recommend the item to the annual conferences for adoption.

[Commission on The Discipline, 10/14-15/1999]

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