

BY-LAWS

“RELATIONSHIPS ARE EVERYTHING”



The House of the Lord

A SUMMARY FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

**PROVIDING INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE IN DOCTRINE AND
PRINCIPLES AS TOGETHER WE SERVE THE CONGREGATION OF**

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD®

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 12, 2013

BY-LAWS

“RELATIONSHIPS ARE EVERYTHING”

The following Bylaws are designed to help The House of the Lord® operate in a biblically faithful manner. The Bylaws cover basic issues related to church governance, membership, the responsibilities of church officers, and the use of church property. They also cover issues such as church restoration, HIV/AIDS, offerings, etc.

It is no longer possible to assume that everyone holds to the same standard of common sense, fairness, and justice, even within the same church.

This loss of common values even within the church can cause a great deal of confusion and conflict. It can also expose a church to devastating lawsuits. A generation ago, very few people would have even dreamed of suing a church. But the legal climate has changed dramatically in recent years, and today lawsuits against churches are common place. Part of the reason for this is that people have differing expectations as to how a church should conduct its affairs or treat its members. When these expectations are not met, a lawsuit often follows, which can ruin a church both financially and spiritually.

Realizing that the absence of common norms and values can pose a threat to the unity and well-being of our church and damage its witness in the community (John 17:21-23), we developed these Bylaws as a means of establishing commonly accepted standards for how we would treat one another and govern ourselves as a body. In particular, these Bylaws are designed to accomplish these goals:

They help to prevent surprises and disappointed expectations by providing potential members with a thorough explanation of how the church intends to govern itself and accomplish its mission.

They reduce the likelihood of confusion and conflict within the church by establishing clear operational guidelines.

They prevent the misuse of authority by church leaders by limiting their powers and establishing procedures that protect members from being disciplined or losing rights without due process.

They reduce the church's exposure to legal liability by addressing legal issues and requiring that potential lawsuits will be resolved through biblical mediation or arbitration rather than through litigation.

As you read these Bylaws, we encourage you to look up and study the Bible passages that are cited next to particular provisions. *In addition, all documents referenced but not present in these By-Laws, are available upon request in the church office.* If such study and supporting documentation does not answer all of your questions and concerns, please do not hesitate to approach one of our pastors or elders, who will be happy to talk with you about these Bylaws.

The House of the Lord® Board of Trustees
The House of the Lord® Council of Elders

BYLAWS

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Disclaimer

As you read this document, you will notice that the names “Holy Spirit” and “Holy Ghost” are used interchangeably. Even though both names refer to the same Person, the third person of the Triune Godhead, there is a purpose behind this usage. The name “Holy Spirit” is the translation of the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and other modern translations. We use the New American Standard Bible and the New American Standard Bible Updated Edition (NASB-U), because of the stiffness and accuracy of the translation. The name “Holy Ghost” is the translation of the King James Version (KJV). When the KJV was translated, the old English word “ghost” was being used. We now use the more modern word “spirit.” That is the simple difference between the names “Holy Spirit” and “Holy Ghost.”

But, there is a more complex difference that you need to be aware of. The name “Holy Ghost” has become subconsciously identified with the veneration of the KJV and with Pentecostalism. While, on the other hand, the name “Holy Spirit” has become somewhat identified or at least used by modern Christianity. The name “Holy Ghost” seems to indicate someone mysterious, miraculous, and more personal. The name “Holy Spirit” seems to transmit a concept of a force or an intellectual awareness of the power of God.

While neither of these names transmits exactly what the Bible transmits, modern Christianity's concept of the third person of the Triune Godhead lacks clarity

as well. As a matter of fact, we are not practical Trinitarians, i.e. we intellectually assent to the Tri-unity of God's personality, but do not really have a practical doctrine or interaction with the Spirit of God. Therefore, sometimes, to look more closely and seriously at how the Holy Spirit reveals Himself in His Word, the term "Holy Ghost," is used, which causes some people to hesitate for a moment.

Bishop F. Josephus Johnson II
Organizer and Senior Pastor
The House of the Lord®

SECTION 1

1.1 Name

The name of this local church shall be THE HOUSE OF THE LORD®, herein known as "the church", located at 1650 Diagonal Road, Akron, Ohio 44320

1.2 Organization and Incorporation

As a local expression of Christ's universal church, this local church is organized under the authority of Jesus The Christ by the leadership of the Holy Spirit through the Senior Pastor, Elders and Trustees, As a State entity the church shall be organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Ohio.

1.3 Purpose and Limitations

To bring glory and honor to the Triune God by promoting true worship, mutual edification, and gospel witness;

To operate exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the classification of legal charities; and no part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of any private stockholder or individual; and no substantial part of the activities of the organization, or any receipt of its funds, shall be utilized for any other purpose except those purposes mentioned above;

To handle affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by the civil authorities.

The church shall not have or issue shares of stock, and no dividends shall be paid. No part of the income or assets of the church shall be distributed to any member or officer without full consideration. The church is prohibited from lending money to guarantee the obligation of a member or officer of the church. No member or officer of the church has any vested right, interest or privilege in or to the assets, property, functions, or activities of the church. The church may contract in due course, for reasonable consideration, with its members or officers without violating this provision.

SECTION 2

2.1 Purpose Statement

Strategically investing in covenant relationships to advance the reign of God!

Strategically: a carefully devised plan of action (conducting a war) against the devil, the world, sin and self with the goal of making a difference for the Kingdom of God

Investing: contributing time, effort, and energy towards the development of relationships that make a difference for the Kingdom of God

Covenant: a pact, treaty, alliance, or agreement between two parties of equal or unequal authority, established with an oath, usually in elected relationship, according to a divine sanction which contains a group of promises...(Jeremiah 31:33-34)

Relationships: ...with God the Father
...with God the Son
...with God the Holy Spirit
...with ourselves
...with others

We ask you to pray about this purpose statement. Pray that God will reveal to you the true meaning of this purpose statement. Pray that God will help you accept this purpose. Pray that God will help us, as a church, and fulfill our purpose.

2.2 The Vision (As written by Bishop F. Josephus Johnson II)

Over the course of time, God has given us a vision for the life of The House of the Lord® through time spent alone with Him in His Word and prayer. The vision is the vision of a preferred future. It is the vision of what God wants to do with and through The House of the Lord® until Jesus comes. Over the course of time, God has given me various scriptures that have contributed to this vision, but one of the primary Scriptures is Luke 4:18-21. Jesus came to Nazareth, stood up in the synagogue on the Sabbath Day, and read Isaiah 61:1-2. Jesus announced that this Messianic prophecy was fulfilled in Him that very day. This Messianic prophecy is about the anointing and the appointing of Jesus The Christ in terms of ministry. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach the good news of the gospel to the poor. Not only was He anointed, but He was also appointed or sent with a special message. He was to proclaim, herald, or preach the binding up of the brokenhearted: that's consolation; recovery of sight to the blind: that's illumination; release to the captives: that's emancipation; freedom to those who are downtrodden: that's liberation; and the year of grace of the Lord: that's salvation.

The people that Jesus is referring to are consciously hurting. Therefore, I can see in this vision thousands of people in the Northeastern Ohio area, who are consciously hurting, receiving support and healing, i.e. being evangelized, loved, nurtured, and cared for in a relational environment that is undergirded by prayer and based on the Word of God. Only when a person becomes consciously aware of his own pain can he sense the true futility of the human condition. "We ignore what we already know with a deepseated, intuitive knowledge—that no love or friendship, no intimate embrace or tender kiss, no community, commune or collective, no man or woman, will ever be able to satisfy our desire to be released from our lonely condition." This truth is so painful that we prefer to live with unrealistic expectations, hoping for a cure all.

When we face the true pain of the human existence, it should drive us to a supernatural source of comfort: Jesus The Christ. It is the pain of crisis that should drive us to the cross, and it is at the cross where we can find unconditional acceptance and a stable identity.

Yet, even in Jesus The Christ, there is **no** final comfort or escape from pain in this world. The pain that we must experience becomes a source of human understanding and compassion. Healing in this context includes taking away the false illusion that wholeness can be given by one to another. Healing does not take away the loneliness or pain of another, but invites a person to recognize his/her loneliness on a level where it can be shared. When someone can share their pain, they no longer have to run away from it, but can accept it as an expression of the basic human condition. From this position, we realize that we must obey God and rely upon Him to comfort us in all of our affliction that we may comfort others with the comfort wherewith we ourselves have been comforted.

We want to offer healing and support, i.e. evangelism, love, care, and nurture in a relational environment, because God as to His very nature is a triune relationship; and when we accept Jesus The Christ as our personal Savior we are born into a vertical relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (reconciliation) and a horizontal relationship with other believers (brothers and sisters in the Lord) must be cultivated.

This must be undergirded with prayer because prayer is the very atmosphere of the church (Eph. 6:18). All of this must be based on and proceed from the Word of God, because the Word of God is the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man (Rom. 15:4). This comes from training people to pursue the baptism/filling of the Holy Ghost and live in the dynamic of the power of the Holy Ghost, through discipleship.

The visible instruments of this relational environment are the celebration service, the small groups, and the leadership training mechanism.

The celebration service will facilitate celebration, i.e. adoration, awe, reverence, piety, thankfulness toward God, spiritual healing, a sharing community and evangelization in our actions and attitudes at The House of the Lord®, as a way of life through the centrality of the Word of God in preaching, teaching, public reading, prayer, praise, singing, drama, thanksgiving, serving, giving, baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The small group is an ongoing relational gathering of several participants. The small group activities include Bible study, Bible application, nurture, one another ministry, life issues and struggles, evangelism, training to enter into a fullness of relationship with the Spirit, service, and leadership development, to minister to those attending The House of the Lord® and the surrounding community; resulting in a relational environment where people care for one another. The purposes of the small group are healing, empowerment, evangelism, discipleship, shepherding, and service.

The leadership training mechanism will provide the training, the accountability, and the support to enable groups to grow and birth new groups until Jesus comes.

2.3 Condensed Vision

The vision of The House of the Lord® is to glorify God by providing healing and support for those in Northeastern Ohio who are consciously hurting, through the good news of Jesus The Christ offered in a relational environment, so that these people may develop significant relationships with God, Jesus The Christ, the Holy Spirit, and other believers. We strive to do this primarily through a vibrant celebration service and a nurturing smallgroup experience based upon the Word of God.

2.4 Mission Statement

“A place where you sense you are in the presence of God, and when you leave you're glad you went!”

“Relationships Are Everything”

PHILIP A mission statement and a purpose statement are very close, if not identical in most cases. But with a church, the purpose statement comes pretty much from the biblical purposes that Christ left for His Church, in His Word. Whereas, this mission statement is intended to capture our unique

mission, task, or purpose, i.e. the mission or purpose of The House of the Lord[®], as it relates to the purpose of the Church of Jesus The Christ.

2.5 Church Philosophy

From the very beginning, when The House of the Lord[®] was first founded, the main purpose and goal has been to win lost souls to Christ. Years have passed, we've had five different locations and our membership has grown from four people to more than 6000, yet the purpose and goal at The House of the Lord[®] remains intact: SOULS. Realizing that it is only through Jesus The Christ whereby men must be saved, we have been determined to preach the Gospel message of Jesus The Christ in every service.

Yes, The House of the Lord[®] is concerned about winning souls to Christ, but we're also concerned about the souls we win. This is why we try to provide new converts (whether they join or not) with tools that will help them grow spiritually and experience an overcoming, victorious Christian life. We believe that people today are hungry for the Word of God. They have questions, and they want answers. They long for meaningful worship services. They wish for true Christian fellowship. They are looking for biblical solutions to life dominating problems. They are looking for power to transform lives. And these are the goals of the ministries at our church.

We believe God called us to evangelize the city of Akron in general and the AfricanAmerican population in particular. In practice, this is yielding a multicultural, multiethnic congregation. We welcome people of all cultures, ethnicities, and languages.

The House of the Lord[®] was first organized to be an evangelistic church that would present the Gospel of Jesus The Christ through public evangelism and Christian Education.

Second, it would be a Christ-centered church where every activity and involvement of the church would center on lifting up the name of Jesus The Christ.

Third, The House of the Lord[®] would be a Bible believing church.

Fourth, The House of the Lord[®] would be a Bible teaching church where the inerrant, infallible Word of God would be given "top priority".

Fifth, it would be a faith work church where there would be no begging, selling or any money-making rallies. The church would be solely supported by providing each member the opportunity to freely give to the church as God has prospered him/her.

Sixth, The House of the Lord[®] would be 'a family oriented' church realizing that if the church is to be strong then each family unit within the local body must be strong.

Seventh, The House of the Lord[®] would be a called out, separated church realizing that if God's mission and purpose of winning lost souls to Christ was to be fulfilled, the church must be careful of its associations.

These seven fundamental truths of The House of the Lord[®] are important because they list the principles that we believe God has honored with His blessings of many souls saved, lives changed, and glory to Him.

It is now time to add a new fundamental to our philosophy. We believe the experience, encounter, or reality of the baptism in or filling with the Holy Ghost, which is the power of Calvary that is realized at Pentecost, will bring a new reality and intimacy with Jesus The Christ and provide power for new possibilities in bringing in the reign of God, in our everyday lives.

SECTION 3

1. Church Covenant

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

We believe that God has called us to be a Christ centered, Bible believing, faith oriented

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

We also engage to maintain family and private devotion; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, exemplary in our deportment, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready to forgive and work towards reconciliation, without delay, in keeping with the teaching of Jesus The Christ. This includes agreeing to resolve disputes among the brethren through Christian Conciliation guidelines (*see Christian Conciliation Policy*).

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

SECTION 4

Marriage and Biblical Sexuality

4.1 Abortion

The House of the Lord does not believe in abortion (Exodus 20:13; Job 31:15; Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 49:11; Luke 1:31, 41-44; Romans 12:1-2).

We wholeheartedly support the efforts of organizations that provide counseling and support for pregnant women (Psalm 127:3-5).

4.2 Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender Issues

The House of the Lord affirms the intrinsic and inherent worth of all people! Because God is the creative-Father of all people, all people have basic, innate worth. This includes those who are Lesbians, Gays, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender.

We are opposed to any and all forms of hatred and violence against Lesbians, Gays, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender individuals.

However, the Bible teaches that same-sex intercourse is sin (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We understand that to disagree in any way with the prevailing culture norm and opinion that same-sex intercourse is natural and normal is to be considered antiquated and bigoted; but we must lovingly stand where we believe the Bible stands.

The Bible seems relatively uninterested in sexual orientation. It is not what a person feels or prefers, but what that person does with those feelings or preferences that is the Bible's concern.

Therefore, we do not believe that one's sexual orientation is inherently sinful, whether that orientation is due to genetic causation or the complex interplay of genes, intra-uterine and post-uterine biological development, environment, and choice (which is our position).

We believe the grace of God is sufficient to overcome the practice of same-sex intercourse.

We hold that the practice of same-sex intercourse and biblical morality are incompatible.

We teach clear biblical standards for sexual morality, in general.

We will not permit or condone the practice of same-sex intercourse by any leader of The House of the Lord.

We will invoke the appropriate discipline and reconciliation up to and including removal from leadership and termination from employment or volunteer service.

While we believe this standard is also applicable to members of The House of the Lord, the size of the church and the teaching that teachers or leaders incur a stricter judgment (James 3:1) is the reason for not assertively applying these measures to members.

4.3 Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

The institution of marriage was conceived and established by God (Genesis 1:27; 2:18; 2:21-14; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-21). It is older than any other institution. Furthermore, marriage is God's example to us of the relationship He desires with His bride, the Church. The House of the Lord believes marriage to be a sacred and enduring relationship between one man and one woman.

The House of the Lord does not sanction, endorse, or recognize domestic partnerships or civil unions for same sex marriages, and will not perform wedding or other services to sanction, endorse, or recognize them in any location under any circumstances.

Based on Matthew 19:9; 5:32 and their contexts, we believe divorce to be granted on three grounds: abandonment, abuse, or adultery (which includes but is not limited to infidelity, incest, pedophilia, same-sex intercourse, and bestiality).

We will recognize divorces and perform remarriage services for those whom the Elders have determined after review to have been divorced under the aforementioned biblical grounds.

4.4 The Sanctity of Life

God alone is the giver of life. Practices such as abortion, euthanasia, mercy killing, suicide, murder, child abuse, spousal abuse, abuse of the elderly, or any other malicious violence against another human being are completely contradictory to the teachings of the Bible and the life of a Christian (Genesis 2:7; Psalms 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:24; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:31-44; Exodus 20:12; Matthew 15:4).

The House of the Lord believes that life begins at conception and starts with the first heartbeat. A fetus is a human being and that life is to be protected. We, as people, do not have the authority to determine whether a fetus or a pregnancy is to be terminated, except in the case of a medical emergency.

Neither violence, abuse, nor any other form of death by one's own hands or the assistance of another is acceptable. Neither self-murder nor assisted termination of a life is consistent with Christian principles (Psalm 139:13-16).

The House of the Lord does not believe that abuse of one's spouse and/or children should be tolerated. Such abuse is a violation of the commitment to love and protect one another in the bonds of holy matrimony.

In support of its position on the sanctity of life, The House of the Lord provides instruction and/or educational material on living a godly lifestyle, spiritual growth, and resolving conflicts in daily living (Ephesians 5:21-25).

SECTION 5

5.1 Membership

- a. Prayerfully and thoughtfully consider the question of uniting with this church after having accepted Jesus The Christ as your Lord and Savior.

The membership shall consist of all adults and children of those adults who have made a profession of faith in Christ, and have been admitted into membership by the New Member Orientation Ministry. All such members have the privilege of pastoral oversight, instruction, and government by the church.

- b. You must believe that you have met a change of heart and that your sins have been taken away; that you trust Christ and love all His ways.
- c. Carefully consider the doctrine of this church. You must accept it as the teaching of God's Word. This acceptance would be evidenced by a signature of affirmation of these by-laws on the last page of this document.
- d. You must cheerfully accept the obligations imposed by the Church Covenant. Signing the covenant at the end of this document would evidence this acceptance.
- e. Complete the membership application process and class instruction or seminar(s) designated for new members.
- f. You must promise to strive at all times to live peaceably with your brothers and sisters, to be faithful to your duties, and to bear your share of the burdens and responsibilities that belong to the members of this church.
- g. Membership requires that you are at least eighteen years old and in good standing. "Good standing" means that a member is not presently under the censure of suspension or deposition due to any act of omission or commission that violates the principles, doctrine, ethic, integrity and character of The House of the Lord®.

Children and youth who have joined The House of the Lord® who joined the church with their family, friend, relatives or by themselves, are considered members in good standing at The House of the Lord®. However, individuals under the age of eighteen do not have any voting privileges relative to church business affairs.

- h. Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Executive Staff of their intention to withdraw and the reasons thereof. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Executive Staff (or their representative) shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth.

Membership in the congregation of The House of the Lord® is not transferrable or assignable.

- j. All members of the congregation shall be expected to support the program and needs of THOTL in proportion as the Lord shall prosper them.

SECTION 6

Church Restoration & Dispute Resolution

This section covers the The House of the Lord® and its agents, including its pastors, officers, staff, and volunteers with regard to any actions they may take in their official capacities. This section also covers any and all disputes or claims arising from or related to church membership, doctrine, policy, practice, discipline, restoration, decisions, actions, or failures to act, including claims based on civil statute or for personal injury.

Galatians 6:1 (NASB), “¹ Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.”

6.1 What kinds of sin or offense merit discipline?

- a. Confirmed habits of wrongdoing (2 Thess. 3:6)
 - Living in or practicing continuous, habitual unrepentant sin (1 Tim 5:20)
 - Obvious, apparent, visible sin (I Tim. 5:24)
- b. Being divisive; heresy in doctrine (Titus 3: 10)
- c. Immorality of Conduct (1 Cor. 5, 2 Cor. 7:11)
 - Includes gross immorality
- d. Sudden faults (Gal. 6:1)

6.2 What are the grounds for excommunication?

If a person refuses to repent of sin and is refusing to listen to Christ, the leaders of The House of the Lord®, or its members, excommunication can be part of a determined effort at restoration (1 Cor. 5:1-13).

3. Basic Steps

Matthew 18:15-18 (NASB), “¹⁵ If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

If a member is caught in any trespass (Galatians 6:1), the following **basic** steps will be taken, which are consistent with Scriptural instructions:

- a. “...go and reprove him in private” – One brother or sister should go to them in private to lovingly confront and encourage them toward repentance (Matt. 18:15; Gal 6:1-2; Col. 3:16; James 5:19-20).

- b. "...take one or two more with you" – If they will not listen to one person, especially after several attempts, two or three brothers or sisters should go and talk with them (Matt. 18:16).
- c. "...tell it to the church" – If the personal and informal efforts do not correct an offense, Jesus says we should "tell it to the church" (Matt. 18:17).

In the spirit of keeping matters as confidential as possible, "telling it to the church" should first involve telling one of the Staff Pastors/Elders and requesting their assistance in resolving the matter. Where it is determined that Church action is necessary, members of the Pastoral Staff/Elders may repeat steps one and two above and try to talk personally and informally with the member. If the member does not respond favorably, the matter may be taken to another level and the member asked to answer to the matter in a more formal and judicial manner, as described in section 5 below.

If the member will not listen to the leaders and other select members, if necessary (and only under circumstances where the sinful conduct has been verified), the entire congregation may be informed of the problem as part of formal church restoration and dispute resolution process so that they too can try to encourage the member to turn from his or her ways (repent) before further grief and pain is brought to themselves and others (Matt. 18:17-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 13:17).

- d. "...let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax gatherer" — If the member continues to harden their heart after repeated appeals and absolutely refuses to listen to the church, then they may be treated "as a Gentile and a tax gatherer" — excommunication, as described in section 5.8.5 below (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:2-7, 11-13).

6.4 Purpose of Restoration

- a. Restoration is based upon the relational nature of God, as He has revealed Himself in His Word.
- b. Restoration is not primarily intervention and confrontation when anyone is caught in a trespass, but restoration of the trespasser to right relationship with God, His Word, and His people.
- c. Restoration is aimed at facilitating the maturation of the transgressor, protecting, preserving, and maturing the life and health of the church, and protecting, preserving, and proclaiming the loving and fatherly nature of God.
- d. Restoration is a process, not an event; and it takes place in a relational environment or context.
- e. Restoration covers a wide spectrum of activities from eliciting accountability to loving confrontation to investigation to preventative measures to corrective measures...to evangelistic measures...to whatever the Spirit directs.

By joining this church, all members agree that these methods shall provide the sole remedy for any dispute arising against the church or its agents, and they waive their right to file any legal action against the church in a civil court or agency, except to enforce an arbitration decision. Additional details and specifics as to how the church restoration is determined, handled, resolved, mediated etc. is contained in the ***Church Restoration Policy, Christian Conciliation Policy and the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation.***

SECTION 7

Church Officers

We hold that an officer of this church must be a member in good standing, i.e. saved and living out the devotions of the church covenant. This person should have exhibited to the congregation that he or she possesses the qualities of being filled with the Holy Ghost, wisdom, an honest reputation, and faith.

We believe that our church officers are appointed, not only by us but more so by God. We esteem them highly and obey them, in the Word of God.

7.1 Elders

Elders are responsible for the **spiritual leadership of our church**. They advise and pray with the senior pastor and minister to the assembly in keeping with the direction of the Holy Ghost for this assembly.

7.1.1 Qualifications for Elders

Since Elders act as pastors, shepherds, or overseers, the qualifications are the same as those listed in I Timothy 3:1-7. Those qualifications are:

1. Above reproach.
2. The husband of one wife.
3. Temperate.
4. Prudent.
5. Respectable.
6. Hospitable.
7. Able to teach.
8. Not addicted to wine.
9. Not pugnacious.
10. Gentle.
11. Peaceable.
12. Free from the love of money.
13. One who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control and dignified.
14. Not a new convert.
15. A good reputation with those outside the church.

The following are practical qualifications:

1. Saved at least three years (1 Tim. 3:6).
2. Member of The House of the Lord® at least three years (1 Tim. 5:22).
3. Active in at least one ministry of the church (Rom. 12:48).
4. Attends church school or a small group structure and church services on a regular basis (Heb. 10:25).

5. Eligible one year after probation for church restoration (Gal. 6:1).
6. Supports the church financially on a regular basis (at least the minimum standard set by the church).
7. Not an abuser of alcohol, or user of tobacco, marijuana or drugs (1 Tim. 3:8).
8. In agreement with church doctrine (Jude 1:3).

The Senior Pastor and the Council of Elders appoint Elders. Their term of office is lifetime or such time as they move from our fellowship for some reason.

See the Council of Elders Policy for additional details and information.

7.2 Staff Pastors, Pastors, Ministers

Although we do not want to perpetuate a system of hierarchy, where titles and positions could seem to be more important than ministry and relationships, we do see the necessity of having a certain organizational structure in place where certain people are charged with specific responsibilities and authority, along with those who are recognized as having attained some level of accomplishment in ministry. The qualifications for ministers are detailed in the *Ministerial Level Requirements*, because they are the entry level of pastoral ministry, in our church-

7.2.1 Staff Pastors

Staff pastors are full-time, paid, clergy who report to the senior pastor. The senior pastor hires them in conjunction with the advice and approval of the Trustees. They must acknowledge a call to pastoral ministry and meet the appropriate requirements. They are ordained as pastors and assigned specific staff responsibilities.

It is the charge of the pastor along with the Elders and pastoral staff to feed and tend the flock as Christ's minister, and with the elders to lead them in the service of Christ. It is their task, when called upon, to conduct the public worship of God; to pray for and with Christ's flock as the mouth of the people unto God; to feed the flock by the public reading and preaching of the Word of God, according to which they are to teach, convince, reprove, exhort, comfort, and evangelize, expounding and applying the truth of Scripture with ministerial authority, as a diligent workman approved by God; to administer the sacraments; to bless the people from God; to shepherd the flock and minister the Word according to the particular needs of groups, families, and individuals in the congregation, discipling by teaching plainly the first principles of the oracles of God to those who are yet babes in Christ, visiting in the home of people, instructing and encouraging individuals, and training them to be faithful servants of Christ; to minister to the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the dying; and to make known the gospel to the lost.

7.2.2 Pastors

Non-Staff Pastors are non-full-time, and sometimes stipend clergy who have been ordained to a **specific area of ministry in the church**. These servants of God will have successfully completed the requirements for ordination, which include an internship leading some ministry or area of ministry. Ordination is the public recognition and setting a part of a person to the ministry or area of ministry that God has called him/her to.

7.2.2.1 Pastoral Ordination

- a. Having attained a high degree of accomplishment of the “Ministerial License Considerations.”
- b. Having served under the requisites of a Minister or Pastor for a period not less than, three (3) consecutive years.
 - 1) Time period commencing at the point of personal acknowledgment and The Assembly of Staff Pastors and the Council of Elders’ approval of such acknowledgment.
- c. The Assembly of Staff Pastors and the Council of Elders’ approval and evaluation of the progress during internship.

7.2.3 Ministers

The House of the Lord® recognizes those who acknowledge the call of God in their lives corporately and publicly as representatives of the community through the rites of licensing and/or ordination.

7.2.3.1 Ministerial Licensing Consideration

- a. Must be a Christian with commendable Christian reputation (1 Tim. 3:7).
- b. Must be a studier of the Bible and able to teach the Gospel (i.e. the death, burial & resurrection of Jesus The Christ according to Bible).
 - 1) A threeyear incubation period with main body of believers.
 - 2) Faithful in attendance, giving, involvement, integration, requirements Matt. 11:1).
- c. Authorized by the Council of Elders (not a loner).
 - 1) Given authority and instruction (Matt. 10:1, 5).
 - 2) Assigned responsibilities (Luke 10:116).
- d. Periodic return and reports of events.
 - 1) Progress recorded and evaluated (Luke 10:1720).
 - 2) Willing to receive exhortation (Acts 20:1).
- e. Commendable field reputation (2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:1417; 4:1, 2).
- f. Must complete Systematic Theology or demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to the church doctrine.
- g. Must complete the reading of and exercises in the Eight Ministries of the Holy Spirit and Workbook
- h. Must complete The Johnson Leadership Institute course of study under the senior pastor.
- i. Required to read the materials assigned for personal development.

See Ministerial Level Requirements and the Ministers Handbook for more details

7.3 Paid Staff

Those who are part-time or full-time paid staff members are hired by the senior pastor to conduct administrative, implemental, and managerial leadership, on a day-to-day basis.

While these persons may not sense a need to be a licensed minister or ordained pastor, the calling upon their lives and the qualifications that authenticate that calling are just as serious.

7.4 The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee was established by the Senior Pastor in response to the transition of The House of the Lord® from a regional church to a mega church. The Executive Committee, led by the C.O.O., is charged with the responsibility of assisting the Senior Pastor in analyzing short and long term goals and needs of the church, implementation of strategies and plans, evaluation of current goals and programs to insure their effectiveness, and to help in the administration of personnel issues with the paid staff. The Committee will become a resource base for other committees and groups to reference needs, policy development and procedural implementation. *The Executive Committee functions are synonymous with that of a Board of Directors, other than those functions specifically enumerated as the responsibility of the Board of Trustees.*

Decisions are not made unilaterally or independently.

The Executive Committee is composed of a minimum of the Senior Pastor, the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Pastor of Administrative Services, and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Controller. The Executive Committee is appointed by the Senior Pastor and their terms are for life, unless some situation should prevent them from continuing.

The Executive Committee maintains a close liaison with the Chairperson of the Trustees.

See Executive Committee Policy for additional information.

7.5 Deacons

Deacons are one of two biblical offices of the New Testament church, bishops, elders, overseers, shepherds, or pastors being the other. Deacons are the extension of pastoral ministry. They provide practical service and ministry to the assembly.

7.5.1 Qualifications of Deacons

The full text of qualifications would be entirely too lengthy to quote here. We can only refer to the passage that constitutes the basis of our qualifications, I Timothy 3:813. *The qualifications of a deacon are comparable to that of a minister* and again a high degree of spiritual attainment in the sight of God and man is necessary.

Deacons should visit the people, especially the sick, instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourning, and nourish and guard the children of the covenant. They should pray with and for the

people. They should have particular concern for the doctrine and conduct of the pastor and help him in his labors.

Deacons shall show forth the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy toward the saints and strangers on behalf of the church. As delegated and directed by the Senior Pastor, Executive Staff and/or the Council of Elders, they shall minister to the temporal needs of members and friends, and assist in the care and maintenance of church property when called upon.

Deacons are appointed by the Senior Pastor, Pastoral Advisor, Council of Elders, and the assembly of Deacons.

See the Deacon Handbook for more details on this ministry

7.6 Trustees

Trustees are required by the State of Ohio for the purposes of its status as a nonprofit corporation and for its perpetual succession. The Trustees are responsible for the financial and legal leadership of the church.

7.6.1 Qualifications of Trustees

The full text of qualifications would be entirely too lengthy to quote here. We can only refer to the passage which constitutes the basis of our qualifications: I Timothy 3:8-13. The qualifications of a trustee are comparable to that of a deacon and a high degree of spiritual attainment in the sight of God and Humanity is necessary. Because this is an appointed office, certain requirements are hereby set forth in conjunction with those found in I Timothy 3:8-13.

- a. Saved at least three years (1 Tim. 3:6).
- b. Member of The House of the Lord® at least three years (1 Tim. 5:22).
- c. Active in at least one ministry of the church (Rom. 12:48).
- d. Attends church school and church services on a regular basis (Heb. 10:25).
- e. Eligible one year after probation and restoration for church discipline (Gal. 6:1).
- f. Supports the church financially on a regular basis (at least the minimum standard set by the church).
- g. Not an abuser of alcohol, or user of tobacco, marijuana or drugs (1 Tim. 3:8).
- h. In agreement with church doctrine (Jude 1:3).

7.6.2 The Screening Committee

The purpose of this committee is to screen all nominees for the position of trustee. The committee is appointed by the Senior Pastor to interview the nominees. The committee considers the following:

- a. Qualifications of the Trustees as listed above and in the Trustee Appointments Policy and Procedures for The House of the Lord®.
- b. Support of their family.
- c. Deep commitment to work harmoniously and in a spirit of cooperation with the pastor, staff and all elected leadership.
- d. Above reproach in business or vocation.

After the interview, the screening committee, with the approval of the Senior Pastor will appoint those individuals who agree to and are willing to adhere to the requirements listed above.

See Trustee Appointment Policy for additional information

7.7 All Leaders (Department Heads, Teachers, Small Group Facilitators, Etc.)

These persons are considered leaders in our church and should satisfy the following qualifications:

7.7.1 Qualifications for All Leaders

- a. Saved at least three years (1 Tim. 3:6).
- b. Member of The House of the Lord® at least one year (1 Tim. 5:22).
- c. Attends church services on a regular basis (Heb. 10:25).
- d. Eligible one year after probation for church discipline (Gal. 6:1).
- e. Supports the church financially on a regular basis (at least the minimum standard set by the church).
- f. Not an abuser of alcohol, or user of tobacco, marijuana or illegal drugs (1 Tim. 3:8).
- g. Successful completion or enrolled in seminars and/or workshops geared and directed towards new members, The Eight Ministries of the Holy Spirit and Study Guide or able to demonstrate through testing, or some other means, an acceptable knowledge of church doctrine.
- h. Willing to sign a covenant that affirms their willing adherence to the doctrine of this church (Jude 1:3).
- i. Willing to submit to appropriate leadership.
- j. A letter of transfer or favorable reference from previous church, where applicable.

SECTION 8

8.1 Offerings

It is believed that God has called The House of the Lord® to be a faithwork church. As a result the church would be solely supported by tithes and offerings freely given by its members. We therefore refuse to dishonor God's house by selling, begging, or any other fund raising activity that would not coincide with those principles set forth in God's Word.

The Bible states in Romans 1:17 NASB, "For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.'"

The Bible also states in 2 Corinthians 9:7 NASB, "Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver." In concert with this verse, we ask that members of this church to give that which can be given freely and cheerfully.

The House of the Lord® shall have one general treasury.

Financial reports shall be made to the church periodically and the financial books shall be made available for inspection upon request.

An independent audit is done once a year to insure the propriety and integrity with which we handle God's resources.

We hereby, with the conviction of God, set forth these guidelines, as God's divine will for this local body of believers:

- a. Every member should give as God has prospered him/her.
- b. Every member should begin his/her giving with a tithe of all that they have earned each week.

We believe that tithes were before the law, during the law, and after the law and is a suggested starting point for giving.

- c. Every member should give offerings, over and above tithes, as they feel led and prospered. Where sin has abounded, now grace super abounds. So, we believe that we should give offerings over and above our tithes as we are led and prospered. Every member should give regularly and proportionately, at least a tithe of all that he/she has earned each week. Matthew 6:33 NASB, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."

8.2 Church Business

8.2.1 Concerning Church Officers.

(See the Senior Pastor Vacancy Policy regarding Succession).

BY-LAWS

- a. The **Senior Pastor** is called by God and selected by the current pastor with approval from the Council of Elders, Trustees and the Pastoral Staff, and continues in office as long as all parties are agreed His special duties are preaching the Gospel, administering the

ordinances, exercising pastoral oversight, and taking general guidance and care of the religious interests of the church and the people.

- b. The **Staff Pastors** are chosen by the Senior Pastor, the Executive Committee, the Council of Elders and the Board Trustees to be full-time employees of The House of the Lord®. The staff pastors are under the jurisdiction of the Senior Pastor and the Executive Committee. Their duties are varied, but consist of primarily administering the departmental ministries of the church. This would include recruiting, training, discipling, and eliciting accountability from leaders and their ministry members. There does not give anyone permission to lord their title or position over the flock but acting as examples in love and compassion.
- c. The **Deacons** are appointed by the Senior Pastor, Executive Committee, Council of Elders and the assembly of Deacons. Their duties consist in caring for the sick and needy members, assisting in the administration of the ordinances, and in every way aiding the pastor in his work. *See Deacon Handbook for more information*
- d. The **Executive Committee** with the full knowledge and the final decision regarding such document(s) resting with the Board of Trustees will assist the C.O.O. in handling contracts and other legal documents pertinent to the Church. The C.O.O. with the assistance of the Executive Committee members and the Trustee Chairman, if necessary, will handle signatures on such documents.

Signature authority on all checks proceeding from The House of the Lord® will be the responsibility of any two of the four persons of the Committee (Senior Pastor, Chief Operating Officer, Pastor of Administrative Services, and Finance Administrator).

- e. The **Pastor of Administrative Services** will oversee the administrative support for the Pastoral Staff; coordinate task with the church secretaries and receptionist; see that the church records are accurate and updated; oversee coordination and implementation special events; oversee all published media and notices originating from the church office; insure that the Senior Pastor's schedule is current and up to date; assist in the budgeting process, a member of the Executive Committee
- f. The **Controller or Chief Financial Officer** (bonded) will oversee the annual independent audit by a Certified Public Accountant, by providing all necessary documentation and explanations requested. The Controller or Chief Financial Officer should have Certified Public Account credentials and certification.

The House of the Lord® fiscal year is from January to December of the calendar year.

- g. The **Chief Operating Officer** is to ensure that the business affairs of the church, including the supervision of pastoral staff and support staff (with assistance from the Pastor of Administrative Services), service auxiliaries ministries and the appropriation of allocated resources are maximized, enhanced and enabled effective ministry of the church. The primary focuses of the Chief Operating Officer is on the non-ministerial or business functions of the church (ex. Maintenance, construction, office staff, finance, legal, audio/video, IT etc.).

The House of the Lord® By-Laws are amended by majority approval of the Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees and the Council of Elders

8.2.2 Distribution of Governance Authority

- a. **The Senior Pastor with the approval of the Executive Committee and Elders appoints and removes Trustees.**
- b. The Senior Pastor selects and the Elders, Trustees, Pastoral Staff and Executive Committee ratify a new senior pastor.
- c. The Elders and Trustees removes a senior pastor
- d. The Trustees purchase church property
- e. The Trustees hold church property in trust, for the church.
- f. The Trustees are responsible for the disposition of church property.
- g. The Executive Committee represents and manages the church.
- h. The Executive Committee handles the personnel matters of the corporation.
- i. The staff carries out the day-to-day business of the church, as well as day-to-day ministry.
- j. The Elders act as the spiritual advisory board to the senior pastor and give spiritual discernment and counsel.
- k. The Deacons act as the spiritual extension of the pastor – carrying out the day-to-day pastoral ministry.

8.2.3. Disposition of Property

The Articles of Incorporation of The House of the Lord® place the responsibility for the purchase, conveyance and disposition of property in the hands of the Trustees.

In the instance of ‘real’ property (i.e. real estate) the disposition process, with the aid and assistance of the Executive Committee would involve investigating fair market values, comparative analysis, discussions with and hiring of a real estate agent (if necessary).

In the case of any other ‘capital’ properties, disposition, with the aid and assistance of the Executive Committee could involve donating said properties to another church, charitable institution or individual; researching the fair market value of the property and then searching for a suitable buyer of said property.

In either situation, the Trustees would insure that proceeds for the sale/disposition of property owned by The House of the Lord® would be deposited in the general treasury. In addition, all documentation is to be kept in order, submitted and filed with the appropriate institutions or organizations – as well as copies filed at The House of the Lord®.

8.2.4 Contracts, Checks, Deposits and Funds

7.2.4.1 Contracts. The Board of Trustees may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents of the Church, in addition to the officers so authorized by the Bylaws to enter into any contract or execute and

deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of THOTL, and such authority may be general or may be confined to specific instances.

7.2.4.2 Checks, Drafts, or Orders. All checks, drafts, or orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Church shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the Church (usually the COO, Finance Administrator, PAS and the Senior Pastor), and in such manner as instructed and approved by the Board of Trustees. Checks issued by THOTL require two signatures (a combination of any of the two persons listed above)

7.2.4.3 Deposits. All funds of the Church shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Church in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board of Trustees may select.

7.2.4.4 Gifts. The Board of Trustees may accept on behalf of the Church any contribution, donation, gift, bequest or devise for any purpose of the Church (Mal. 3:10; Luke 6:38; I Cor. 16:1; and II Cor. 9:68).

8.2.5 Reception of Members.

- a. Any person wishing to become a member should make it known at the appropriate time during regular worship service.
- b. The only prerequisite for membership into the Body of Christ shall be a public profession of faith in Jesus The Christ. A public profession of faith shall be evident by the person coming forward to the altar during an invitation, or making such profession to an altar worker, pastor, minister, deacon or a person who is a member of the New Member Orientation Ministry. After the profession is confirmed by any of the said persons previously mentioned, the seeker shall be received as a fellow believer.

All those aspiring to be members of The House of the Lord® are to attend and complete designated classes or seminars to insure a good foundation of faith in Jesus the Christ and the practices (doctrine) of The House of the Lord®. *See Section 4 on Membership.*

- c. Persons coming from other denominations may be received after stating their Christian experience and their assent to The House of the Lord® faith and practice (doctrine), which they will study in detail in new member or other designated classes or seminars.

A person may be received into communing membership by a letter of transfer from another church by the Executive Committee, by reaffirmation of faith, or by confession of faith. In order to be received into membership, a person must also sign the Church Covenant, sign the Church By-Laws and be accepted by the Executive Committee.

- d. Persons excluded from the church may be restored after making due confession to the Church, and giving satisfactory evidence of repentance for their sins. *See Church Restoration Policy for more information.*

8.2.6 Dismissing of Members.

Members may also be removed from membership by order of the Executive Committee and/or Council of Elders when they: persistently, over an extended period of time, and without adequate reason absent themselves from the stated services of the church; unite with a church of another denomination; cannot be found for a period greater than two years; or are removed by excommunication for persistent impenitence (see Church Restoration Policy). Children may be removed from membership with their parents or when they reject the covenantal responsibility of submission to home or church and neglect the ongoing exhortation of the Executive Committee and/or Council of Elders to profess faith in Christ.

A member uniting with another denomination may be granted separation from The House of the Lord by the granting of a letter of standing; or membership may end by the simple erasure of the name from the roll as directed by the Executive Committee or Council of Elders.

8.2.7 Congregational Business Meetings

The House of the Lord® is a large church. Having a membership of 6000 plus members, congregational meetings have become impractical and too difficult to manage in an orderly manner. Since the Trustees are entrusted to handle the financial matters of the church, the Executive Committee is entrusted to handle the business and policy affairs of the church, the Elders are entrusted as spiritual advisors to the Senior Pastor and the Staff is entrusted to implement the vision of the Senior Pastor on a daily basis, decisions of governance are routed through these entities. Should a decision require consideration of the entire church, the Senior Pastor will advise during a worship service or call a special meeting (ex. “The State of the Church” message every January).

8.2.8 Transactions with Interested Parties

A contract or other transaction between The House of the Lord® and one or more of its Executive Committee members, Trustees, staff members, church officers, Elders, Deacons, or family members thereof (“Interested Parties”), or between The House of the Lord® and any other entity, of which entity one or more board members, officers, or Trustees are also Interested Parties, or in which entity and Interested Party has a financial interest, shall be voidable at the sole election of the Corporation unless the following provisions are satisfied:

- a. The material facts as to the Interested Party’s relationship or interest and as to the contract, action, or transaction are disclosed or are known to the Executive Committee, or a committee designated by the Executive Committee, in good faith reasonably justified by the material facts, authorizes the contract, action or transaction by the affirmative vote of a majority of the disinterested members of the Executive Committee, even though the disinterested members constitute less than a quorum of the Executive Committee, or a committee designated by the Executive Committee; or
- b. The contract, action or transaction is fair as to the Corporation as of the time it is authorized or approved by the Executive Committee, or a committee designated by the Executive Committee.

Interested Parties may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Executive Committee, or a committee designated by the Executive Committee, that authorizes such a contract, action or transaction.

No loans shall be made by the Corporation to any of its directors or officers.

8.2.9 Conflict of Interest Policy

It is the policy of The House of the Lord® to identify conflicts of interest and to provide for full disclosure of any and all material conflicting interests by Interested Parties, and permit the Executive Committee, or a committee designated by the Executive Committee, to gather all relevant facts and circumstances to determine in accordance with *the Transactions with Interested Parties* guidelines (see section 7.2.7) whether or not any disclosed potential conflict is benign and not in any way jeopardizing the religious mission, exempt function, or reputation of Christ's church, so that the contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair, and reasonable to the Corporation. Consequently, the Executive Committee shall maintain a Conflict of Interest Policy that will provide for full disclosure of material conflicting interests by interested Parties, and permit the Executive Committee, or a committee designated by the Executive Committee, to determine whether the contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair, and reasonable to The House of the Lord®.

8.2.10 Reporting

It is the policy of The House of the Lord® to report all manner of abuse to any members of the church. "Any members" means from infants, children and youth (child abuse) to senior members (elder abuse), spousal abuse, etc. The manner and guidelines for the identification and reporting of abuse(s) is according to the Ohio Revised Codes (ORC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Ohio Department of Aging and related government, health care and child care/child watch agencies. *See The Church Workers Policy for additional details.*

SECTION 9

DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of the Church, the Board of Trustees shall, after the payment of all the liabilities of the Church, dispose of all of the assets of the Church exclusively for the purposes of the Church in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for the purposes of the Church in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall qualify as an exempt corporation or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or of the corresponding provisions of any future United States Revenue Law) as the Board of Trustees shall determine.

No part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, officers, directors, or any person except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered, and to make payments in the furtherance of the Church. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws of the Church, the Church shall not carry on any activity not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax, under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, (or by the corresponding section of any future Revenue Code of the United States of America) or (b) by a corporation, contributions of which are deductible under Section 170 (c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the corresponding section of any future United States Revenue Law).

SECTION 10

The House of the Lord's Position on Same-Sex Marriage

Written by Bishop F. Josephus Johnson, II
Establishmentarian and Senior Pastor

Marriage and sex, between two people of the opposite sex, were both created and ordained by God in

Genesis 2:20-25 (NASB-U), “The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. [21] So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. [22] The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. [23] The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.’ [24] For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. [25] And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”

Before we deal with sexual relations between two people of the same sex, we affirm the intrinsic and inherent worth of all people! Because God is the creative-Father of all people, all people have basic, innate worth. This includes homosexuals.

We are opposed to any and all forms of violence against homosexual persons, and believe that gay, lesbian, and transgendered individuals should be accorded the basic civil rights that all American citizens are due.

Before we can go forward, we need to define homosexuality. The *Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* defines homosexuality as

“1 : of, relating to, or being of the same sex.”

This is expanded on the “Standards4Life” web site, at www.standards4life.org, which is the web site of the Christian Medical & Dental Associations.

“In the human, the term homosexuality generally connotes four behavioral dimensions: sexual fantasy, sexual activity, sense of identity, and social role. The most important dimension in assessing homosexual orientation is erotic fantasy. Such fantasy may be entirely private and may or may not motivate sexual activity with others. Someone may be celibate, for example, but homosexual in orientation.” --Richard C. Friedman, MD and Jennifer Downey, MD, *Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, Spring 1993

The Bible is clear that sexual fantasy and sexual activity between two people of the same sex is **BY-LAWS** and abnormal.

This comes up early in the Bible with the situation in Sodom and Gomorrah. The writer of Genesis states a couple of times that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was great. We find this in

Genesis 18:20 (NASB-U), “And the LORD said, ‘The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.’”

The writer, which is believed to be Moses, is writing for Jehovah: and He identifies the problem in Sodom and Gomorrah as exceedingly grave sin!

Now, what was the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah? The sin of the men of Sodom is revealed in

Genesis 19:3-5 (NLT), “But Lot insisted, so at last they went home with him. He set a great feast before them, complete with fresh bread made without yeast. After the meal, [4] as they were preparing to retire for the night, all the men of Sodom, young and old, came from all over the city and surrounded the house. [5] They shouted to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to spend the night with you? Bring them out so we can have sex with them.’”

The sin was homosexual fantasy and behavior! The Bible does **not** call homosexuality “a viable alternative lifestyle,” but sin!

Furthermore, God’s response to this sin is judgment!

Genesis 19:23-25 (NASB-U), “The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar. [24] Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven, [25] and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.”

Please notice that the LORD rained fire and brimstone, from heaven, on Sodom and Gomorrah. It is interesting to note that the name for homosexual intercourse is “sodomy.”

We can see that sexual intercourse between two people of the same sex is sin, but where does it say that this is abnormal? In addition, the Bible verses are about two men, not two women! We will answer both questions as we look at a prohibition against sinful and abnormal sexual practices in

Leviticus 18:22-24 (NASB-U), “You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination. [23] Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion. [24] Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled.”

Here we have a prohibition against men having sex with men and that behavior is “... classified as detestable (תועבה; cf. vv 26, 27, 29; 20:13). Something detestable is an activity that God abhors. One dimension of the horrendous incident reported in Judges 19 involved the homosexual

drive of some of the men of Gibeah in Benjamin against a stranger. Their wanton behavior led to their being proscribed (*condemned*) by all the other tribes.”¹

We also see that God forbids bestiality, i.e. sexual intercourse with beasts or animals, by men or women. As men lying with men is detestable, people lying with animals is unnatural and confusion.

God warns the Israelites not to defile themselves by such sexual practices, because they would become like the nations that He was driving out of the land that they would occupy.

Remember that Israelite culture is agnatic or patrilineal. This means that family relationships are traced and described through the males. Therefore, this verse does not mention women having sex with women, but it is probably understood.

Let’s look at another prohibition.

Leviticus 20:13-16 (NASB-U), “If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them. [14] If there is a man who marries a woman and her mother, it is immorality; both he and they shall be burned with fire, so that there will be no immorality in your midst. [15] If there is a man who lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; you shall also kill the animal. [16] If there is a woman who approaches any animal to mate with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.”

Here male homosexuality is not only characterized as detestable or repugnant, but as a capital crime! Although other forms of immorality are covered, we are only touching on bestiality, because it was mentioned alongside of homosexuality in Leviticus 18. Bestiality is also a capital crime!

These are Old Testament verses and must be looked at in the light of the new revelation of the New Testament. As we move into the New Testament, it is interesting the Paul categorizes sexual sin, be it heterosexual, homosexual, or bestial, as being in a different category than other kinds of sins. Paul wrote in

1 Corinthians 6:18 (NASB-U), “Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.”

The word “immorality” is *porneia* and according to *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* “of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse.”

Therefore, sexual sins seem to have a unique impact upon the people committing them.

¹ Hartley, J. E. (2002). *Vol. 4: Word Biblical Commentary : Leviticus*. Word Biblical Commentary (Page 297). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

Let's look at a major passage, in the New Testament.

Romans 1:26-32 (NASB-U), "For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, [27] and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. [28] And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, [29] being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, [30] slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, [31] without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; [32] and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them."

Because of immorality, God gave the Gentiles over to degrading passions. Then, Paul names those degrading passions: 1) women changing the natural function for that which is unnatural. He is talking about the natural sexual function; 2) in the same way as women, men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire for one another; and 3) men committing indecent sexual acts with other men.

Here, Paul not only talks about sexual intercourse, but lusts between the parties.

In addition, those who commit such sexual acts receive the due penalty of their error.

Furthermore, just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, because those who commit such acts are not acknowledging God, God gave them over to depraved or disqualified minds. Their minds are below par in intelligence. If you know anything about Grief Recovery[®], we say, "When your heart is broken, your head doesn't work right; and your spirit can't soar!"

Then, Paul describes those who have sexual relations with those of the same sex. They are filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil, envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, boastful, inventors of evil, unloving, unmerciful, and although people who commit such acts know the ordinance of God, i.e. that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but give hearty approval to those who practice them. There are many people in America who are not homosexuals, but they give approval to those who practice homosexuality, through their attitudes and actions.

Paul is clear the homosexual lust and intercourse, which would certainly include all other homosexual behavior, is unnatural, sinful, and carries with it the penalty or consequences of such error. In addition, God will turn those who practice homosexual lust and intercourse over to depraved, disqualified, or unintelligent minds, because they know that this behavior is wrong and

that those who act in this way are worthy of death, but they persist in this course of attitude and action.

We come to another important Bible verse in

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NASB-U), “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, [10] nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. [11] Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

In this list of sinners who will not inherit the kingdom of God, there are two sinners that interest us:

1) effeminate and 2) homosexual. The Greek word translated “effeminate” is

“2. of pers. *soft, effeminate*, esp. of *catamites*, men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually.”²

The Greek word translated “homosexuals” is a derivative of the Greek word for “sodomy”.

Now Paul makes a powerful point: there were some among the Saints who had been homosexuals before they were saved, but they had been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God! Homosexuality is **not** unpardonable or **unforgivable**! God loves and forgives homosexuals who ask for forgiveness and forsake the behavior, i.e. they either change their sexual orientation or remain celibate (*i.e. not having sexual fantasy or behavior with anyone, as long as the person is unmarried*).

Therefore, we support the right of homosexuals to seek and receive therapy, when they have decided they no longer wish to live as homosexuals. Denying homosexuals this kind of therapy is based upon biased science and is at odds with American social values.

Furthermore, we do not condemn people who are struggling. The song writer wrote: “Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin!” It is not struggling that’s a sin, but yielding that’s a sin. If you struggle with the same sex or the opposite sex, we still ask for celibacy, if the person is not married.

² Arndt, W., Gingrich, F. W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (1996, c1979). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature: A translation and adaption of the fourth revised and augmented edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-deutsches Worterbuch zu den Schrift en des Neuen Testaments und der ubrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (Page 488). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Consequently, we see homosexuality as any other sexual sin and we do not hate homosexuals, as we do not hate adulterers.

Let's touch on one more Bible verse.

1 Timothy 1:8-11 (NASB-U), "But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, [9] realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers [10] and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, [11] according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted."

Here Paul says that homosexuality, among other sins, is contrary to sound teaching and the glorious Gospel of God!

Now that we have dealt with what the Bible teaches, we need to deal with what's going on in America, and around the world. There's a cultural war being waged in America between the liberal, activist courts and the people of the United States. Homosexuals are going into court and challenging their state's constitutions for same-sex marriages. One of their main arguments is that homosexuality is inborn. Therefore, to deny homosexuals the right to get married and all the legal benefits of marriage is to discriminate against them. This leads to the conclusion that those who oppose same-sex marriages are bigots who simply hate homosexual.

First, there is **no** scientific evidence that homosexuality is inborn (*see more on this at www.standards4life.org*). There may be some evidence that a person may have a predisposition to homosexuality, but a predisposition still needs a choice. This can be likened to alcoholism. Many people may have a predisposition to alcoholism, but they have to make a choice to be an alcoholic.

This also deals with the claim that homosexuals are being discriminated against, in the same way that African-Americans have been discriminated against.

However, being a minority is a result of involuntary heredity, while homosexuality is a voluntary choice.

Furthermore, when the issue of same-sex marriages has been placed on the ballot, the people have soundly defeated any concession of same-sex marriages. At the writing of this position paper, forty-five states have prohibitions against same sex marriage (nineteen have constitutional amendments against same-sex marriage and twenty-six have statues against same-sex marriage. The people have spoken! Nevertheless, liberal judges, who are appointed for life, are striking down these state imposed sanctions. These activist judges are wiping away the vote of the people with a single stroke of the pen.

We believe that homosexuals have the right to live and pursue life as they see fit, but we do not believe that homosexuals—who are less than one percent of the population—should be allowed to change the natural, historic culture of our nation by legalizing same-sex marriage.

We are opposed to gay marriage—not due to an animus toward gay persons—but because it violates God’s design for one man/one woman unions and it will ultimately destroy marriage as a viable social institution by opening the door to polygamy and polyamory. We are convinced that group marriages mixing any number of people together in same-sex and mixed sex unions is not good social and local social policy for any nation.

Therefore, we support the only action that can save our culture, i.e. the Federal Marriage Protection Amendment. The amendment was originally proposed by Representative Marilyn Musgrave in 2002 and consisted of two clauses:

Marriage in the United States of America shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman.

Neither this constitution nor the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.

A new amendment was proposed by Representative Musgrave that modifies the second sentence. H.J. Res. 106 (108th Congress 2004) and S.J. Res. 40 (108th Congress 2004) each provide:

Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution, nor the constitution of any State, shall be construed to require that marriage or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon any union other than the union of a man and a woman.

The chief sponsor of the amendment in the Senate is Wayne Allard (R-Colorado).

The first sentence means that **no** legislature may confer the name of marriage on same-sex unions and **no** court may recognize a same-sex marriage contracted in another country.... So far as legislatures are concerned, the primary thrust of the sentence’s prohibition is symbolic, reserving the name of marriage to its traditional meaning. But symbolism is crucial in cultural struggles.”³

“The second sentence expresses the main thrust of the amendment. It recognizes the liberal activist courts are the real problem. If courts are prevented from ordering same-sex marriage or its

³ Robert Bork (a former federal appeals court judge and solicitor general, is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute), *The Wall Street Journal*, “Stop Courts From Imposing Gay Marriage, August, 7, 2001.

equivalent, the question of arrangements less than marriage is left where it should be, to the determination of the people through the democratic process.

To try to prevent legislatures from enacting permission for civil unions by constitutional amendment would be to reach too far. It would give opponents the opening to say we do not trust the people when, in fact, we are trying to prevent courts from thwarting the will of the people.”⁴

The Amendment does **not** take anything away from homosexuals and leaves the decision of same-sex marriages in the hands of the voters of each state, rather than activist courts. This is how it has been and this is how it should be.

All people, regardless of their sexual orientation, should be treated with love, respect, and honor.

Towards A Biblecostal™ Theology And Hermeneutic
(Revised 05/30/2005)
Bishop F. Josephus Johnson, II

I continue to refine a biblical theology and hermeneutic for a Biblecostal™ theology and hermeneutic. I coined the term “Biblecostal”™ on October 16th, 1998, in an attempt to keep from being theologically categorized and lumped in with people who are different from us—**not** because of any sense of superiority or pride, but for the sake of clarity in teaching. There are two seemingly opposite poles of theological teaching: Pentecostal and Conservative Evangelical, with the latter being very similar to and having its roots in Fundamental Theology. I want to state for the record that I object to the terms and the stereotypes attached to the terms Pentecostal, Evangelical, and Fundamental as they are currently being used. In a manner of speaking we are all Pentecostal, because the Church was born on the Great Day of Pentecost; we are all Fundamental, if we believe in the fundamentals of the Bible; and we are all Evangelical, if we believe in the evangel, i.e. the Gospel of Jesus, the Christ. Nevertheless, these names are commonly used in America with some sense of meaning. Therefore, I will reluctantly use them as they are currently used.

One of the distinctive characteristics of Biblecostal™ Theology is that we hold to some of the beliefs of both Pentecostals and Evangelicals simultaneously, while leaning towards some of the distinctives of Pentecostals with respect to the Luke’s perspective of “the baptism in the Holy Spirit” (Luke 1:5). I call this the “empowering” ministry of the Holy Spirit. Similar to the Bible and the post-postmodern world in which we live, it is no longer inconceivable to hold two beliefs or positions that seem to be antithetical. It is now possible to be both/and, rather than either/or.

⁴ Robert Bork (a former federal appeals court judge and solicitor general, is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute), *The Wall Street Journal*, “Stop Courts From Imposing Gay Marriage,” August, 7, 2001.

We are not *classically* Pentecostal, because we do not hold the view that that the “initial evidence” of the contemporary baptism in the Holy Spirit or “empowering” ministry of the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. Although I believe I understand those who teach this doctrine, agree that a good case can be made for this teaching, and believe that tongues are likely to occur in conjunction with the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit, we do not teach the doctrine of evidentiary tongues because 1) there is **no** direct biblical statement that speaking in tongues is the “evidence” of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, 2) although a case for this teaching can be built from the texts involved, speaking in tongues is not mentioned in every occurrence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and 3) although the “initial evidence” doctrine captures the expectation of the texts involved, “The focus on evidence can lead to a preoccupation with a single crisis experience. Moreover, evidentiary tongues can also be readily confused with a badge of holiness, an experience that signifies that one has entered into a higher degree of spiritual maturity.”⁵

While not all those who hold to a baptism in the Holy Spirit that is subsequent to salvation would hold to the “initial evidence” doctrine, this is nonetheless widely held to represent Pentecostalism.

We are Evangelical, but more, because we agree with many of the teachings of Evangelicals with the major exception of their take on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and their belief that the manifestations of the Spirit, listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, are no longer in operation. Some would call us “Charismatic,” but the Charismatic Renewal Movement was a movement within mainline denominations, and we are a nondenominational, independent church. Furthermore, we cannot be classified as “the Third Wave” or “Neo-Pentecostalism,” which describes the intrusion and belief in the manifestations of the Spirit within the confines of conservative Evangelicalism. While making room for Pentecostal manifestations of the Spirit, this group still holds to the Evangelical view of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In light of these differences, it seems better to come up with our own designation.

During the course of this paper, I will make some critical observations about both Classical Pentecostals and conservative Evangelicals. I do not do so with any sense of ultimate judgment, animosity, or superiority, but only to point out differences for the purpose of understanding. This is in keeping with one of the teaching methods of Jesus, Who often taught by contrast. Undoubtedly, few people live at these extremes, but are probably somewhere in the middle. Nevertheless, understanding something about the extremes can help us understand the controversy.

It is important to develop a theology and a hermeneutic, because both are involved in understanding this controversial subject. Consequently, I am developing a written, systematic theology of what we believe the Bible teaches with respect to the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit. I am also developing our “hermeneutic” or the way we tend to interpret the Bible and certain critical passages with respect to the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit today.

⁵ William and Robert Menzies, *Spirit And Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000, p. 143.

After going back into the Word of God and restudying these things, over the last eight years, I have come to some conclusions. However, I can make no final statement or teaching, because the depths of the Word of God can never be fully or finally plumbed. We believe in what the Reformers referred to as *semper reformanda*, i.e. always reforming. Therefore, this remains a work in progress.

To get a better perspective of this controversial subject, we need to explore some of the history behind it. Historian and scholar Donald W. Dayton, in his book *Theological Roots Of Pentecostalism*, cites a divide between the Pentecostal and the conservative Evangelical hermeneutic in the mid-1800's. Developing Pentecostals, of that era, seemed to rely upon a Lukan, historical narrative hermeneutic, while developing conservative Evangelicals, of that era, seemed to rely upon a Pauline, didactic hermeneutic.⁶ Donald Dayton also wrote, "Narrative texts are notoriously difficult to interpret theologically." In addition, Reformed theologian, R. C. Sproul, said in the tapes series "Knowing Scripture," "Do not draw conclusions from narratives only." Before going forward, I want to point out that although this seems to be predominantly a Pentecostal problem, Evangelicals are not free of this problem either, especially when it suits their theological purposes. This is only one explanation of an ongoing dichotomy that I see between Classical Pentecostals and conservative Evangelicals. A dichotomy that may be captured in the question, "Can there be a Pentecostal scholar?"

Moreover, Dayton wrote "Pentecostals read the accounts of Pentecost in Acts and insist that the general pattern of the early church's reception of the Spirit, especially as it is in some sense separated in time from the church's experience of Jesus, must be replicated in the life of each individual believer.

In making this claim, Pentecostalism stands in a long tradition of a 'subjectivizing hermeneutic.'"⁷ Yet, I say, to the contrary, this does not prove that narrative passages can never be used to determine doctrine, because it is done often, but doctrinal statements must be made not only in the light of Luke and Acts, or the Pauline epistles, but the entire Bible.

Nevertheless, I have found books that present the Pentecostal perspective from a scholarly, biblical perspective. One such book is *Spirit And Power*, by William and Robert Menzies. The authors deal with the perspective that Luke is a theologian and historian that can stand on his own two feet. They argue that although Luke was undoubtedly affected by being a companion of Paul, his writing predates Paul's epistles and seem to have a different intent and perspective. If Luke is allowed to speak for himself and is **not** read through Pauline eyes and filters, it will be seen that Luke's view of the Holy Spirit may be different, though not contradictory, to Paul's view. Two other excellent books give credence to this perspective: *Luke: Historian And Theologian*, by I. Howard Marshall and *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, written by Roger Stronstad.

In addition, Philip Francis Esler, in his book *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, put forth evidence that Luke-Acts should be dated "in the mid- to late eighties or the early nineties of the first century

⁶ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots Of Pentecostalism*, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, New Jersey, 1987, p. 23

⁷ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots Of Pentecostalism*, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, New Jersey, 1987, p. 23

CE.”⁸ Furthermore, “...Luke nowhere displays the slightest acquaintance with Paul’s letters.”⁹ Consequently, it is likely that the author of Luke-Acts is not Luke the physician, the companion of the Apostle Paul. Therefore, this is another reason to let Luke speak for Himself.

Finally, Classical Pentecostals seem to place an emphasis upon experience, with less grounding of that experience in the Bible, while conservative Evangelicals seem to put an emphasis upon the Aristotelian logic of systematic, propositional theology, with little room for genuine personal experiences. This also includes the interpretation of the experiences of the book of Acts.

On the other hand, conservative Evangelicals have intellectualized the power of God and done away with many spiritual manifestations. The Aristotelian logic that has been superimposed upon biblical texts has impacted many of the conservative Evangelicals to the point of theologizing God to death. The American, Greek influenced tendency to lift the intellect above the emotions does not accurately represent the Hebrew mindset in which the Bible is written. Hollenweger wrote in his book *Pentecostalism*, “Now it is unquestionable that Aristotle made a great discovery. He said that if of two propositions one is the exact contradiction of the other, one must be wrong. The trouble with that logic is that it is foreign to the biblical testimony. In the Bible, God can repent, He can change His opinion, for example in the book of Jonah. He can say: ‘Only forty days and Ninevah is destroyed,’ and then decide not to destroy it, much to the chagrin of Jonah. God is—like a partner in marriage—not without contradiction, but totally reliable. He is not reliable like a computer, he is reliable like—well—like only Himself.”¹⁰ I believe God is unchangeable in character, but unsearchable in His judgments and unfathomable in His ways (cf. Romans 11:33).

The early Church in Acts, which undoubtedly operated as the Church was meant to operate, had openness to the Spirit and teaching. They had manifestations of the Spirit and doctrine. Christianity, according to Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19, is the experience of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit on the basis of the gift of saving faith, and yet there was also developing doctrine. After the miraculous manifestations in the first part of the Acts 2, we read in

Acts 2:42, “And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

The Church was devoting itself to the apostle’s teaching or doctrine. It was probably an oral theology that was developing, but it was a theology. The propositional, systematizing of theology would come later.

I believe that we need a biblical balance between the Classical Pentecostal and the conservative Evangelical perspectives. There also needs to be an integration of experience and theology, and an integration of oral theology and propositional, systematic theology. Genuine

⁸ Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 1987, p. 29.

⁹ Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 1987, p. 28.

¹⁰ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins And Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1997, p. 195.

spiritual experience needs to be grounded in and interpreted through our biblical theology, and our biblical theology needs to be lived out in our experience. Again D. A. Carson wrote, “Throughout history there have been pendulum swings of various sorts. The church, unfortunately, is not exempt. At times there are enormous pressures to intellectualize and formulate the Gospel; at others, enormous pressures to ‘feel’ one’s religious faith and develop passion for God—profound, emotional outbursts of contrition, praise, adoration. At most times in history, of course, groups espousing each of these polarities co-exist, one perhaps on the decline, the other on the ascendancy; and most groups embrace some mixture of the two, without much thought as to their proportion. Only rarely have Christians, such as the early English Puritans, self-consciously committed themselves to wholistic integration of the two. Noncharismatic Evangelicals *tend* to the former stereotype; Charismatics (*and certainly Pentecostals*) *tend* toward the latter. Both have their dangers.”¹¹ Of course, I believe D. A. Carson is using the term Charismatic in a similar way that we are using the term Pentecostal.

We are seeking to do what Carson sees Christians as rarely doing. We are seeking to establish a group of Christians who are committed to the wholistic integration of these two perspectives, i.e. we seek to contemplate and formulate the Gospel, while experiencing and feeling our faith in legitimate biblical experience!

Allow me to sketch more of the historical background of this discussion. In reading Donald Dayton’s *Theological Roots Of Pentecostalism*, I became aware of the fact that the climate and religious developments of the mid-1800’s to 1900, just before the modern Pentecostal movement began, is very important to understanding the present theological developments. It was interesting to see that the Wesleyan Holiness Movement, during that time, eventually evolved into two prominent movements: a movement that touted a second work of grace or blessing of “entire sanctification or holiness” and the Pentecostal teaching of the baptism with the Holy Spirit bringing both power for service and holiness.

Just before the turn of the century, many of the prominent religious leaders of America were writing about and teaching on the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Men like Moody, Torrey, A. B. Simpson, and A. J. Gordon, were teaching that there was a baptism with the Holy Spirit available for Christians, although Moody tended to keep his experience and teaching more private and Torrey later violently denounced the Modern Pentecostal Movement. Once again Donald Dayton wrote, “...by the mid-1890’s almost every brand of the Holiness and ‘higher life’ movements of the nineteenth century, as well as the revivalism of the period in general, was teaching a variation of some sort or another on the baptism with the Holy Spirit, though with some significant differences in nuance and meaning.

It is thus no accident that Pentecostalism emerged when it did. All that was needed was the spark that would ignite this volatile tinder.”¹²

Then we come to the controversy over who is the father of the Modern Pentecostal Movement. Some believe it is Charles Parham, at the turn of the century, while others claim it is William Seymour with the start of the Azusa Street Revival. This is important because of the nature and hermeneutic of the two movements. The nature of Parham’s experience and hermeneutic was

¹¹ D. A. Carson, *Showing The Spirit*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1987, p. 106.

¹² Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots Of Pentecostalism*, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, New Jersey, 1987, p. 188.

racist and puts forth the teaching of tongues being the ‘initial evidence’ of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. His contribution to Pentecostalism is significant. Nevertheless, I claim that William Seymour is the father of the Modern Pentecostal Movement. This is backed up by the fact that virtually every Pentecostal group in the world can trace their heritage back to the Azusa Street Revival. Furthermore, it is this theology and hermeneutic which has impacted our theology and hermeneutic. More specifically, the experience, theology, and hermeneutic of William Seymour is less radical, more biblical, and still has the potential for ongoing impact upon the world.

Walter Hollenweger said, “For if this movement be of the Spirit—which I believe with all my soul—then it is also of the Spirit that:

- It began with a black ecumenist, in the black, oral Afro-American culture, with all that implies;
- It integrated important elements of Catholic (*universal*) spirituality;
- It was inspired by the social and political interpretation of holiness developed in the American Holiness Movement;
- It developed—from its very beginning—critical elements in relation to dispensationalism, inspiration of Scripture, hermeneutics, social and political issues, and modern theological scholarship;
- It began as an ecumenical renewal movement.”¹³

We still cannot understand some of the present theological climate within Christendom, without understanding Fundamentalism. “Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism were unrelated reactions to the state of religion at the close of the 1900’s, but these unrelated movements soon began to react to each other... Fundamentalism was a movement back to the fundamentals of the Word of God. It was an intellectual reaction to the church of that time. It proposed a cognitive rescue of the church from its weariness. Pentecostalism was a reaction to intellectual enterprise. The Pentecostal critique focused **not** so much on diluted theology as upon withered piety. The problem, to Pentecostals, lay **not** in wrong thinking so much as in collapsed feeling. Not the decline of orthodoxy, but the decay of devotion lay at the root of the problem. It was not that the church was *liberal*, but that it was *lifeless*. *What was needed was not a new argument for heads, but a new experience for hearts*. Fundamentalists and the neo-orthodox mounted arguments. Pentecostals gave testimony.”¹⁴ Classical Pentecostals subscribed to an oral theology, while conservative Evangelicals subscribed to a systematic, propositional theology. I was raised in the Classical Pentecostalism of “The Church of God In Christ,” but in reaction to what I considered to be excesses and abuses, I studied and taught conservative Evangelicalism in our church from 1974 to 1997. In 1997, I began a biblical reevaluation of my teaching that continues to this day. I now believe I am coming to a more moderate, biblical position.

“Pentecostalism and Fundamentalism were separate and often hostile movements, and **Pentecostalism became one of the targets of Fundamentalism**. Fundamentalists were particularly

¹³ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots Of Pentecostalism*, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, New Jersey, 1987, p. 397.

¹⁴ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1997, pp. 190-191, quoting Russ Spittler’s, “Fundamentalists,” A paper presented at an international conference at the University of Calgary, Canada, pp. 103-116.

critical of Pentecostalism. It is held that the famous G. Campbell Morgan, one of the contributors to *The Fundamentals*, spoke of the Pentecostal movement as ‘the last vomit of Satan.’”¹⁵ This becomes even more important, when you understand that conservative Evangelicalism is a milder form of Fundamentalism.

Although we disagree with certain Evangelical perspectives, Evangelicals have given us a necessary propositional perspective of Christianity. Their perspective has influenced all of Christianity to seek to formulate accurate statements and propositions concerning the Word of God. On the other hand, while there are a number of things that we disagree with in the Modern Pentecostal Movement, it is important to note that we see God working through the Modern Pentecostal Movement to continue the Reformation. The first Reformation restored the Word of God and the doctrine of justification by faith to the people. The second Reformation is well on its way to restoring to the people of the Church the power of the early Church through the manifestations of the Spirit. Now, finally, the third Reformation is restoring the ascension gifts, gifted people, or fivefold ministers of Ephesians 4, for the equipping of the saints to the work of ministry. This shall usher in the Day of the Saints, which will usher in the final manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

What Biblecostals™ Believe

Based on the aforementioned understanding and history, I now put forward the following beliefs.

We accept the Evangelical belief and those who hold the belief that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is explained by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:13 and occurs at salvation. If one holds to this belief, we would simply urge that person to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit that Paul talks about in Ephesians 5:18. Nevertheless, we teach the doctrine of subsequence (*logically, if not chronologically*¹⁶) of the “empowering” work of the Holy Spirit, because of

Acts 1:8 (NASB-U), “But you will **receive power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (*bold type added*).

I use this terminology to reduce the confusion between Luke’s filling of the Spirit (Acts 2:4) and Paul’s filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), and Luke’s baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) and Paul’s “by one Spirit we are all baptized into the body...” (1 Corinthians 12:13). The empowering work of the Holy Spirit is an event and an experience that is subsequent to or after salvation and is for power for believers to be witnesses of Jesus, the Christ, and to transact kingdom business. In the book of Luke-Acts, inspired speech accompanies each experience of the

¹⁵ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1997, pp. 190-191, quoting Russ Spittler’s, “Fundamentalists,” A paper presented at an international conference at the University of Calgary, Canada, pp. 103-116.

¹⁶ William and Robert Menzies, *Spirit AND Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2000, p. 48.

empowering of the Holy Spirit, i.e. tongues, prophecy, or preaching with power; and that inspired speech tends to be tongues and/or prophecy. In addition, it would logically seem to include the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge.

Since there is no verse that states that inspired speech must always accompany the empowering of the Holy Spirit, we conclude that we should expect inspired speech, when we are empowered by the Holy Spirit for service.

In Acts, there are many dynamic synonyms for the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. These dynamic synonyms highlight different parts of the same event. When you consider verses like Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4, 8, the experience is to be expected and is seen as necessary to carrying out the mission of the Church.

Now, God gives the empowering of His Spirit sovereignly, but there are some things that we can do to put ourselves in a position and condition to receive what God has given. We believe that the filling that Paul is describing, in Ephesians 5:18, is something that every Spirit-indwelted believer should seek, and is **not** the filling of the Holy Spirit the Luke describes in Acts. In addition, we do not believe that the baptism into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13) is not what Luke describes as being baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). Furthermore, we believe the manifestations of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 are still in operation and are activated in the life of the believer, when s/he is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We believe part of the confusion over the operation of the Spirit in the New Testament proceeds from the many dynamics that take place on the Great Day of Pentecost. On the Great Day of Pentecost, believers were probably born of the Spirit, baptized into the body of Christ through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) (*which signals the birthday of the Church*), indwelted by the Spirit, sealed by the Spirit for the day of redemption, baptized in the Spirit by Jesus Christ or empowered by the Spirit (Luke 3:16; 24:49; Acts 1:5; 1:8; 2:4), possibly convicted by the Holy Spirit—this may occur just prior to salvation—, etc.

Article 1: The Difference Between The Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Filling with the Holy Spirit.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a baptism through the instrumentality of Jesus in the sphere of the Holy Spirit for power to carryout the mission of the Church (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5). Because the sphere of the baptism in the Holy Spirit may also be indicated in the Greek preposition *en*, I like the phraseology “the baptism ‘in’ the Holy Spirit.”

After studying the major passages of Acts, which have to do with the baptism in the Holy Spirit or the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit, I am making the observation that Luke uses **dynamic** synonyms when discussing the baptism in the Holy Spirit. All of these terms that are being used are dynamic synonyms for the same thing:

- Being clothed with power from on high;
- The promise of the Father;
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit;
- The receiving of the Gift of the Holy Spirit;
- The coming of the Holy Spirit upon people;
- The filling of the Holy Spirit;

- The pouring forth of the Holy Spirit;
- The promise of the Spirit;
- The gift of the Holy Spirit;
- The falling of the Holy Spirit upon people; and
- The gift of the Holy Spirit being poured out on people.

I would add a footnote that the filling of the Holy Spirit seems to be used more than the other synonyms. I believe this is intentional and instructive. The “Lukan” filling with the Holy Spirit refers more to what was received than to what God gave. God poured out His Spirit and baptized the 120 in His Spirit. They received or were filled with the Spirit. What we see here is cause and effect! He was the cause and He intended for the effect to be the filling of the Holy Spirit. This effect, i.e. the effect of being filled with the Holy Spirit, I believe was supposed to be the repeatable experience of the Christian. This effect was for power for witnessing and transacting kingdom business to carry out the mission of the Church, which includes inspired speech, and is not to be confused with Paul’s filling of the Spirit, which is the control of the Holy Spirit for everyday living. Unfortunately, for us, God has left us, not as a result of any lack of power on His behalf but because of His divine sovereignty, some choice in the matter.

The giving of a gift and the receiving of a gift are two different ends of a transaction. ***I can give you a gift, but whether you receive that gift and how you receive that gift is up to you.*** Even though He gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to groups, in the book of Acts, the individual responses to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit were unique. ***Perhaps, not everyone was filled to the same extent. Nevertheless, God intended for the normal life of believers to be Spirit-filled to be witnesses, but alas that is not the case.***

We believe the empowering of Holy Spirit or baptism in the Holy Spirit is an event and experience that is subsequent to salvation, and “the filling” talked about in Acts and “the filling” talked about in Ephesians 5:18 are not the same. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a vivid, concrete experience. When I use the term “experience,” I mean “not mere feelings, although they are a real part of experience, but an effect that transforms and empowers lives.”¹⁷ Furthermore, the experience is not just internal, but external. Peter, in Acts 2:33, equated the promise of the Holy Spirit with God pouring forth that which they both saw and heard!

Evangelicals make the case that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit came upon saved people in Acts 2, because of the new dispensation, but came upon people at salvation from that point forward. An equally convincing biblical argument can be made that these people were saved in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 and thus the baptism in the Holy Spirit came subsequent to or after salvation. (See my paper “*The Baptism in the Holy Spirit/Ghost.*”)

This seems to be specifically stated in Acts 2:38. After Peter had preached the message of the kingdom to the gathered crowd, Luke writes:

¹⁷ Kieran McDonnell & George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation And Baptism In The Holy Spirit*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1991, p. 358.

Acts 2:38, “And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Here we see a model, if not a formula for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is represented by the synonymous term “the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Repentance plus water baptism bring about the gift of the Holy Spirit. The internal plus the external, i.e. conversion plus the adult rite of initiation—which is water baptism—bring about the gift of the Holy Spirit, i.e. the baptism in or empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Keep in mind that neither repentance nor water baptism are meritorious. Repentance is the flip side of faith and a gift from God. Water baptism is the necessary expression of repentance and faith and a part of the biblical, conversion-initiation motif.

Furthermore, the six references to the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16) seem to refer to a subsequent experience available to all believers. Although 1 Corinthians 12:13 can be applied to Pentecost in a way that equates the baptism in the Holy Spirit with salvation, I believe Paul is describing the unity that was created by the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, on the Great Day of Pentecost, among the already saved believers. I don’t believe Paul is defining the baptism in the Holy Spirit that occurred in Act 2, although that is when this unity was first inaugurated.

Furthermore, when the same author using the same words speaks for himself, I don’t believe that the “filling” of the Holy Spirit in Acts and the “filling” that Paul commands in Ephesians 5:18 are the same. In Acts, Luke is describing an event subsequent to salvation for power to be a witness, which creates the missionary community of the Church; whereas, in Ephesians, Paul is describing something that every believer should seek, i.e. the control of the indwelling Holy Spirit in every area of his/her life. The ongoing, everyday control of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life and the event and experience that empowers a believer to be a witness and transact Kingdom business is two different things. They may be further contrasted as walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) versus witnessing, warring, and worshipping in the Spirit.

Some argue that the Bible never exhort us to seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit or any of the other dynamic terms. On the surface, this may seem to be true, but with a little examination, we will see that it is false.

The exhortation to seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit is stated in Luke’s recounting of the familiar “Ask, Seek, and Knock” passage, in Luke 11. He summarizes this teaching differently than Matthew. He records the words of Jesus in:

Luke 11:13 (NASB-U), “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”

What is Luke talking about? The length and nature of this paper will not allow a full exegesis, but Luke’s intent seems to be constantly pointing forward to the baptism in the

Holy Spirit, on the Great Day of Pentecost. Therefore, in the future, at and after Pentecost, we should ask, seek, and knock for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

With a little study, it will also be seen that Jesus commanded His disciples to be empowered by the Holy Spirit when He told the disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait until they were clothed with power from on high (cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). The phrase “clothed with power from on high” is another synonym for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is a command that captures the indispensability of the empowering work of the Holy Spirit, i.e. for service.

From an Evangelical perspective, there is only one initial baptism in the Holy Spirit, but many fillings. Jesus gave the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, on the Great Day of Pentecost, and what the 120 received and experienced was the filling of the Holy Spirit. The result of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was the filling of the Holy Spirit.

According to this perspective, there is only one baptism with the Spirit, we are exhorted to constantly seek and appropriate the filling of the Holy Spirit—because the filling of the Holy Spirit can be lost through **sin** and the **erosion of life**. John R. Stott said, “When we speak of the baptism of the Spirit we are referring to a once-for-all gift; when we speak of the fullness of the Spirit we are acknowledging that this gift needs to be *continuously and increasingly appropriated*.”¹⁸

From the Pentecostal and Biblecostal™ perspective, we believe in many baptisms and many fillings. According to Acts 4:23-31, the fact that the Holy Spirit filled the disciples once, in Acts 2:4, does not exclude later fillings as in Acts 4:31.¹⁹ If these terms are synonymys for the same experience, then what happened in Acts 4:31 can be considered another baptism. In addition, if the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for power to be a witness, would we not need fresh power in our various opportunities to witness?

In addition, as we have previously noted, Luke also wrote in Luke 11:13 that the heavenly Father would give the Holy Spirit to those who ask in prayer. It is possible that after the initial baptism in the Holy Spirit, on the Great Day of Pentecost, prayer for a fresh baptism in the Holy Spirit, filling of the Holy Spirit, or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is wholly appropriate.²⁰

Furthermore, Paul’s exhortation to be filled with the Spirit, in Ephesians 5:18, means that we should constantly seek to be filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. I do not believe that the Bible teaches that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is necessary for salvation. On the other hand, neither does it teach the present complacency with the gift of salvation, but an expectation for Pentecostal power for mission.

Article 2: Tongues

¹⁸ John R. W. Stott, *Baptism & Fullness*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1964, p. 47.

¹⁹ Kilian McDonnell & George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation And Baptism In The Holy Spirit*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1991, p. 40.

²⁰ Kilian McDonnell & George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation And Baptism In The Holy Spirit*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1991, p. 41.

There is **no** clear statement in the Bible that the spiritual manifestation of tongues, or any of the other manifestations in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 have ceased, but there are a number of Scriptures that indicate that tongues shall continue to the end of age. Let me give you just one:

Acts 2:38-39 (NASB-U), “Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.’”

Now, what promise is Peter talking about? He has already told us in

Acts 2:33 (NASB-U), “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”

The promise of the Holy Spirit, which was the promise of the Father, which was also the promise to Abraham, was poured forth with the **visible manifestation** of split tongues of fire and the **audible manifestation** of a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and men speaking languages they did not know, through the power of the Holy Spirit!

I prefer to use the biblical term that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 12, *phanerosis*, or “manifestation”. I do not like the term “sign,” because it seems to influence people to seek for **proof** of an experience and to seek for something other than the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Now, some of the “manifestations” of Acts 2 are extraordinary and occur only once, because the Great Day of Pentecost is the inauguration of an entirely new dispensation of the Holy Spirit. The visible tongues of fire and the sound of a violent, rushing wind do not occur again, because the Holy Spirit came to earth once-and-for-all in this dispensational way. Yet, the spoken tongues and prophecy continue to be manifest in conjunction with the empowering work of the Holy Spirit, because of the Spirit’s advent to other people groups and the normative side of the subsequent events.

In addition, the other manifestations of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 were given to each believer for the common good of all, in the Church.

After much study, consideration, and reconsideration, I believe the manifestation of tongues in Acts is speaking in known, human languages that were **not** learned, through the power of the Holy Spirit, at the coming of the Holy Spirit to different people groups in keeping with Acts 1:8.

It seems that once they filled that function, the nature of tongues changed. The transition may have been underway in Acts 19:1-7, because there is no statement of understanding, interpretation, or explanation of the tongues that occurred there. In 1 Corinthians, the nature of tongues seems to be either a message of prophecy for the assembly, which should to be interpreted or explained (1 Corinthians 14:5, 27, 28; Acts 2:14-21); or private language for prayer, praise, worship, and spiritual warfare (1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:2,

14), which does not need to be interpreted when spoken to God or to one's self. After much study, I interpret "speaking in tongues to one's self" to include speaking in a vault or upwards towards heaven, not to the gathered assembly.

The tongues in 1 Corinthians are transrational²¹, precognitive, or preconceptual language. The prefix "trans" means beyond. These post-Acts tongues are not "irrational," but "transrational," i.e. they are beyond the rational, beyond the mind. The Spirit is a higher faculty for communicating with God than the mind!

Preconceptual or precognitive language is language that is spoken directly to God. No one understands the actual syllables, but in his/her spirit the person is speaking mysteries. This person's mouth is allowed to speak out of the depth of his/her spirit, through the impetus of the Holy Spirit, before the mind conceives or conceptualizes the ideas or words. When one uses this language in a private setting, it does not need interpretation. No one understands this spiritual language, not because it is not a real language, but because it is not a known conceptual language—i.e. not a language that is composed of syllables or words that represent known or familiar concepts. Preconceptual or precognitive speech is "not filtered through the mind for orderly arrangement, and which when delivered, may sound like language but is really lacking any form, syntax or specific vocabulary. It is not ecstatic, although emotion may or may not be experienced during the speaking of tongues. The mind is functioning, although it is not leading the process. The speaker knows what he or she is doing, but may not know the meaning of what is being said."²²

We do not believe that one has to speak in tongues to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. There is **no** statement in the Bible that tongues is the "initial evidence" of the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the historical narratives of the book of Acts do not prove this conclusively. Therefore, if someone says that s/he is empowered by the Spirit, without speaking in tongues, we accept that person's testimony.

Of course, we understand, that one can be "filled" with the Spirit, from Paul's perspective, without speaking in tongues. Remember, I don't believe Paul's filling is the same and Luke's filling.

We can state, based on the history of Luke-Acts that inspired speech (i.e. tongues, prophecy, or preaching with power) accompanied each occurrence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit; and that inspired speech tends to be either tongues or prophecy.

This manifestation may flash forth either at the initial baptism or a subsequent fresh baptism. In addition, we believe the Spirit may flash forth in any of the nine manifestations of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, for the edification of the body.

Neither tongues nor any other manifestation of the Spirit is an end all. The manifestation of tongues does not make anyone instantly mature or sinless. All believers must still grow in the knowledge and grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, the Christ. Moreover, the manifestations can be expressed in an immature or fleshly way.

²¹ *Spirit-Filled Life Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 1737.

²² George Mallone, *Those Controversial Gifts*, InterVarsity, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1983, p. 84.

Furthermore, we do **not** teach or tolerate an attitude of “the haves” and the “have nots.” We do not believe that those who speak in tongues are automatically more spiritual than those who have not spoken in tongues, because tongues are a non-meritorious gift.

Article 3: Manifestations Of The Spirit

I see **no** Bible text that states that the manifestations of the Spirit, which are listed in 1 Corinthians 12, have ceased. Those who maintain that the phrase “the perfect,” in 1 Corinthians 13:10, refers to the canon of the Bible, do so with arguments from silence—because that is not the context of the passage and nothing concerning this is directly stated in the passage. Most scholars, believe the phrase “the perfect,” in the NASB or “that which is perfect,” in the KJV, refers to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, I affirm that these manifestations are still in operation today and available to every believer. Additional reasons for believing that the manifestations of the Spirit are still in operation are as follows:

- 1) The Bible says as much in 1 Corinthians 14:26.
- 2) Peter’s quoting of Joel 2:28-32, in Acts 2:17-21, highlights the fact that God was pouring out His Spirit upon all Mankind or flesh.
- 3) Peter clearly states, in Acts 2:39, that the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit is for you, your children, all who are afar off, and as many as the Lord shall call.
- 4) The imagery of the Red Sea relating to salvation and the Jordan River relating to the advent of the Holy Spirit in Acts (Exodus 14; Joshua 3).
- 5) The fact that God is the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb. 13:8).

We further affirm that while the Spirit may repeatedly use certain believers in certain spiritual gifts, these manifestations are not the exclusive possession of any one believer, but are given to all believers, as the Spirit wills, and they flash forth for the edification of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7). This does not preclude the Holy Spirit from repeatedly giving a particular manifestation to certain individual believers or God giving gifted individuals to the Church (Ephesians 4:11).

Article 4: The Baptism In The Holy Spirit And Sanctification

We believe that the believer is born of the Spirit (John 3:6), sanctified positionally, at salvation, from the penalty of sin and in his/her spiritual walk is being progressively sanctified through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and will one day be sanctified, ultimately or finally, from the presence of sin. The baptism in the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of sanctification, which brings power for witnessing and service, is a part of ongoing sanctification. We do not hold to a second work or blessing of grace that grants the believer

entire sanctification. We do believe that a fresh baptism in the Holy Spirit will afford the believer new power, which will have some impact upon the believer's ongoing sanctification or holiness.

Article 5: The Holy Spirit And Gifts Of Healings

We do believe that God gives "gifts of healings." We do not believe that God gives a permanent gift of healing that can be manipulated by the right amount of faith, although faith may sometimes be the critical element in a specific healing. We believe that the Holy Spirit gives "gifts of healings" according to the sovereignty of God. This does not preclude the Holy Spirit from using a believer repeatedly in a particular gift of healing.

This is the continuing development of Biblecostal™ theology and hermeneutic. If this seems too close to Classical Pentecostalism at times and very much like conservative Evangelicalism at other times, it is because we are trying to put forth a balanced biblical perspective. It is "The Quest For The Radical Middle."²³ Kilian McDonnell said that Pentecostalism is: "Those Christians who stress the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit directed toward the proclamation that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."²⁴ This sounds like a "Word and power" or "Word and Spirit" church. This definition is very similar to what God is giving to me at this time; i.e. to teach and facilitate an encounter and experience with God and His power that is based upon the Word of God!

BY-LAWS REVISIONS

Revision	Description of Revision & Writer	Doc. Owner	Release Date
F	Addition of Section 4: Biblical Sexuality and Marriage	HAM	4/21/14

²³ Bill Jackson, *The Quest For The Radical Middle*, Vineyard International Publishing, Cape Town, South Africa, 1999, Jacket Cover.

²⁴ McDonnell (with Bittlinger), *Problem*, quoted by Villafane, *The Liberating Spirit*, 85, and Synan, "Pentecostalism," 32.

E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added 4.1 i and j re: Membership • Added 7.2.1.f: Fiscal Year statement • Modified Section 7.2.4: Contracts, Checks, Deposits and Funds • Added Section 8: Dissolution • Added Bylaws Amendment Approval Page 	HAM	6/17/13
D	<p>Document reformatting</p> <p>Revised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees section • Ministers and Deacons • Statements in the long and short vision statements • Church Discipline to Church Restoration and Dispute Resolution • Purpose statement • Mission statement • Church Philosophy • Nomenclature change from Office Manager to Pastor of Administrative Services <p>Added</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towards a Biblecostal™ and Theology Hermeneutic • Mention of Minister and Deacon Handbooks (separate items) and Ministerial level Requirements • Definitions and explanations to the Church Restoration and Dispute Resolution section • Definition of Pastor of Administrative Services <p>Removed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former doctrinal statement • Section 9 • Parliamentary Procedure 	HAM	2/12/13
C	Added policy references		10/12/07
B	Updated Introduction		1/11/06
A	Revised <i>Original</i>		June 2002

AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

The Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed, and new bylaws may be adopted by a twothirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board of Trustees of the Church at any regular or special combined meeting of the Board of Trustees. At least fourteen (14) days written advance notice of a meeting called for the purpose of altering, amending or repealing the Church's Bylaws or Articles of Incorporation shall be given to each member of the Board of Directors.

Adopted by full Board of Directors this _____ day of _____, _____.

Director

Church Covenant

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

We believe that God has called us to be a Christ centered, Bible believing, faith oriented body.

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

We also engage to maintain family and private devotion; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, exemplary in our deportment, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready to forgive and work towards reconciliation, without delay, in keeping with the teaching of Jesus The Christ. This includes agreeing to resolve disputes among the brethren through Christian Conciliation guidelines (see policy).

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

Signature

Date

Printed Name

BY-LAWS

**THE HOUSE OF THE LORD®
BY-LAWS**

MEMBER AGREEMENT

Having been led, as I believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus The Christ as my Savior, and on the profession of my faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, I do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter in agreement with this local body of believers (called The House of the Lord®) as to the doctrines and principles set forth in the document called The House of the Lord® By-Laws.

As long as I remain a member of The House of the Lord®, I will endeavor to live by, model and espouse these precepts (and the covenant) in my private as well as public lifestyle.

Signature

Date

Printed Name