



Membership Handbook and Constitution  
2011-2012 Edition

*“Experiencing and expanding God’s Diverse Kingdom  
in the city and throughout the world”*

# A Word from Pastor Chris

Greetings Brothers and Sisters!

I welcome you to Strong Tower Bible Church and we praise God for your interest in this ministry! We want you to know off the top that we are not looking for more church members, so please feel no pressure from us. However, we are looking for **Kingdom-minded Christians** who wish to make be difference makers.

We are looking to be sharpened by people who want to know Christ and make Him known, representing Him well in every sphere of life. Therefore, we trust God to provide STBC with gifted ministry partners and like-minded co-laborers to do the work He has called us to do for His glory. We hope and pray this description fits you. At STBC you have something to receive, something to give, and something to do. Beginning first with our leadership, we expect everyone that is officially associated with STBC to **Grow Spiritually, Serve Actively, and Give Obediently**.

You must be advised that God wants to pour His Spirit into **new wineskins** that are flexible, stretchable, and adaptable (Mark 2:22). If you come to STBC without these qualities, you will “crack” under the pressure. As God pours into us and we pour into one another, we want to then pour into a world that needs life, light, and hope. Strong Tower will be unlike any other church you’ve attended, so therefore be open to the new thing God will do in you, through you, and around you.

I believe this handbook will be a blessing to you because in it we try to clearly and concisely articulate our history, beliefs, expectations, and purpose. Our vision is to experience and expand **God’s Diverse Kingdom** in the city and throughout the world. I pray that in the course of time you will be able to see the vision, add to the vision, and run with the vision!

Fired Up,

Chris Williamson

Senior Pastor

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# STBC Pre-Membership Application

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Each spouse should fill out a separate application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: African African-American Asian Caucasian Hispanic Native American Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: Single Married Separated Divorced Widowed

Children:

\_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ How long? \_\_\_\_\_

Classify yourself: Unbeliever Seeker New Believer Immature Believer Mature Believer Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please share how and when you came to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior:

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Have you been baptized? \_\_\_\_\_ Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Would you like to be baptized at STBC? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of last church joined: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

What were your reasons for leaving this church? \_\_\_\_\_

Has that church been properly notified of your departure? \_\_\_\_\_ Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about STBC? \_\_\_\_\_

Why are you considering joining STBC? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a doctrinal position that we teach at STBC that you need more clarification on? \_\_\_\_\_ What is your question or concern? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your biblical perspective on this particular doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your spiritual gifts? \_\_\_\_\_

What are you passionate about? \_\_\_\_\_

What is one of your strengths? \_\_\_\_\_ Weakness? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any warrants out for your arrest? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a registered sex offender? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you under a restraining order? \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you look up to spiritually and why? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like to do for fun? \_\_\_\_\_

How will you serve at STBC? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you believe in the call to give financially to God at the local church? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

How can Christians improve upon race relations? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How would you classify yourself politically? Republican Democrat Independent  
Tea Party Other

What are some of your favorite books? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some of your favorite movies? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What animal, bird, insect, or fish are you most like and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Section #1:  
Foundations

## **Our Pastor and His Wife**

Chris Williamson was born July 17, 1968 in Baltimore, Maryland as the youngest of five children to Harold and Betty Williamson. He was born again through Jesus Christ on June 29, 1984 at a Christian camp in the hills of Maryland sponsored by former professional baseball player and Evangelist Pat Kelly. After graduating from Milford Mill High School in 1986, he went on to attend the Christian, liberal arts institution Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Chris was called to preach on July 4, 1987 in New York City.

Dorena McFarland Williamson was born on December 20, 1970 in Washington, D.C. as the second oldest of five children to Dr. Allen and Doris McFarland. Dorena met Christ as small child and was subsequently reared in a godly home. After graduating from high school in Portsmouth, VA. she went on to Liberty University and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology.

Chris began courting Dorena McFarland on Valentine's Day of 1988 and the two were later married on December 28, 1991. While at Liberty University, Chris participated in an evangelistic rap music ministry called Transformation Crusade for six years. Upon completion of his undergraduate degree in Biblical Studies in 1990, a Masters of Religious Education at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in 1992, and ordination into the gospel ministry under Dr. Allen McFarland and Calvary Evangelical Baptist Church, the Williamsons came to Nashville, Tennessee to further explore their musical options. It became quickly apparent, however, that God did not bring them to Nashville for music.

## **Our Birth as a Church**

When Transformation Crusade decided that God had brought an end to their musical ministry Chris began working with Christ Community Church (PCA) in Franklin, Tennessee. He came on staff with the church in January 1993 as an intern with Franklin Community Ministries. While working with Pastor Scott Roley and Paige Overton Pitts of FCM in the lower income communities of Franklin, God began to move upon Chris' heart to plant a church. Planting a church, by the way, was something Chris said that he would never do.

Nevertheless, God had burdened Chris' heart for black men and the need to teach them the realness and relevancy of God. He believed this knowledge of Christ would transform them personally, their homes, and subsequently their communities. He began a bible study in his apartment complex to minister to the parents of the young people he worked with. In the meantime, Chris preached on several occasions at Christ Community Church which gave some of the white believers on hand a glimpse into his heart and burden for ministry. It appeared that God was at work in the "deep South" putting together an interracial fellowship of believers.

In the summer months of 1995, Chris held a series of prayer and informational meetings for anyone who may have been interested in forming a non-denominational, bible based fellowship. Because of the outpouring of God's favor, Strong Tower Bible Church held its first service on September 3, 1995 at the Franklin YMCA in the aerobics' room. There were 68 friends, relatives, and well-wishers at that first service. The core membership of the church was about 30 folks.

## **Our Vision**

*To experience and expand **God's Diverse Kingdom**  
in the city and throughout the world*

### **1. The Biblical Basis for the Vision- Revelation 5:9-10- BY YOUR BLOOD!**

- A. Every Tribe
- B. Every Tongue
- C. Every People
- D. Every Nation

### **2. The Outworking of the Vision- Ephesians 4:1-6- THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT!**

- A. Experience God's Diverse Kingdom by:
  - 1. Worshipping together and Praying together
  - 2. Learning together and Ministering together
  - 3. Living together and Eating together
  - 4. Serving together and Fighting together
  - 5. Suffering together and Standing together
- B. Expand God's Diverse Kingdom by:
  - 1. Building a diverse staff
  - 2. Being intentional to reflect authentic ethnic and cultural diversity
  - 3. Raising, sending, and supporting missionaries in diverse fields
  - 4. Supporting Para-church ministries and church plants that intentionally build  
God's Diverse Kingdom

5. Leading the charge for diversity in the local community among churches
6. Writing and publishing materials on God's Diverse Kingdom
7. Ministering locally and abroad with teams and activities that model and promote God's Diverse Kingdom
8. Encouraging and supporting cross-ethnic adoptions and bi-racial marriages

## **Our Mission**

*"Strong Tower Bible Church exists to **make disciples** of Jesus Christ by being a Bible based, multidimensional fellowship of believers."*

We **make disciples** through **R.O.A.M.:**

**R-** Revelation- This is Biblical

**O-** Observation- This is Relational

**A-** Application- This is Personal

**M-** Multiplication- This is Intentional

By **Bible-based** we affirm that the Holy Scriptures are our sole authority and source for preaching, teaching, living, worship, and governing (II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:19-21).

By **Multidimensional** we celebrate the fact that we are:

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Multi-Ethnic   | 4. Multi- Gifted       |
| 2. Multi-Cultural | 5. Multi- Political    |
| 3. Multi-Economic | 6. Multi- Generational |

## **Our Ministry Philosophy**

*“Strong Tower Bible Church strives to be **balanced** in  
Up-Reach, In-Reach, and Out-Reach.”*

## **Our Membership Philosophy**

*“We expect every member of STBC to **GROW** spiritually, **SERVE** actively,  
and to **GIVE** obediently”*



Section #2:  
Core Values

## **OUR CORE VALUES**

1. **LOVE:** We love God! We love Jesus! We love the Holy Spirit! We love all people and do our best to make sure that everyone feels loved, even when love is displayed through truth and discipline. Our love for one another is to transcend our gender, our race, our economics, our politics, our past, and our shortcomings.
2. **SOUND TEACHING:** We love the truth of God's Word and we do our best to read it and expound upon it properly. Regardless of who is teaching or preaching at STBC you can expect a biblically accurate message to be presented.
3. **AUTHENTICITY:** We strive to keep it real as a local church, never hiding behind religiosity, cliché's or falsehoods. We are free to be who we are because of the love and grace of God. Get rid of your masks.
4. **FREEDOM IN WORSHIP:** We plan to have order in our worship services but we are not afraid to break from that plan when we sense the leading of the Holy Spirit to go in another direction. We love to incorporate diversity and various musical styles, cultural expressions, and arrangements into our services.
5. **PRAYER:** Even though we don't do it as much as we would like, we love to pray. We believe the church is to be a "house of prayer" above anything else.
4. **UNITY IN THE MIDST OF DIVERSITY:** We love to experience unity without surrendering to conformity. We can agree to disagree on secondary issues of the faith without being harsh or judgmental with one another. We respect differences on our way to being one without having to be the same. We strive to keep the main thing the main thing, which is the gospel, and we are persistent to keep the Main One the Main One, who is Jesus Christ.
5. **GRACE:** Grace is the overwhelming sufficiency, security, supply, and motivation of the believer. Daily experiencing God's grace personally allows us to be dispensers of this grace to others around us.
6. **PURPOSES OF CHURCH:** We believe the primary purposes for Sunday church gatherings are the corporate worship of God, and the edification and equipping of the saints of God. We believe that church truly starts when we leave the church building.
7. **THE HOLY SPIRIT:** We rely on the presence, moving, leading, and empowering of the Holy Spirit to do all things.
8. **FACILITIES:** We have never made ministry about the necessity to own or build buildings. Over the years, we have been content to rent and lease facilities. We have enjoyed not having debt and putting the bulk of God's financial resources into people and ministry. However, if God should ever lead us to acquire our own land and facilities our goal will be to accomplish the project in cash unless God leads otherwise.

9. **MONEY:** God doesn't "need" our money. It's already His. God calls us to invest His money that He allows us to use properly on earth, so as to store up true riches in heaven. Giving is just one aspect of stewardship. In every church there people who rob God, tip God, tithe to God, and cheerfully give sacrificially to God. The goal for all of us is to grow in the grace of giving at the local church and beyond.

10. **EXPECTATION:** Every member of STBC is encouraged to grow spiritually, serve actively and give obediently with the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God.

11. **G-RACE:** We teach that racial issues, political differences, theological perspectives, and cultural distinctions, though real, are not the primary focus of STBC. It is the Gospel that drives STBC, giving us the proper context to address all things and race must be discussed and expressed in light of grace.

12. **ISRAEL:** STBC loves and prays for Israel! We acknowledge the Jewish heritage of our faith and we do not replace promises made to Israel with the church.

13. **MISSIONS:** Every member is a missionary of some kind. STBC sends and supports missionaries locally, nationally, and internationally. We believe that the scope of missions involve specific evangelistic efforts as well as acts of mercy, deeds of kindness, and points of social intervention and contact among the lost, the last, and the least of society. A minimum of 10% of our annual operating budget goes to missions.

14. **KINGDOM:** We believe that the kingdom of God is the reign, reach, return, and redeemed of God. Jesus has authority over every realm, person, situation, and problem. The local church functions best when it understands its kingdom teachings and authority.

15. **CHURCH DISCIPLINE:** We believe in and practice church discipline if a matter calls for it based on following the principles of Matthew 18:15-20. The goal of church discipline is always the restoration of the defiant believer. Byproducts of church discipline are a healthy reverence for God and a personal inventory of holiness among the membership.

16. **LEADERS:** Leaders lead best when serving all. STBC respects its leaders and submits to their authority when properly exercised from biblical parameters. We do not put our leaders on pedestals or believe they are above rebuke or being wrong.

17. **CHURCH PARTNERSHIPS:** We know that we are not the only church in our city that God is using to bring glory to Himself and to accomplish His purposes. STBC loves to fellowship with several churches of various denominations in the area.

18. **THE GOSPEL:** STBC preaches the gospel to the lost and we preach the gospel to ourselves. Lost sinners and saved sinners must rely solely upon the finished work of Jesus Christ and the total redemption it accomplishes in the sight of God.



## Section #3:

# What We Teach and Where We Stand

## **WHAT WE TEACH**

*Strong Tower Bible Church is based, sustained, and directed by the Word of God and not upon man's opinion or tradition. STBC holds the Bible as our primary authority and final source of teaching, preaching, and church government.*

### **THE HOLY SCRIPTURES**

We teach the Holy Scriptures to be the inspired, infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (in the original autographs). We also teach that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are designed for our practical instruction in faith and conduct (II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21; Psalms 19:7; Matt. 5:18).

### **THE GODHEAD**

We teach that the one true and living God eternally exists in three co-equal Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and these three are one God (Deut. 6:4; Gen. 1:26; Isaiah 6:8; Eph. 4:4-6; Matt. 28:19). The God we serve is one in essence yet plural and distinct in person. This is known as the “tri-united” or the “trinity”, i.e. three in one.

### **GOD THE FATHER**

We teach that God the Father loved the world, sent His Son, punished His Son for our sins, raised Christ from the dead, elects and chooses individuals, draws people to Jesus, adopts believers in Christ as His very own children therefore becoming their heavenly Father (Eph 1:3,3: 14-15; James 1:17; John 3:16,6:44; Isaiah 53:4-5; Rom. 8:29,9:11; Gal. 4:5,6).

### **GOD THE SON**

We teach that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who came into the world that He might manifest God to men, fulfill prophecy, and become the Redeemer of a lost world. To this end He was born of the Virgin Mary, received a human body and a sinless human nature without ever ceasing to be God (Luke 1:3-35; John 1:1,14,18; Hebrews 4:15; Philippians 2:5-11).

We teach that in infinite love, He voluntarily accepted His Father's will and became the divinely provided sacrificial Lamb of God and took away the sins of the world once and for all (John 1:29; Rom. 3:25-31; II Cor. 5:14; Hebrews 10:5-14; I John 2:2).

We teach that He victoriously rose bodily from the dead defeating Satan, hell, and death. Upon ascending back to Heaven with all authority, Jesus was accepted by His Father and is now seated on His right hand as a soon coming King (Matt. 28:6; John 20:20; I Cor. 15:55-57; Col. 2:13-16.3:1; Rev. 19:11-16).

We teach that Jesus is the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, and He does not cease to intercede and be an advocate for the saved (Eph. 1:22-23; I

Tim. 2:5; Hebrews 7:25; I John 2:1-2).

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, being co-equal to the Father and Son in all attributes pertaining to deity (Acts 5:3-4; II Cor. 3:18).

We teach that in the work of redemption He justifies, washes and sanctifies sinners in cooperation with the Son; He regenerates unbelievers and indwells them at the moment of salvation, thus baptizing them into the body of Christ and sealing them until the final day of redemption (I Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5; I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:12-14, 4:30).

We teach that through the Holy Spirit, God provides every believer power to live the Christian life. We further teach that every Christian receives grace from God in the form of a spiritual gift which enables him or her to function as a contributing member of the body of Christ (Rom. 8:9-11; Galatians 5:16-25; Romans 12:6; I Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:7-13).

## **ANGELS AND DEMONS**

We teach that Satan, the devil, is the prince of demons and is the declared adversary of God and man. However, when the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, He limited the power of Satan and guaranteed the ultimate triumph of God and His people (Eph. 2:2; I Peter 5:8; I Cor.4:4; Rev. 20:10; Col. 2:13-15).

## **SALVATION**

We teach that no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he or she is born again spiritually, and that the new birth of the believer comes only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God (John 1:12-14, 3:3-8).

We teach that our salvation has been accomplished by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this redemption is by the grace of God, which is an unmerited gift, given in love by God and is not a result of any human works whatsoever (John 3:7-18; II Cor. 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Romans 4:4-5).

We teach that upon receiving the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, the believer passes immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life, and into fellowship with God (John 1:12, 5:24)

We also teach that once this salvation is accomplished, we and all true believers everywhere shall be kept saved forever (John 10:28-29; Romans 3:24, 8:35-39; II Tim. 2:11-13; Galatians 2:16; Eph 2:5, 8-9).

## **THE CHURCH**

We teach that all who are united to the risen and ascended Son of God are members of the Church, which is the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:12-27; Acts 2:42-47).

We teach that the explicit message of our Lord Jesus Christ to those whom He has saved is to make Christ known to the whole world and that this is the purpose of the Church through the individuals within it (Matt. 28:18-19; Acts 1:18; II Cor. 5:1-21).

We teach that local churches, such as Strong Tower Bible Church, gather together for practical instructions in the Scriptures, for fellowship with God and with other believers, and for corporate witness to the unsaved world. Our common spiritual goal is to grow toward Christ's likeness (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:5; Eph. 4:13-16).

## **THE RAPTURE AND THE REVELATION OF CHRIST**

We teach that Jesus Christ will return in the air to receive unto Himself His own who are alive and all those who died in saving faith. This snatching away is called the rapture and it can happen at anytime. We teach that after the rapture a future period of "Great Tribulation" on the earth will be climaxed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. At this return Jesus will defeat the armies of Satan and the Anti-Christ and reign on the earth for 1,000 years (I Thessalonians 4:13-17; Zechariah 14:4-11; Rev. 3:10; 20-22).

## **THE ETERNAL STATE**

We teach that at death the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body when Christ comes for his own, whereupon soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory. All those who rejected Jesus Christ will eternally be separated from God to endure His eternal wrath forever, first in Hell, then in the Lake of Fire (II Cor. 5:8; Rev. 20:11-15, 21:1-27; I Thess. 4:13-18).

## **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERS**

We teach that God appoints leaders (Elders/Pastors) to guide His church in the understanding and application of Scripture. It is their responsibility to be examples of godliness as they see to the spiritual wellbeing and protection of the flock over which God has given them charge (Acts 6:1-8; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:7,17; I Peter 5:1-3). We also teach that God appoints Deacons and Deaconesses to serve the specific felt needs of the body as hands on representatives from the Elders (I Tim. 3:8-13; Rom. 16:1-2).

## **CHURCH ORDINANCES**

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper to be observed by all believers until His return (Matt. 28:19; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 10:47-48).

We teach that the ordinance of baptism in most practical cases is the immersion of the believer in water as it sets forth the essential facts of redemption: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:4; Acts 8:26-39), but the church will baptize by pouring if it is ever necessary due to extraneous circumstances. STBC practices baptism in the “name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (Matt.28:19-20).

We teach that the Lord’s Supper is a privilege offered to all believers in commemoration of our Lord’s death until He comes. The actual elements of bread and wine (juice) are symbolic of Christ’s body and blood (I Cor. 11:23-28).

## WHERE WE STAND

Strong Tower Bible Church is a non-denominational church it is necessary to state where we stand on many of today's "hot topics" of contemporary Christianity. In no way are we trying to say that we have the final, best, or only interpretation on these matters. Many of these topics we deem as "non-essential" matters and should not be used by the enemy to divide God's people. **STBC firmly believes that the essential issue on the floor is the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.** We try to keep the main thing the main thing. We firmly believe that "*sound doctrine*" (Titus 2:1, which literally means healthy or balanced teaching) is to conform to the message of the gospel of God's grace, which is the premise of our teaching (Acts 20:24).

Therefore, we are asking you to respect where we stand even if you don't agree, so that there may be unity and oneness in this particular local house of God. We believe that God's people can be one without being the same. These answers will obviously be concise and to the point. If you need clarity and further explanation on these topics or any others, please call the office to set up an appointment with one of the elders. If you have a differing perspective, please be ready to support it in writing by sound, biblical, and logical interpretation.

### ***Where does STBC stand on Women being used in the Ministry?***

We must begin with the premise that men and women are intrinsically equal before God in all matters pertaining to humanity (Gen.1:26-27) and redemption (Gal.3:28). A woman is not more than a man or less than a man when it comes to personhood. Male and female are equal in essence; however, ***equality of essence doesn't mean sameness of role or function.*** That is the key to shaping a balanced understanding. Men and women can be one without being the same or doing the same thing in the church.

Jesus valued women and included them in God's program like no other rabbi in his day, however, He didn't compromise God's standard in order to "validate" women through hierarchical promotions. ***Jesus did not appoint one woman to be a part of His leadership team of the Twelve Apostles*** (Luke 6:12-16). That truth needs to be greatly considered. It can't be said that Jesus didn't want to offend the Pharisees in that male dominant culture by having women on His team because Jesus never allowed the religious establishment to hinder His agenda on any other issue. In fact, if Jesus' first coming was in this "all inclusive" era His leadership team would have still been comprised of all males. Why? It would have been unnatural to have women in primary places of spiritual leadership because He would have contradicted the order of the home that He established in Genesis 2 and Psalm 128. Plus, with the church being built on the foundation of the apostles (Eph. 2:20), He would have opened the door to confusion and controversy for future generations. Jesus would not and could not contradict His creative order for the sake of total female accommodation (I Cor. 11:3, I Timothy 2:13)

For Jesus, He could love, value, esteem, and use women in the ministry, but He would not compromise His creative order of male leadership (not male dominance) in the domestic home and in the church house to do so. He is a God of order but Satan is the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33). Therefore, any kind of female posturing over a man in the home or in the church is essentially satanically influenced (I Timothy 2:14, 5:14-15). Satan, who is a fallen, un-submissive angelic being, despised, rejected, and resisted **established authority** as ordained by God. He purposefully tempted and influenced Eve with his own folly so that she would step out from her role as helper to become the head or primary leader of the family (Genesis 3:1-7). This brought chaos. The sad thing is that Adam became passive and let the devil turn his home upside down. He should have done what God did in heaven and that was to expel the serpent.

With that being said, Jesus brought respect, honor, and dignity to women during His earthly ministry that even surprised His disciples (John 4:27). He championed and redeemed the status of women in society through His public dealings and affirmations of them in a male dominant and sometimes abusive culture (John 4:4-26, 8:1-11). He often used women in positive ways as examples in His teachings (Luke 15:8-10, 18:1-8), and it was women who helped finance the disciples' ministry (Luke 8:1-3). But most significantly it was women whom Jesus appeared to first when He resurrected (Luke 24:1-11).

He went on to tell the women in His resurrected state to, "*Go and **tell my brothers** to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.*" (Matt. 28:10). Jesus told women to communicate a message from God about God to men. They even had to give the men instructions and teach them about the future plans of Jesus concerning where to meet. Do you think that was purposeful in that culture? Yes it was! Jesus knew the nature of men (John 2:24-25) and He knew the disciples would not initially heed the women's message (Mark 16:11, Luke 24:9-11) due to their cultural upbringing. In this case, if the men had not listened to the women proclaim the truth about the resurrection they would have sat in a temporary state of ignorance and lacked a blessed experience.

We teach that a woman can possess any gift of the Spirit like pastor/teacher or prophesy, but she cannot hold the office of pastor/elder/bishop in the local church. A woman can use her prophecy or teaching gift to minister a Word from God to the congregation at large if she has demonstrated a non-usurping attitude toward male authority. In short, a woman cannot be an authorized, recognized, ordained pastor/elder in the local church, but she can preach in the church once it has been demonstrated to the pastor(s) that she has a right attitude and the right perspective on church government. This standard goes for any man who preaches in the church as well. Preaching is not a right but a privilege.

## ***Where does STBC stand on Tithing?***

When it comes to giving, STBC teaches, encourages, and expects all of its members to be **givers** (Luke 6:38) and **generous** ones at that (II Cor. 9:5-7). Giving to God is a joy, a privilege, and an act of worship. When we give God our hearts first in daily obedience and surrender, He then moves on our hearts to be givers of everything we possess. No sacrifice is too great for Him when He calls, asks, or commands. God wants our giving to be motivated by love (I Cor. 13:3) because it has been said, "You can give without loving but you can't love without giving". STBC teaches that we should give the King of Kings our first and best financial gifts (Proverbs 3:9-10). We are always encouraged to be generous and not stingy with God's money because all of it is His (Haggai 2:8). Regular giving reminds us of this truth. Our use of God's money is always an acid litmus test of where our hearts are before Him (Matt. 6:21). We are most like Jesus when we give (II Cor. 8:9). Therefore, we give because of what we become because of it: Christ-like.

With that being said, **how much** should a believer give to God? What's interesting is that the NT doesn't give specifics on how much believers are to give regularly to God. Perhaps God does this because giving is more of a heart issue than it is an amount issue (Luke 21:1-4). The examples of giving cited in Acts 4-5 and II Corinthians 8-9 were situational offerings taken to help poor, needy, and suffering saints in the body of Christ. They were not meant to be templates for ongoing local church giving among believers. Overall principles for giving can obviously be gained from these cases, but the Scriptures do not specifically tell a believer how much he or she should give in the context of maintaining the ministry of a local church. For instance, Paul wrote that pastors should be compensated from the people they minister to (Galatians 6:6, I Timothy 5:17-8), but he didn't spell out how that should actually happen. In this context Paul quotes from the OT passages of Deuteronomy 25:4 and Leviticus 19:13. Therefore, **principles** can be gained from the OT economic system for sustaining the local church financially (I Corinthians 10:11).

STBC teaches that believers are not under the law or the tithe for that matter (Romans 6:14); instead we are under grace and grace when properly understood should invoke a greater response in God's people than the Law of Moses ever could (II Cor. 3:7-18). It would be impossible and unnecessary to tithe today under the parameters of the Old Covenant. However, there are principles that can be gained from the OT discipline of tithing (Romans 3:31, 15:4, I Cor. 10:11). We can't tell you how much to give, but we can teach you from the Scriptures **a consideration to start with** in your giving. Many young, new, or spiritually immature believers often need a guide and a starting place in their giving, therefore, ***"The STBC Tithe Principle"*** states that giving 10% of our gross income to God at the local church is a great place to aim for and launch from in our giving to God.

Why aim to start our giving with a tithe or with 10%? Before the Law mandated tithing, Abraham and Jacob gave God a tithe of their resources out of **appreciation** and not obligation (Genesis 14:20, 28:22). Therefore 10% can be used as a base number, a barometer, and a launching pad in the context of NT giving to show our

appreciation to God. Aiming to start our giving to God with 10% is like using training wheels on a bike. The training wheels were never meant to stay on the bike. Rather, they simply help get us started until we become mature enough to ride without them. As we grow in grace and in our commitment to God we believe our financial giving and spiritual sacrifice should grow as well. Paul said that growing and excelling in giving should be one of our goals as Christians (II Corinthians 8:7).

STBC teaches that our financial gifts or “tithes” are to be given to Jesus at the local church and not to a ministry, individual, or needy person. These instances call for an **offering** or a donation, but not your tithe (II Cor.8:5). Under the Old Covenant, “*the whole tithe*” was God’s and it was given to Him at His “*storehouse*” which was also called “*my (God’s) house*” (Mal.3:10), and today we give to God all that is His at the local church, which is called “*God’s household*” (I Tim. 3:15). STBC takes collections every week on Sunday (I Cor.16:2). These funds, as overseen by the Elders (I Timothy 5:17) are to be used for the furtherance of the gospel, church programs, and the support of church staff and missionaries worldwide (I Cor. 9:14, Philippians 4:12-19, I Tim. 5:18).

### ***Where does STBC stand on Speaking in Tongues?***

STBC believes that speaking in tongues is one of the wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:10) that some, not all, believers possess. This blessed gift, like any other spiritual gift, is not available or necessary for every believer to experience. All believers have been baptized by the Spirit (I Cor. 12:13), but not every believer will speak in tongues (I Cor. 12:30). All believers have the indwelling Holy Spirit, but not every believer will speak in unknown languages.

One expression of tongues as seen in the early church stage was when a person spoke a known human language that they themselves did not learn or know prior (Acts 2:4, 11). ***These are tongues spoken to men.*** It is highly unlikely that this gift will occur again in today’s context with our advancements in linguistics.

Another expression of tongues in the Bible is a worship tongue (I Cor. 14:16) or an unknown prayer language (14:9) that some, and not all (I Cor. 12:30) believers in Corinth experienced. ***These are tongues spoken to God.*** Paul regulates the use of this gift by suggesting that it be performed privately (14:28) and not publicly in the worship service (I Cor. 14:19) apart from an interpreter (I Cor. 14:27-28) so as not to confuse immature believers or unbelievers who may be present (I Cor. 14:23). This expression of tongues does not make this believer “more spiritual” than another believer who doesn’t have the gift. The manifestation of this gift does not give the recipient “more power” or make them any closer to God than a Christian who does not speak in a “heavenly prayer language”. God always looks at and listens to the person’s heart for worship, praise, and prayer and not what comes out of their mouths per se (Matt. 15:7-9). The goal is for Christians to pray and worship from their heart to God on a regular basis whether in known or unknown languages.

## ***Where does STBC stand on Divorce and Remarriage?***

STBC starts the discussion about divorce the way Jesus did and that is with a defense for marriage (Matt. 19:3-6). STBC fights for the sanctity and perseverance of all marriages. We believe that through the grace of God, any situation can be worked out if both partners are willing to submit to God's Word, counseling, accountability, time, and hard work. We believe that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16) because it destroys the family (Mal. 2:15; I Cor. 7:14). From the beginning, God intended marriage to be between one man and one woman for life (Matt. 19:6), but due to sin and the hardness of hearts that often develop in marriages (Matt. 19:8), God allowed divorce only under certain circumstances as an act of grace and mercy.

The two clear observances for a Biblical divorce are as follows:

1) **Sexual Immorality** (Matt. 19:9)- Sexual immorality is the defiling of the sacredness of the covenant through inappropriate sexual conduct with another person. The word Jesus used as recorded in the Greek is "porneia" which means illicit sexual behavior. This can specifically cover sexual intercourse, as well as a wide range of other gross perversions.

In this context "porneia" speaks of **a habitual lifestyle** of illicit sexual behavior and not necessarily a one-time occurrence.

2) **Abandonment by an Unbeliever** (I Cor. 7:15) If an unbelieving spouse chooses to leave the believing (Christian) spouse, the believing spouse is not under bondage to the marriage covenant.

Irreconcilable Differences and Church Discipline:

**Irreconcilable differences** are not Biblical grounds for divorce. Neither is "emotional abuse", as devastating as it can be, grounds for a divorce that would have God's approval. In rare cases, however, when someone who professes to be a Christian with lip service, but is not rendering life service to God and their mate, he or she can fall into the category of being judged as an unbeliever by the church (I Tim. 5:8). This will result in **church discipline**, which is the dismissal of the unrepentant, sinning "believer" from fellowship in God's church house (I Cor. 5:1-5; Matt. 18:15-20) and the barring of fellowship in the social house or domestic house (I Cor. 5:9-13). The initial dismissal of the "believer" obviously calls for a marital separation, but not necessarily a divorce because the goal and prayer of church discipline is repentance and restoration. In the meantime, the church will help provide (along with extended family) for the appropriate felt needs of the remaining spouse until some sort of decision is reached.

No divorced person in the church will be loosed (Matt. 18:18-20) without elder approval (Heb. 13:17). Once someone has been "loosed" by the elders they are free to remarry, but our suggestion, however, is that they **wait for at least one year to begin seeing someone else**. This one year time period allows the person to heal, grow, be objective, and leave room for a possible miracle of restoration of the

previous marriage.

For a female believer in our ministry who divorces her husband for reasons that are not biblical, the church will ask that woman to remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her original husband (I Cor.7:10-11). Failure to observe this biblical ordinance may result in church discipline because the woman is knowingly committing adultery when she marries again (Matt.19:9-10). Remarriage may be a possibility if the divorced husband remarries someone else. Each situation must be thoroughly reviewed by the pastors.

Any married couple that comes into our ministry with a prior unbiblical divorce will be loved, used, and encouraged. We believe that God can still bless the union even though there may be a level of unique stress to the union because it is not God's original ideal and perfect will. The couple's service in the body by way of elder, deacon or deaconess may be denied due to the qualifications of I Timothy 3. Each situation must be thoroughly reviewed by the pastors.

### ***Where does STBC stand on Election and Free Will?***

STBC teaches that God's choosing and man's choosing in salvation are two truths that run parallel in Scripture but do not intersect. The Bible makes it clear that God elects (I Peter 1:2), chooses (Eph. 1:4), predestines (Rom. 8:29, Eph. 1:5) and draws people to Himself for salvation (John 6:44). At the same time, the Bible states that men are responsible if they should choose to reject God's Son (Matt. 23:37, John 5:40).

STBC does not try to reconcile these two intangibles of election and free will. For instance, in Acts 27:23-25, God in His sovereignty says to and through Paul that **all** of the lives of the sailors would be spared in the storm. Yet in Acts 27:30-32 the soldiers could make their own freewill choice to stay on or attempt to get off of the boat which would appear to nullify the sovereign promise of God that said, "*God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.*" How can God save all the lives on one hand, and yet any man could lose his life by his own decision? This is a beautiful mystery.

We love the glorious aspect of a God whom we cannot fully define or figure out (Dt.29:29). God is not like man. He is perfect in His emotions and choices, unlike us. We must trust His loving heart, boundless wisdom, and sovereign preeminence. We know that He is not willing that **any** should perish (II Peter 3:9), but we know that **many** will nevertheless perish (Matt.7:13). Our motivation in sharing the gospel with everyone is out of our love for God and people, as well as an appreciation for being chosen. Our peace in sharing the gospel is in knowing that God will do the saving, and not us (Acts 13:48, John 1:13, I Corinthians 3:5-8).

### ***Where does STBC stand on Eternal Security?***

STBC believes that Jesus gives the believer eternal life at the moment of their conversion (John 3:16, 36, 5:24). If eternal life can be lost, and the key word is ***“eternal”***, then it wasn’t eternal to begin with. It would be conditional, temporal life, but the Bible doesn’t teach that. God sees every true believer as presently glorified (Rom.8:30) and seated in the heavenly places (Eph.2:6). We cannot be separated from God’s love (Rom.8:35-39) or snatched out of God’s hands (John 10:28-29). God will complete the work He started in us (Phil.1:6, II Tim.1:12). Jesus purchased for us with His blood an eternal redemption (Heb.9:12). The believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit until heaven (Eph.4:30) and the Holy Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing our future inheritance (Eph.1:13-14). The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Eph.4:30), but he will never leave (Heb.13:5-6).

STBC believes that salvation is the work of God and He secures those He saves. For God to take our salvation away makes Him to be a liar, which is impossible (Heb. 6:18), and it puts the sacrifice of Christ on a conditional basis and a limited range of effectiveness. We believe that God was capable enough to choose us (Eph. 1:4), and He is also capable enough to keep or secure His chosen (Heb. 7:25). Because salvation is not earned by works, how can it be lost by works? If our sins are eternally paid for by ***one sacrifice*** (Heb. 9:24-28), what sin can cause a believer to lose their salvation? Some have suggested unbelief and turning from God but that’s not possible eternally speaking because God turned the unbeliever to Himself and gave him or her the faith to trust in Jesus in the first place (Eph. 2:1-10; I Tim. 1:14). You can’t turn from someone in your own strength or choice when you didn’t turn to Him in your own strength or choice. If they “turn” it may be evidence that they were never truly a part of Christ to begin with (I John 2:18-19) because the saved will endure to the end (Matt. 24:13).

### ***Where does STBC stand on Water Baptism?***

STBC believes that water baptism is a public declaration of one’s personal faith in Jesus as their Savior. Water baptism is also a symbol of the gospel, for when it is practiced by immersion it sets forth the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom.6:1-4). The water also symbolizes cleansing from sin (Acts 22:16), but in no way does water have any saving power to it (I Peter 3:20-21). The cleansing from sin comes through the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 9:22), not water. To be ***“born of water and the spirit”*** (John 3:5) means to be born again spiritually just as sure as you were born the first time naturally through water, i.e. the embryonic fluid in the placenta. The context of John 3 in no way mentions water baptism but rather the birthing experience (3:6).

STBC in no way believes that water baptism is essential for salvation. In Mark 16:16 where it says, ***“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved...”*** is not the whole verse. The rest of the verse says, ***“...but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”***

If water baptism is essential for salvation the verse would have said, “*whoever does not believe **and is not baptized** will be condemned.*” So we deduce that the thing that saves a person is belief or faith in Jesus, and the thing that causes a person to not be saved is a lack of belief or faith in Jesus. The understood principle is that if you truly come to believe in Jesus as your savior you will be baptized. We believe that any believer who has not been baptized should be baptized as soon as possible as an act of obedience (Matt.28:19-20), as an act to follow the example of Christ and fulfill all righteousness (3:13-15), and for public identification of their relationship with Jesus Christ (Acts 2:41, 10:47).

The word “baptizo” in the Greek literally means to identify with by way of immersion or submission. It comes from an understanding of clothing textiles in the first century. A cloth dyer would identify a plain piece of fabric with the color of dye that he dipped it into. Whatever color he dipped it into, the cloth became identified with that color. As we are dipped into, identified with, that is baptized into the Body of Christ by spirit baptism (I Cor.12:13), we are to be baptized into water to show publicly of that spiritual reality (Acts 10:47). The children of Israel were baptized (submitted to, identified with) into Moses in the wilderness (I Cor.10:2).

STBC practices baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as Jesus commanded (Matt.28:19-20) for the purpose of identifying the convert with the triune God. There may be certain instances where baptism by immersion would be difficult (a crippled person) or even impossible (person on their deathbed), therefore we will baptize by pouring in these cases. If a believer comes under our ministry and they have not been baptized we will encourage them to do so. They will not be accepted as a member of the church because they are in direct disobedience to the Lord’s commission because of their refusal to be baptized. If they have been baptized prior as an infant of “covenant parents” we will acknowledge that and not demand of them immersion baptism as a prerequisite for membership. If they choose however, to experience baptism by immersion for themselves, we will be glad to oblige them.

Because it is not written anywhere in the Bible that only pastors and clergy are to do the baptizing exclusively (I Cor.1:13-17), we encourage heads of homes to baptize their children and family members at a church service if they so desire. We also believe that if a believer wants to get re-baptized as an act of rededication, re-identification (Jordan River), or celebration (spiritual birthday, church anniversary, etc.) that there is no scriptural mandate to say that cannot happen. The “*one baptism*” of Ephesians 4:5 is spiritual baptism, not water baptism.

### ***Where does STBC stand on Church Discipline and Restoration?***

If it is brought to the attention of the elders of STBC that one of its members is living in a lifestyle of known, unrepentant disobedience, the matter will be investigated based upon the guidelines of Matthew 18:15-17. This passage teaches that the

offended Christian, i.e. the one sinned against, is to first confront the offending Christian one on one for the purpose of seeking restoration. If the offender does not “hear” the offended Christian’s case, i.e. confess their sin, repent, and produce fruit in keeping with repentance, then two or three witness are to be brought in to confront the offending believer for the purpose of restoration.

If the offender does not “hear” the witnesses, i.e. confess their sin, repent, and produce fruit in keeping with repentance then the church (leadership and laity) is to be notified. The church leadership will confront the sinning, unrepentant offender for the purpose of restoration. “Telling it to the church” can also imply telling the church body on a Sunday morning so that they can fervently pray for the person who is spiritually trapped by Satan to do his will. If the offender does not “hear” the church, i.e. confess their sin, repent, and produce fruit in keeping with repentance then the church is to put that person out of the church (I Cor. 5:2). The elders of the church will agree and “loose” that person from the confines of the church (Matt. 18:18-20).

The charges are to be announced to the membership during a Sunday gathering (I Cor. 5:4, I Tim. 5:20, Prov. 5:14), usually at communion. Putting the person out of the church is a protective measure for the state of the church itself in order to keep her pure and free from the leaven of un-dealt with sin and rebellion (I Cor. 5:6-8, Josh. 7:11-12). This public and dreadful procedure causes fear to spread through the church (Acts 5:11, I Tim. 5:20) and this can turn out to be quite healthy for the church (Acts 9:31).

The disciplined Christian loses the privileges of local church fellowship, resources, and spiritual covering (I Cor. 5:5, 9-11). In this unfortunate alternative the person is handed over to Satan (I Tim. 1:20), since it appears that they are submitting to him and not to God, for the purpose of destroying their flesh (I Cor. 5:5, Num. 12:10). Once the protective umbrella of God’s grace is removed (Num. 12:10, 14:22), then Satan will be used to teach them a lesson (I Tim. 1:20), destroy their flesh (I Cor. 5:5), and run them back into fellowship with God and His people. The prayer of the church is “Lord break him/her, but please don’t take him/her” (I John 5:16-17). In the meantime until this person repents, the church members are to refrain from fellowshiping with the offender (I Cor. 5:9-11, Num. 12:14-15) for the purpose of shaming them (II Thess. 3:14-15, Num. 12:14).

When this person repents they are to publicly confess their repentance to the church (Prov. 28:13). They are to then be publicly restored to church fellowship (Gal. 6:1-5, II Cor. 2:7-8, John 21:15-17).

### ***Where does STBC Stand on Giving and Receiving Prophetic Words?***

STBC relies more upon the “*prophecy of Scripture*” (II Peter 1:16-21) than we do upon prophetic words spoken by individuals. We abide by I Thessalonians 5:19-20 which says, “*Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold*

*fast what is good.*” We encourage our members to know and study God’s Word (II Tim. 2:14-19) so as to test all prophetic words with the whole counsel of God’s Word because if God does speak prophetically or futuristically through a person, it will never contradict His established, written Word.

If someone does have a word for the body of STBC it will be in line with the words God has already spoken to the pastors and elders (I Cor. 14:33). Before several Christians (Acts 21:4) and the prophet Agabus spoke to Paul about his fateful destiny in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14), God had already spoken to Paul prior (Acts 20:22-24). Also, the test of a true prophet was 100% accuracy in the fulfillment of that which was told (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). Perfection and/or the consequences of imperfection appear to not be demanded of today’s prophets or those who listen to them.

We encourage our members to walk by faith (II Cor. 5:7) looking to Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2) and not to look for “a word” or “a sign” (Matthew 12:39). We believe that God speaks to His children primarily through His Word and the Spirit who indwells the believer (John 14:26, 16:13, I John 2:26-27). However, we strive to maintain balance that God can speak to His children through unconventional means (Acts 21:9), but we also know we live in an age where there are many self-promoting, self-absorbed, and self-called prophets who have “a message from God”, usually for a fee. Therefore we are admonished to “*test the spirits*” (I John 4:1). Spiritual people judge all things (I Cor. 2:15). Our goal is to be rooted in Christ, knowing His voice and His Word while maintaining sound doctrine so as not be blown away by every wind of doctrine that is so prevalent (Ephesians 4:11-16).

### ***Where does STBC stand on Healing?***

We believe emphatically that God is a healer (Exodus 15:26) and He still heals today (Hebrews 13:8), but He does not always heal in every situation (II Timothy 4:20). We are to pray with expectancy that God will heal our loved ones who are sick, but we also pray submitted to His sovereign wisdom and plan. This is not wavering faith. Rather, this is **praying with balance**. The Hebrew boys taught us to pray like this when they said to the king in the face of the fiery furnace, “*Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand O king. But if not, let it be known to you O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up*” (Daniel 3:17-18). We will not bow to sickness whether God heals us or not. A merry heart is our medicine (Proverbs 17:22) and God’s joy is always our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

There are times that God heals us and delivers us from sickness in this life, and then there are times when deliverance will be experienced through death in glory with God (Romans 8:18). Faith is not always the criteria for whether or not we will be healed because Jesus healed people according to their faith (Matthew 9:22, 29) and He also healed people who had little faith (Mark 9:24) or no faith at all (Luke 22:51,

John 5:1-8). Whether we have faith or not, God is gracious and loving towards His children and He has made provision for them through Jesus whereby death, or the things that cause death, loses its sting (I Cor. 15:55-57).

God gave Paul the ability to heal others (Acts 19:11-12) and even raise the dead (Acts 20:7-12), but he was not healed himself of his mysterious infirmity (II Cor. 12:7-10, Galatians 4:13-15). Paul didn't heal Timothy but told him to take wine, which is a modern day equivalent to medicine (I Tim. 5:23). He didn't tell Timothy to "claim his healing". Paul also left Trophimus sick in Miletus (II Tim. 4:20). This implies that healing is never to be seen as an automatic occurrence, nor should a lack of healing be viewed as a defeat. The stripes of Jesus heal us first, foremost, and entirely from the spiritual effects of sin. Physical healing in this life is possible but always secondary.

STBC believes in divine healing but we do not endorse people who claim to be divine healers. We bear in mind that Satan has ability to mimic the power of God (Exodus 7:8-12, Rev. 13:12-15), therefore every "healing" is not proof that God is operating. When the focus is on healing and not on Jesus, Satan is pleased with that. We should have faith that God can heal and faith that God may choose not to heal.

### ***Where does STBC stand on Interracial Marriage and Interracial Adoptions?***

STBC teaches that for Christians, the only stipulation that a marriageable person should have is that future spouse be in the Lord, i.e. saved (I Cor. 7:39). God does not prohibit or discourage interracial marriage. A marriage minded couple should receive pre-marriage counsel regardless of their racial or cultural differences. As far as interracial adoption is concerned, the only prerequisites to have are love and the desire to raise the child in the fear and admonition of the Lord. In fact, STBC encourages adoption period and not just interracial adoption.



Section #4:  
Spiritual Gifts Assessment

# SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT

## 1) Who gets Spiritual Gifts?

*For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. Romans 8:14-17*

## 2) What is a Spiritual Gift?

"Spiritual gifts are divine abilities distributed by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God's design and grace for the common good of the body of Christ."

What you do best in the body of Christ by Bruce Bugbee

## 3) How does God give Spiritual Gifts?

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. I Corinthians 12:4-6*

*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to his people." Ephesians 4:7, 8*

## 4) Why does God give Spiritual Gifts?

*Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. I Corinthians 12:1*

*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good... I Timothy 4:14*

- God gives Spiritual gifts to teach us **independence!**

*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and although its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ... But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that the parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. I Corinthians 12:12-31*

- God gives Spiritual gifts to teach us **dependence!**

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10*

*Again it was like a man going on a journey ... well done good and faithful servant!*  
Matthew 25:14-30

- God gives Spiritual gifts to teach us **interdependence!**

## **5. Confusion about Spiritual Gifts?**

### **A. Don't Confuse Spiritual Gifts with Natural Talents!**

Natural Talents: Given at Physical Birth, sometimes talents can be transformed, they can vary in degree and kind, and they are God-given

Spiritual Gifts: Given at Spiritual Birth, sometimes talents are Holy Spirit inspired, they can vary in degree and kind, and they are God-given

### **B. Don't Confuse Spiritual Gifts with the Fruit of the Spirit!**

Fruit of the Spirit: "Being" qualities, attitudes, by-product of a healthy walk with God, and they are necessary for effective ministry

Spiritual Gifts: "Doing" qualities, aptitudes, supernatural endowment of Spirit, and they are necessary of effective ministry

### **C. Don't Confuse Spiritual Gifts with Spiritual Disciplines!**

Spiritual Disciplines: Strengthens ministry growth and effectiveness, develops devotion, examples: Prayer, Study, and Fasting

Spiritual Gifts: Strengthens ministry growth and effectiveness, expresses devotion, examples: Intercession, Knowledge, Mercy

### **D. Don't Confuse Spiritual Gifts with Ministry Positions!**

Ministry Positions: General roles, "Titles" of positions, examples: Pastor, Elder, Deacon, Small Group Leader, Teacher, and Mercy Team Member

Spiritual Gifts: Specific functions, "Tasks" to perform, examples: Teaching, Shepherding, Prophecy, and Encouragement

## **5) What are your Spiritual Gifts?**

Let's take the Spiritual Gifts Experience Assessment Test!

# Spiritual Gifts Experience Assessment

## Directions:

A) Place the score for your response to each of the following statements in the appropriately numbered box on the answer sheet below. Use the following scale”

### SCORE MEANING

- 3 = Consistently/Definitely true
- 2 = Most of the time/Usually true
- 1 = Some of the time/Once in a while
- 0 = Never/Not at all

B) *Important:* Answer according to who you are, not who you would like to be or think you should be.

- How true of you are these statements?
- What has been your experience?
- To what degree do these statements reflect your tendencies?

C) When you have completed the Spiritual Gifts Experience Assessment, add up each column and record the total above each letter.

- 1) I can coordinate people, tasks, and events to meet a need.
- 2) I enjoy working creatively with wood, cloth, paints, metal, glass, or other materials.
- 3) I enjoy developing and using my artistic skills (art, drama, music, photography, etc.).
- 4) When I see spiritual complacency, I am willing to challenge it.
- 5) I have confidence that God not only can, but he will.
- 6) I give liberally and joyfully to people in financial need or to projects requiring support.
- 7) I enjoy working behind the scenes to support the work of others.

- 8) I view my home as a safe and caring place to minister to people.
- 9) When it comes to my attention, I am honored to regularly pray for someone or for a concern.
- 10) I am motivated to set goals and influence others to achieve a vision in order to advance God's work on earth.
- 11) I empathize with hurting people and desire to help in their healing process.
- 12) I am attracted to the idea of serving in another country or ethnic community.
- 13) I have spoken a timely and prophetic word to others that I felt came to me directly from God while in prayer.
- 14) I have the ability to communicate the Gospel with clarity and conviction.
- 15) I establish trust and confidence through long-term relationships.
- 16) I am able to communicate God's Word effectively.
- 17) I can readily distinguish between spiritual truth and error, good and evil.
- 18) I research and am persistent in my pursuit of knowing the truth.
- 19) Others often seek me out for advice about personal and spiritual matters.
- 20) I am careful, thorough, and skilled at managing details.
- 21) I am skilled in working with different kinds of tools.
- 22) I help people better understand themselves, their relationships, and God through artistic expression.
- 23) I enjoy reassuring and strengthening those who are discouraged.
- 24) I have confidence in God's continuing provision and help, even in difficult times.
- 25) I give more than a tithe so that kingdom work can be accomplished.
- 26) I enjoy doing routine tasks that support the needs of the ministry.
- 27) I enjoy meeting new people and helping them feel welcomed.
- 28) I enjoy praying for long periods of time and receive leadings as to what God wants me to pray for.
- 29) It is quite natural for me to lead, and it is more comfortable for me to lead than not to lead.

- 30) I can patiently support those going through painful experiences as they are seeking stability in their lives.
- 31) I am willing to take an active part in starting a new church.
- 32) By God's revelation to me, I have been able to shed light on current realities in someone's life that helps them see God's desire for their future.
- 33) After I have shared the story of Jesus, people pray with me for salvation.
- 34) I can faithfully provide long-term emotional and spiritual support and concern for others.
- 35) I simply and practically explain and clarify the Word for those who are confused or just do not know.
- 36) I have a "sixth sense" and frequently am able to identify a person's character based on first impressions.
- 37) I receive information from the Spirit that I did not acquire through natural means.
- 38) I can often find simple, practical solutions in the midst of conflict or confusion.
- 39) I can clarify goals and develop strategies or plans to accomplish them.
- 40) I can visualize how something should be constructed before I build it.
- 41) I like finding new and fresh ways of communicating God's truth.
- 42) I give hope to others by directing them to the promises of God.
- 43) I have a special ability to trust God for extraordinary needs.
- 44) I manage my money well in order to free more of it for giving.
- 45) I willingly take on a variety of odd jobs around the church to meet the needs of others.
- 46) I genuinely believe the Lord directs strangers to me who need a sense of belonging and connection to others.
- 47) I am conscious of ministering to others as I pray.
- 48) I am usually chosen as the group's spokesperson when in discussion groups.
- 49) I am drawn toward people who are sometimes regarded as undeserving or beyond help
- 50) I can relate to others in culturally sensitive ways.

- 51) I speak biblical truth in a timely and culturally sensitive way in order to strengthen, encourage, and comfort God's people.
- 52) I'd rather be around non-Christians more than Christians so that I can build relationships with them.
- 53) I enjoy giving practical support, nurture, and spiritual guidance to a group of people.
- 54) When I teach, people respond to my teaching with action.
- 55) I can see through phoniness or deceit before it is evident to others.
- 56) I seek certainty and truth in order to avoid superficial understandings and speculation.
- 57) I am surprised by how many people are unable to solve problems and seem to lack common sense.
- 58) I can identify and effectively use the resources needed to accomplish tasks.
- 59) I am good at working with my hands and enjoy doing so.
- 60) I regularly need to get alone to reflect and to develop my imagination.
- 61) I reassure those who need to take courageous action in their faith, family or life.
- 62) I am unwavering in my belief that God will absolutely work in circumstances in which success cannot be guaranteed by human effort alone.
- 63) I choose to limit my lifestyle in order to give away a higher percentage of my income.
- 64) I see spiritual significance in doing practical tasks.
- 65) I rarely meet people I do not like and wouldn't want to see included in the life of the church.
- 66) I pray with confidence because I know that God works in response to prayer.
- 67) I set goals and direct people to effectively accomplish them.
- 68) I have great compassion for hurting people.
- 69) I view the overall picture and do not get hindered with problems along the way.
- 70) I have spoken to others about future events or situations that God revealed to me, and they happened as I said they would.

- 71) I boldly speak about salvation through Jesus Christ and see a positive response in those who are listening.
- 72) I can gently restore wandering believers to faith and fellowship.
- 73) I get frustrated when I see people's lack of biblical knowledge.
- 74) God shows me the difference between a demonic influence, a mental illness, and an error in truth.
- 75) When reading or studying Scripture, I see important biblical truths and themes that benefit others in the body of Christ.
- 76) I can anticipate the likely consequences of the actions of an individual or a group.
- 77) I like to help groups become more efficient.
- 78) I serve and work more behind the scenes to make things that are useful for ministry and that honor God.
- 79) The way I say and do things awakens the truth in others, so they say, "I have never thought of it that way."
- 80) I find great joy in affirming the value and worth of others.
- 81) When I see God's activity, I move toward it in spite of opposition or a lack of support.
- 82) For special projects and capital campaigns, I like to give in a way that encourages and inspires others to give generously.
- 83) I like to find things that need to be done and often do them without being asked.
- 84) For me, the greatest times of joy in the church are times of social interaction and fellowship.
- 85) When I hear about needy situations, I feel burdened to pray.
- 86) I influence others to perform to the best of their ability.
- 87) I look through a person's handicaps or problems to see a life that matters to God and an opportunity to serve.
- 88) I am culturally sensitive and comfortable with different ethnic groups.
- 89) I feel a compulsion to speak the words God gives me to strengthen, encourage, and comfort others.

- 90) I openly tell people that I am a Christian and want them to ask me about my faith.
- 91) There are a number of people in my life that I am personally guiding with truth, encouragement, caring and wisdom.
- 92) I communicate Scripture in ways that cause others to learn and become motivated toward greater growth.
- 93) I receive affirmation from others concerning the reliability of my insights about them and of the perceptions I have of others.
- 94) I have suddenly known things about others, but did not know how I knew them.
- 95) I give practical advice to help others through complicated situations.
- 96) I can visualize a coming event, anticipate potential problems, and develop strategies to meet them.
- 97) I am a resourceful person, able to find the best materials and tools needed to build what is needed.
- 98) I use various forms of the arts to draw people closer to God and to his truth.
- 99) I like motivating others to take steps for spiritual growth.
- 100) I am regularly challenging others to trust God.
- 101) I manage my money and give to ministries that are well led and are making a difference for Christ in the lives of people.
- 102) I show my love for others in actions more than words.
- 103) I do whatever I can to make visitors and others feel they belong.
- 104) God gives me a peace and confidence that my prayers are being answered, even when I cannot see the results.
- 105) I am able to cast a vision for ministry that others want to follow and be a part of.
- 106) I enjoy bringing hope, joy, and comfort to people working through a crisis or chronic situation in their lives.
- 107) I relate to leaders who often follow me into new ministry ventures.
- 108) God reveals to me things others cannot see so when I speak to them they can understand his activity in their lives.

- 109) I love un-churched people no matter where they are on their spiritual journey.
- 110) I take responsibility to nurture the whole person in his or her walk with God.
- 111) I can present information and skills to others in ways that make it easier for them to grasp and apply them to their lives.
- 112) I have seen into the spiritual realm where spirits have been revealed to me by God.
- 113) The truths I learn and the understandings I gain create a burden for me because of the responsibility I feel to handle the information wisely.
- 114) When faced with how to apply biblical truths practically in a difficult or complex situation, God reveals to me a solution.
- 115) I want to bring order where there is organizational chaos.
- 116) I have good hand-eye coordination and good dexterity.
- 117) I have a sense of the whole and can creatively put things together in a harmonious flow that artistically communicates a biblical truth.
- 118) I carefully challenge or rebuke others in order to help them grow spiritually.
- 119) I find it natural to believe in God for things that others see as impossible.
- 120) I believe I have been given an abundance of resources so that I may give more to the Lord's work.
- 121) When a task needs to be done, I find it difficult to say no.
- 122) I can make people feel at ease even in unfamiliar surroundings.
- 123) I see specific results in direct response to my prayers.
- 124) I figure out where we need to go and help others to get there.
- 125) I am moved with compassion and motivated to remove the sources of another's suffering.
- 126) God's authority and power are manifested in the new churches and ministries I served to start.
- 127) I feel compelled to expose sin wherever I see it and to challenge people to repentance.

128) I'm constantly thinking of ways to bring up spiritual matters with friends who do not know God.

129) I feel responsible to help oversee and protect believers from the things that keep them from fellowship with God and one another.

130) I struggle with how to take what I have been studying and communicate only those things that will help God's people learn what they need at the moment.

131) I can sense when demonic forces are at work in a person or situation.

132) I love learning and share with those who want to learn.

133) I like to read and study the book of Proverbs for its simple and powerful truths expressed in a clear and practical way.

*If you have repeatedly had any of the following experiences, indicate that with a check mark by the appropriate letter on the answer sheet:*

T. I have repeatedly seen an instant healings as I laid hands on someone and prayed.

U. When I hear people speak in tongues, I feel the Spirit revealing his message to me, and I speak it aloud, interpreting it for the church.

V. I have experienced the power of God within me to cast out demons and heal the sick, and I see his supernatural intervention in me.

W. I have spoken in a language I do not understand, and someone has spoken out to interpret what I had just said.

## **THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT KEY**

A – Administration- The divine enablement to understand what makes an organization function and the special ability to plan and execute procedures that accomplish the goals of the ministry.

B – Craftsmanship- The divine enablement to creatively design and/or construct items to be used for ministry.

C - Creative Communication- The divine enablement to communicate God's truth through a variety of art forms.

D – Encouragement- The divine enablement to present truth so as to strengthen, comfort, or urge to action those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith.

E – Faith- The divine enablement to act on God's promises with confidence and unwavering belief in his ability to fulfill his purposes.

F – Giving- The divine enablement to contribute money and resources to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and liberality.

G – Helps- The divine enablement to attach spiritual value to the accomplishment of practical and necessary tasks that free up, support, and meet the needs of others.

H – Hospitality- The divine enablement to care for people by providing fellowship, food, and shelter.

I – Intercession- The divine enablement to consistently pray on behalf of and for others, thus seeing frequent and specific results.

J – Leadership- The divine enablement to cast vision, motivate, and direct people to harmoniously accomplish the purpose of God.

K – Mercy- The divine enablement to cheerfully and practically help those who are suffering or are in need.

L – Apostleship- The divine ability to start and oversee the development of new churches or ministry structures.

M – Prophecy- The divine enablement to reveal truth and proclaim it in a timely and relevant manner for understanding, correction, repentance, or edification.

N – Evangelism- The divine enablement to effectively communicate the Gospel to unbelievers so they respond in faith and move toward discipleship.

O – Shepherding- The divine enablement to nurture, care for, and guide people toward ongoing spiritual maturity and becoming like Christ.

P – Teaching- The divine enablement to understand, clearly explain, and apply the Word of God, thus causing greater Christ-likeness in the lives of listeners.

Q – Discernment- The divine enablement to distinguish between truth and error, to discern the spirits, to differentiate between good and evil, right and wrong.

R – Knowledge- The divine enablement to bring truth to the body through a revelation or biblical insight.

S – Wisdom- The divine enablement to apply spiritual truth effectively to meet a need in a specific situation.

T – Healing- The divine enablement to be God's means for restoring people to wholeness.

U – Interpretation- The divine enablement to make known to the body of Christ the message of one who is speaking in tongues.

V – Miracles- The divine enablement to authenticate the ministry and message of God through supernatural interventions that glorify him.

W – Tongues- The divine enablement to speak, worship, or pray in a language unknown to the speaker.



Section #5:  
Personal Style Assessment

## **PERSONAL STYLE ASSESSMENT**

1) Who has personal style?

2) Who gives us personal style?

*"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness ..."* Genesis 1:26

*The LORD formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being.* Genesis 2:7

*Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man...*  
Genesis 2:22

God created Adam and Eve with personal style!

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it ... Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.* Gen. 2:15

Adam and Eve had personal style!

3) What is personal style?

Your God-given personal style is the way you prefer to relate to the world around you. Your personal style answers the question, "How can I best serve?"

Bruce Bugbee, What You Do Best in the Body of Christ

4) What's the problem with personal style?

*When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.* Genesis 3:6

Your personal style may explain your behavior but it does not excuse it!

*The man said, "The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."* Genesis 3:12-13

You can blame some of your personal style on your relatives & circumstances but not all of it!

5) What's my personal style?

## How are you energized?

1. I'm more comfortable ...

Doing things for people	1	2	3	4	5	Being with people
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2. When doing a task, I tend to ...

Focus on the goal	1	2	3	4	5	Focus on relationships
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3. I get more excited about ...

Advancing a cause	1	2	3	4	5	Creating community
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4. I feel I have accomplished something when I've ...

<i>Gotten a job done</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Built a relationship</i>
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5. It is more important to start a meeting ...

<i>On time</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>When everyone is there</i>
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6. I'm more concerned with ...

<i>Meeting a deadline</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Maintaining the team</i>
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7. I place a high value on ...

<i>Action</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>Communication</i>
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## How are you organized?

1. While on vacation, I prefer to ...

*Be spontaneous*      1      2      3      4      5      *Follow a set plan*

2. I prefer to set guidelines that are ...

*General*      1      2      3      4      5      *Specific*

3. I prefer to ...

*Leave my options open*      1      2      3      4      5      *Settle things now*

4. I prefer projects that have ...

*Variety*      1      2      3      4      5      *Routine*

5. I like to ...

*Play it by ear*      1      2      3      4      5      *Stick to a plan*

6. I find routine ...

*Boring*      1      2      3      4      5      *Restful*

7. I accomplish tasks best ...

*By working it out as I go*      1      2      3      4      5      *By following a plan*



Section #6:  
Ministry Passion Assessment

## **MINISTRY PASSION ASSESSMENT**

1) What is God-given passion?

“Sometimes we think of our passion in terms of a burden we carry, a call we’ve received, a dream we have, or a vision we’ve glimpsed. Whatever you call it, passion is the God-given desire of the heart to make a kingdom difference somewhere.”

Bruce Bugbee, What You Do Best in the Body of Christ

2) Where does God-given passion come from?

*Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself also in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Psalm 37:3-6*

The LORD puts passion in our hearts and it shines out in our acts and is lived out in our cause!

*If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again...We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though Christ were making his appeal through us. 2 Corinthians 5:13-15, 20*

The LORD puts passion in our minds and it drags us around and changes our words!

3) What’s your God-given passion?

## Passion Indicators

1. Imagine that you and I are meeting for the first time. In the course of our conversation, we talked about a variety of topics. Then we turn to a new subject. As you are talking to me about it, you start speaking a little faster. You lean forward. You become increasingly animated. Your voice goes up a little. Your passion may be indicated by more active body language. You are talking about a subject that could keep you up late at night. It's the topic that would cause you to jump out of bed in the morning. **What are we talking about?**

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2. Sometimes our dreaming or reflection allows us to imaginatively explore the desire of our heart. In these times, we may visualize or find ourselves being drawn as if by a current toward something that heightens our feelings and enlarges our capacity for action. The image that we see will hit an emotional chord. When you are alone, do you ever wonder, "What if...?" Does your response to that question create emotional energy? **What is it?**

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3. Make a list of your greatest achievements. Be sure they are things that you enjoy doing. These achievements may be accomplishments that others do not find particularly impressive, but were important to you. (Conversely, you may have achieved Student of the Year, but to you it was not a big deal, or you did not enjoy the process of earning it.) **What are they?**

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Perhaps when you were twelve, you and a friend decided to put on a neighborhood carnival. You organized the booths, got people to run them, had prizes, made and sold tickets, and actually made a little profit. You pulled it off and had a great time doing it. It was an enjoyable achievement? **What themes can you see?**

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4. What kind of things are you doing? What topics are you involved in, in which you lose track of time? When you are moving in the direction of your passion, time can easily slip away. Our passion can make us less aware of what is going on around us because we become so focused on what we care about most. **What might that be?**

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5. People who are fulfilling their passion are making a purposeful difference. (By the way, even though you are making a difference, it doesn't necessarily mean you are serving in the area of your passion.) Those who are expressing their heart's desire will find greater energy and focus as they positively impact those around them. Of course, the process of fulfilling your passion will not always be fun or easy. But in the midst of moving toward your passion, there is an inner confidence that you are doing what God wants you to do in the way he wants you to do it. There is an assurance that you are where he wants you, and that he is using you according to his divine purposes. Whether subtly or overtly, you are making a difference. **Where is that happening? In what area would you like to see it happen?**

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6. Your Passion will energize you. Not only will you become more alive emotionally, but the activity or thoughts about your passion will actually give you energy. This is God's way of moving you toward those people, roles, or causes that are his created agenda for your life. His will for you is partly revealed in your God-given passion.

**What energizes you?**

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7. Whatever your passion is, it needs to be submitted to a twofold test: 1) Does it glorify God? and 2) Does it edify others? If your passion and its expression do not meet this test, you have not identified your God-given passion. You have expressed a desire of your heart, but it is not from God. He cannot violate His own integrity and purposes. That is why we are shown the condition on which God will give us the desires of our heart. *"Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart"* (Psalm 37:3-4)

Jesus was communicating the same principle in the New Testament when He said, *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you"* (John 15:7 NASB). Many people are asking God for things, but they are not abiding in Jesus. When we abide, we can confidently ask, knowing that he will be pleased to respond to our requests because they reflect his purposes. His heart's desire for us become's our heart's desire. Does your passion glorify God and edify others? When you are abiding and delighting in Him, **what desires do you have?**

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Reviewing your responses from above, how would you summarize your passion in a word or phrase? **I have a passion for/to:**

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## Confused?

There are three things that could be in your way to finding your ministry passion:

- 1) Surrounding Values: Our passion is influenced by those who lead us during a certain time of our lives due to it being more “acceptable”.
- 2) Pleaser Personality: Our passion is influenced by the motivation to please others first. You feel that it’s illegal or selfish to say, “I want to...”
- 3) Unrecognizable Theme: We’re a bit too cluttered to narrow it down. Use prayer and the help of a trusted, honest friend to talk through what they see in you.

## What’s Your God-given Passion Category?

### **1) Up-Reach Ministry**

The heart of these ministries is directed toward God and by engaging the church in the Word, worship, song, intercession, the arts, dance, and drama.

#### **Types of Up-Reach Ministries**

Worship Team	Sound	Intercession
Choir	Media	
Bible Study	Sanctuary Care	
Deacons	Drama	
Ushers/Greeters	Dance	
Band	Church Art (paintings, building)	
Communion Team	Stage Crafting (Design & build)	

### **2) Out-Reach Ministry**

The heart of these ministries is focused on relating, reaching and connecting unbelievers and the un-churched to a relationship with Christ and His church.

#### **Types of Out-Reach Ministries**

GDK COME	Operation Homeless Connect
Baby Girls Club	Thanksgiving Baskets
Franktown	Angel Tree
Missions Trips	Back to School Bash
Missionaries	Benevolence

### **3) In-Reach Ministry**

The heart of these ministries is focused upon equipping and assimilating members, visitors, and attendees into a relationship with Christ and the church through Christian education, fellowship, hospitality, belonging, and encouragement.

#### **Types of In-Reach Ministries**

Christian Education Equipping Center

(CEEC Classes, New Member Classes, Apollos Training Institute, Israel Tours)

Men's Ministry

Women's Ministry

Single's Ministry

Children's Ministry

Student Ministry

I-Care Ministry

Finance and Administration Ministries



Section #7:  
Servant Profile and Five Love Languages



## The STBC Membership Covenant

## **The Elder Team's Covenant with the People**

- 1) We commit to grow spiritually, serve actively, and give obediently.
- 2) We commit to pray for you and speak the truth to you in love, holding you accountable to God's biblical standards.
- 3) We commit to make you regularly aware of the vision, mission, and ministry philosophy of STBC.
- 4) We commit to provide personal and corporate avenues for you to grow spiritually in your relationship with the Lord. This includes age and gender specific opportunities.
- 5) We commit to live consecrated lives before the Lord so that our example before you may be worth following.
- 6) We commit to use the pulpit and platform of STBC to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ, the whole counsel of the Word of God, and never a political or personal agenda.
- 7) We commit to protect the church from unruly and divisive people and heretical doctrine.
- 8) We commit to make available to you any material and financial resources in order to help meet your felt needs as the Lord deems appropriate.
- 9) We commit to make you aware of what the Lord reveals to the Elder Team by way of the church's future direction and procedure.
- 10) We commit to properly manage the Lord's material and financial resources, and communicate corporately twice a year about the state of the church's finances.

## **The People's Covenant with the Elder Team**

- 1) I commit to grow spiritually, serve actively, and give obediently.
- 2) I commit to use my spiritual gifts to advance God's Diverse Kingdom and help build up the body of Christ at STBC.
- 3) I commit to respect and submit to the pastors, elders, and delegated authority of STBC.
- 4) I commit to be a faithful, consistent member of STBC for the season that God has me to be here. If and when God should ever call me away from STBC to another church, I will meet with one of the pastors or elders to notify them of God's movement in my life.
- 5) I commit to uphold the doctrinal positions of the church if I am ever asked to speak publicly or lead a ministry. If any questions should arise I will be prompt to discuss the matter with one of the pastors or elders.

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Elder

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Date

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Member

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Date

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Senior Pastor

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Date

## **NOW WHAT?**

Now that we have gotten to the conclusion of the Pre-Membership process, please check the boxes of the items you were able to complete:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend Section #1: Foundations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete and turn in the General Information Form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend Section #2: Core Values
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend Class/Section #3: What We Teach and Where We Stand
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend Class/Section #4: Spiritual Gifts Assessment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend Class/Section #5: Personal Style Assessment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend Class/Section #6: Ministry Passion Assessment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend Class/Section #7: Servant Profile and 5 Love Languages Assessment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with a church consultant to identify at least one area of service
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with an Elder for Questions, Answers, Blessings, and Prayer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign the STBC Membership Covenant
- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive the Right Hand of Fellowship in a Sunday Service
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend the New Members Dinner or Fellowship
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be a disciple of Jesus who experiences and expands God's Diverse Kingdom!



## **Constitution and By-Laws**

# **The Constitution and By-Laws of Strong Tower Bible Church**

## **PREAMBLE**

We the members of Strong Tower Bible Church do ordain and establish the following articles, which form our Constitution, this 3rd day of September in the year of our Lord 1995.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **THE NAME OF THE CHURCH**

The name of this church shall be Strong Tower Bible Church whose administrative address is 828 Murfreesboro Road, Franklin, TN 37064. The mailing address is PO Box 682167 Franklin, TN 37068. The church currently meets for worship on Sundays on the campus of The People's Church in Franklin, TN.

### **THE MISSION OF STRONG TOWER BIBLE CHURCH**

Strong Tower Bible Church exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ by being a Bible based, multidimensional fellowship of believers.

### **THE VISION OF STRONG TOWER BIBLE CHURCH**

Our vision is to experience and expand God's Diverse Kingdom in the city and throughout the world.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **PURPOSE AND BASIC PHILOSOPHIES OF THE CHURCH**

1. Strong Tower Bible Church's ultimate mission is to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. We desire to see every man, woman, boy, and girl grow in relationship with God.

2. Strong Tower Bible Church is an elder led, denominationally unaffiliated church. It is our purpose to be unhampered by the restrictions and decisions of other churches or denominations that would hinder the ministry and message of our church.

3. Because we believe that the Bible is God's Word, it is our goal to draw from the Scriptures the principles that determine our beliefs and practices. As the name implies, it is the Word of God rather than the word of men that ultimately directs our church.

3. It is our purpose to meet frequently for Worship, Christian Education, Fellowship, and Outreach in accordance with Acts 2:40-42. The message we proclaim is based upon a literal, grammatical, and historical interpretation of the entire Bible. We declare the truths of the Bible, being confident that God is glorified and man's needs are met when His truths are presented and obeyed.

4. Strong Tower Bible Church's ministry philosophy is to be a church balanced in Up-Reach, In-Reach, and Out-Reach.

5. Strong Tower Bible Church's membership philosophy is that every member is encouraged and expected to grow spiritually, serve actively, and give obediently.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

#### **SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the church shall be acquired by affirmation of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the signing of a covenant that says you agree and comply with the purposes, goals, and doctrinal statement of the church, and the successful completion of the church's pre-membership classes. For an explanation of personal salvation and spiritual history, a Pastor or an Elder will interview every applicant. No church letter of transfer shall be accepted as a means for membership.

If a former member of STBC returns to have their membership reinstated after previously leaving on good terms, it is not necessary for him or her to go through the pre-membership class again unless they return with a spouse. A simple meeting or discussion with a pastor or elder is sufficient for membership reinstatement.

#### **SECTION 2. RECEIVING MEMBERS**

All applicants shall be publicly presented to the church body at a regular worship

service. At that time, they shall be extended the right hand of fellowship signifying membership.

### **SECTION 3. GENERAL ATTENDANCE**

All persons are welcome to attend the services of the church. If questions of safety or security arise, individuals may be escorted from the premises.

### **SECTION 4. CONGREGATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING**

Whereas governing of the church is vested in the Team of Elders, the Team may from time to time bring before the congregation matters/issues that are currently being considered by the Team. Any matter/issue so presented to the congregation may be for the purpose of solicitation of advice, input seeking, and/or of any other data gathering nature which the Team may deem necessary to assist in making the best possible decision. Professionals outside of our local body may be solicited for their specific expert advice on the matter/issue under consideration.

### **SECTION 5. MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS**

#### **A. Annual Meetings**

There shall be at least one annual meeting of the members of the church. In this annual meeting the membership shall receive: (1) an annual report of actions of the Team of Elders, (2) the Senior Pastor's report, update and perspectives, (3) a review of the church's performance in the most recent budget period, (4) an analysis of the next proposed budget.

#### **B. Semiannual Meetings**

In an effort to keep the congregation informed as to the business, direction, and needs of the church, the Team of Elders may convene a second meeting during the year for a half year update. This semiannual meeting should have an agenda similar to the annual meeting, affording an opportunity for members to pose pertinent questions for the leaders to answer.

#### **C. Regular Meetings**

Weekly worship, midweek Bible study, and other regular meetings of the entire congregation will be set and established by the Team of Elders.

#### D. Special Meetings

The Senior Pastor and/or the Team of Elders shall initiate other special meetings of the membership as deemed necessary. The Team of Elders shall attempt to give the membership as much advance notice of such meetings when possible.

### **SECTION 6. WITHDRAWAL AND DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS**

#### A. Withdrawal

Members may withdraw from the church roll at their own request at any time. The members are encouraged to meet with a pastor or elder to notify the church of their intentions. The pastors also reserve the right to remove a member's name from the role if they have been absent without excuse or notice for over three months. Letter will notify these people if they will not respond to a call for a personal meeting. The church family will be notified at a Sunday worship service or through the bulletin concerning those in the body who have moved on. The church will send a letter acknowledging their membership withdrawal and their name will be removed from the register.

#### B. Dismissal

In harmony with the Scriptural teaching of the Christian faith, discipline must be a functional part of the local church (Matt 18:15-20; Galatians 1:8-9; II Thess. 3:11; I Cor. 5:1-13). The Team of Elders shall discipline any member who knowingly holds false or heretical doctrine, who knowingly lives inconsistently with their Christian profession, or who knowingly would disturb the unity and peace of the Church. The goal of discipline is to restore the person to the church whenever there is repentance and evidence of spiritual change. The Senior Pastor and Team of Elders shall oversee all disciplinary action.

After prayerful consideration and the implementation of the discipline process, as outlined in the church's discipline policy, any person may be dismissed from membership, and his/her name stricken from the church roll by a unanimous vote of the Team of Elders, a quorum being present.

#### C. Non-Members

Non-members may only serve in the church in a limited fashion if they are actively taking part in the process of becoming a member at STBC. Pastoral approval must be granted for such instances, especially as it pertains to certain aspects of the Children's Ministry and Worship Ministry.

## **SECTION 7. RESTORATION OF DISMISSED MEMBERS**

The church also has the responsibility of restoring dismissed members who give satisfactory evidence of repentance (II Cor. 2:6-8) and who corrected the offense. Such membership restoration occurs only by a unanimous vote of the Team of Elders, a quorum being present, who shall inform the congregation of the same.

### **ARTICLE IV: THE TEAM OF ELDERS**

#### **SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE TEAM**

Qualifications of the Elders shall be in accordance with the guidelines established in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9; that is an Elder must have a reputation which is above reproach, be the husband of one wife (no women will be ordained), be temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, and be able to teach, not be addicted to strong drink, not self-willed, not be quick tempered, and not be pugnacious or contentious. An Elder must be free from the love of money, a good manager of his household, a lover of what is good, a just and devout man, and he must not be a new convert in the faith.

In summary, an elder is a spiritually mature man who is called and ordained of God to manage and shepherd the local church.

#### **SECTION 2. ORDINATION OF THE TEAM**

To be ordained as an elder at STBC, one must meet the biblical qualifications as outlined above, faithfully attend the training process, and have been an official, active member for at least one year in the life of the church. The terms “elder”, “pastor” and “bishop” are all interchangeable terms that explain different aspects for the man who will hold the office. For matters of clarity, the staff elders are generally called “pastors” and they make their living in the ministry as a full-time vocation. The lay elders are called “elders” and they hold professional vocations outside of the church.

To be ordained as an “employed”, staff elder/pastor of the church, the candidate must:

1. Undergo a private interview process with the Elders whereby the candidate is asked of his life, ministry, various doctrinal positions, and personal experiences. If the Elders receive the candidate he will be “hired” as a pastor, but the candidate will still need to satisfactorily complete the ordination process. Until he is ordained he will be permitted to attend elder’s meetings in a non-voting capacity.

2. Undergo a public examination of personal life and theological positions before a group of ordained clergy based upon a doctrinal statement that he writes.
3. After passing this oral exam, the candidate will be ordained into the ministry by Strong Tower Bible Church with the laying on of hands and the presentation of an ordination certificate.

Note: All previously ordained ministers coming into STBC for employment will still undergo this process of ordination.

To be ordained as a lay elder at STBC, the candidate must:

1. Be a member of STBC in good standing for at least one year.
2. Be chosen by the Elder Team and approached by the Senior Pastor to inquire about initial interest and availability.
3. Fill out a thorough questionnaire that addresses personal matters, calling, and doctrinal perspectives (i.e. a doctrinal statement).
4. Undergo a public, oral examination of personal life and theological positions before a group of ordained clergy.
5. Be ordained into the ministry by Strong Tower Bible Church with the laying on of hands in a Sunday service and the presentation of an ordination certificate. He will now be permitted to serve and vote as a ruling elder in elder's meetings.

### **SECTION 3. ORDAINING WOMEN AS MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL**

Although STBC does not ordain women to be pastors, the church does ordain women who serve on staff in professional ministry. This authorizing and covering that comes from ordination not only empowers the woman being ordained in the earthly and spiritual realms, it also protects the woman minister and the church in

terms of confidentiality being honored in courts of law. And for those who desire, an ordination certificate allows the minister to receive proper tax benefits.

## **SECTION 4. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY OF THE TEAM**

### **A. Government**

The Team of Elders or their qualified appointees, who shall be ultimately responsible to the Team, shall govern the business and affairs of the church. As the church holds the belief that the New Testament places the burden of governing on a plurality of Elders, the Team of Elders shall oversee the congregation and make policy decisions with regard to the affairs, functions, direction, and business of the church. These decisions must reflect a clear biblical perspective and the best interest of the church. Authority to execute documents of the church shall be vested in the Team of Elders.

### **B. Pulpit Supply**

The Team of Elders shall make provisions for the supply of the pulpit if the Senior Pastor fails to do so, or in his absence.

### **C. Funds of the Church**

The Team of Elders shall be responsible for ensuring that the funds of the church are received and distributed in accordance with the goals and purposes of the church, as stated in Article II of this Constitution. If for any unseen reason, the church would have to terminate its ministry, unused funds/assets will be appropriately distributed to the non-profit organizations the church supports during that time.

### **D. Salaries, Remuneration, and Expenses**

The lay elders on the Team of Elders (and inclusive of the Sr. Pastor if necessary) shall set and structure the guidelines to determine the salaries, wages, and benefits of the church staff in order to protect the staff pastors from matters of questionable integrity.

### **E. Conservation of Church Property**

The Team of Elders shall make provisions for the conservation and maintenance of all the property of the church.

### **F. Dissolution of the Organization**

Upon the dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue

Code, or shall be distributed to the Federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

We agree that no part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code.

## **SECTION 5. SPIRITUAL OVERSIGHT**

The Team of Elders shall be responsible for assisting and supporting the Senior Pastor. The Team of Elders is to provide the personal professional resources necessary for him to effectively lead the ministry of the church and ensure that the spiritual purposes of the church, as set forth in Article II, are realized.

## **SECTION 4. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION**

The Senior Pastor shall represent the Team of Elders in the development and administration of the programs of the church. Such programs shall be in accordance with the purpose and goals of the church as defined in Article II of this constitution.

## **SECTION 5. COMPOSITION OF TEAM AND TERM OF OFFICE**

### **A. Number of Elders**

The number of Elders shall not be less than three (3) and no more than fifteen (15).

### **B. Term of Office of Elder**

The term of Office of Elder shall be three (3) years.

### C. Inactive Status of Elders

After serving for three years, the Elder then enters into an Inactive status for at least one year. His return to the Elder Team is not automatic and it is contingent upon the approval of the Senior Pastor. Particular need on the Elder Team may determine the inactive Elder's ability to be activated immediately. If an elder has been inactive for a number of years, it may be necessary for him to undergo the ordination process again for purposes of familiarizes himself with the culture and new processes of the Elder Team.

During inactive status the Elder can assist with communion and teaching. The Inactive Elder will not be required to attend Elder's meetings, nor will he be empowered with voting privileges. The Senior Pastor and the Elder Team can garner the thoughts and opinions of inactive elders on various topics. An inactive elder may be asked to attend an emergency Elder's meeting and be authorized to vote as it pertains to matters surrounding removing, disciplining, or filling the office of the Senior Pastor.

### D. Discipline, Removal or Resignation of Active Elders

If an Elder proves to espouse doctrine that is inconsistent with STBC's stated position or promote behavior that is inconsistent with the biblical requirements stated for an elder, the Team of Elders will examine, possibly discipline, and if necessary, remove that Elder from the team following a vote. If the elder repents, he will be placed on probation.

In repeated cases of extreme disharmony and disruption, the Senior Pastor can recommend for said elder to be disciplined and possibly expelled from the Elder Team. After examination and prayer, the active elders of the team will vote to remove the elder in question from the team. If the elder is not voted off, he will be placed on probation.

If an elder resigns from the team, the Senior Pastor will accept that resignation and respond to the former elder in writing.

## **SECTION 6. NOMINATION, APPOINTMENT, AND AFFIRMATION OF THE TEAM**

### A. Nomination of Elders

Nomination of men to be considered for the office of Elder shall come from the Team of Elders. The Team shall have the responsibility of assessing the qualifications of each prospective candidate, (as prescribed in Article V, Section 1), making selection, and providing oversight and training of those men.

## B. Appointment of Elders

Upon the successful completion of the Elder's training program, each candidate will be presented to the Team for approval by a unanimous vote of the Team of Elders, a quorum being present. Each candidate shall be presented before the congregation.

## C. Affirmation of Elders

The members of the congregation shall have a specific period of time (exact amount of time will be communicated at the time in which the named are presented) to bring forward any cause for denial of office, be it unfitness or other cause that would prevent a candidate from faithfully serving in the office of Elder. After the specified time period, the candidate shall be presented to the congregation for their affirmation.

## **SECTION 7. QUORUM OF THE TEAM OF ELDERS**

The quorum necessary to conduct the business of the Team shall be two-thirds of the members of the Team of Elders if an Elder or elders are unreachable. Any Elders not at a meeting, but reachable, will be notified of the events of the meeting by the Senior Pastor or a delegated elder and will be given an opportunity to vote. An absent elder may authorize another elder to vote on his behalf concerning a matter that is being deliberated upon.

## **SECTION 8. VOTING OF THE TEAM OF ELDERS**

### A. Voting

A unanimous vote of the Team of Elders, a quorum being present, is required for the adoption of any motion. Any item for vote that is seriously substantial in nature will not be decided upon the day or night of the initial meeting. Rather, time will be given to each Elder in order to invest in more prayer and personal reflection. At a designated and prompt time, the Elders will then share concerning their decision(s) with the Team.

## **SECTION 9. OFFICERS OF THE TEAM OF ELDERS**

### A. The Senior Pastor shall serve as the Chairman of the Team of Elders.

The Chairman shall preside over all meetings of the Team. Unless otherwise changed because of a conflict of interest or properly delegated out, the Senior Pastor shall preside over all congregational business meetings and shall set the agenda for all Team meetings.

B. A Designated Pastor shall serve as the Vice-Chairman of the Team.

The Vice-Chairman shall preside over the meetings of the Team in the absence of the Chairman or when designated by the Chairman. This person is also known as the Moderator. He shall be authorized by the Chairman to act in the Chairman's place and on his behalf as an ex-officio member of any committee designated by the Chairman.

C. An Elder shall serve as Secretary of the Team

The Team of Elders shall appoint an Elder to the office of Secretary. The Secretary shall be responsible for the recording, preparation, sending of minutes, and maintenance of the records, resolutions, and other actions of the proceedings of the Team of Elders.

D. An Elder shall serve as Treasurer of the Team

The Team of Elders shall appoint an Elder to the office of Treasurer unless otherwise delegated out. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the proper recording, reporting, and safeguarding of the funds of the church. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial statements, and presentation to the Team of Elders and the congregation.

E. Reports of the Team of the church

1. Annual Report of the Team

The Team shall make an annual report of the actions of the Team to the church during the first quarter of each fiscal year.

2. Other Reports of the Board

The Team may at its discretion, make other reports of the actions, business, and status to the church at such times as deemed necessary.

F. Subcommittees within the Team

The elders shall lead and serve within the designated subcommittees of Finance, Personnel, and Pastoral Care. The governance, goals, and meeting schedules for these committees are individually unique, yet consistent with key elements as decided upon by the Elder Team. Qualified lay members will be invited to serve on the committees in advisory capacities.

## **SECTION 10. THE APPROVAL MATRIX**

The church shall endorse, implement, operate within, and conduct its business in harmony with the recognized approval matrix as established by the Team of Elders. Possible discipline awaits an elder or staff member that shows blatant disregard for not operating within the approval matrix system.

### **A. Individual Purchase Orders, Check Requests, and Casual Labor**

The approval matrix provides guidelines for purchase orders, check requests, and casual labor costs concerning budgeted and unbudgeted items.

### **B. Hiring Staff, Objective Setting, Review, Compensation, and Termination**

The approval matrix lays forth the church's procedure for hiring, terminating, reviewing, and compensating staff.

### **C. Financial Documents, Monetary Loans, Engaging Professional Services, and Leasing or Purchasing Land/Buildings**

The approval matrix sets forth the accepted procedure for the church's financial documents, handling monetary loans, engaging professional services, auditors, outside services and the leasing and/or purchasing of land and/or buildings.

## **SECTION 11. SENIOR PASTOR**

### **A. Nomination of the Senior Pastor**

The Team of Elders shall appoint a committee, composed of Elders and members of the congregation, to seek a candidate for the position of Senior Pastor. The committee will be chaired by an Elder, and shall recommend candidates for the office of Senior Pastor to the Team of Elders. The candidates for Senior Pastor shall be nominated by a unanimous vote of the Team of Elders, a quorum being present. He shall thereafter be recommended to the members of the church at a meeting of the church called for that purpose.

### **B. Election and Calling of the Senior Pastor**

After the nomination and recommendation of the Senior Pastor by the Team of Elders, he shall be elected by two-thirds vote of those members present at a congregational meeting called for the purpose of electing the Senior Pastor. This meeting shall have been announced by written notice and mailed not less than fourteen (14) days prior to said meeting. Should the candidate receive less than a two-thirds vote of the members present, the matter of nomination and election shall be returned to the Team of Elders.

### **C. Responsibilities of the Senior Pastor**

1. The Senior Pastor shall be the recognized leader of the church and of the Elder Team. Though possessing one vote as the other elders on the team, the Senior

Pastor's perspectives and opinions will be heavily relied upon in moments of indecision, tension, and stalemate. He shall be responsible for providing general guidance to the church and overseeing the implementation of the policies established by the Team of Elders. He shall be the Chairman of the Team.

2. As the chief administrator of the church, the Senior Pastor shall be responsible for the general oversight, coordination, administration, and operation of all programs and personnel of the church. The Senior Pastor has the authority to hire, discipline, or terminate non-pastoral employees within the church apart from the Elder Team's prior approval.

3. It shall be the duty and obligation of the Senior Pastor to be the primary teacher of the Word of God as contained in the Old and New Testaments and to oversee the spiritual ministry of the church, which shall include the direction of worship services.

4. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of each council, and he can attend any meeting of the groups within the church.

5. It shall be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor to be the primary spokesman of the policies, goals, direction, vision, and ministry of the church to the members as well as to the broader community at large. He is able to sign legal documents on behalf of the Elder Team.

#### D. Dismissal of the Senior Pastor

1. The Team may act to terminate the services of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor is excluded from attending the meeting of the Team called to consider the termination of the Senior Pastor and shall have no right to vote at such meeting either in person or by proxy. The Vice-Chairman shall assume his duties at such meeting.

2. The removal of the Senior Pastor shall be by the same procedure as is provided for the calling, nomination, and election of a Senior Pastor. Before such action of removal is taken, the Board shall allow the Senior Pastor to speak to the Team in his own defense.

3. If for any reason, whether for unfaithfulness, unfitness, or other cause, the Team at a properly held meeting shall deem it necessary or desirable to remove the Senior Pastor from office, the Board at such meeting shall select and appoint the validity of the reasons or causes in writing. The Vice-Chairman shall chair the committee.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **THE DIACONATE: DEACONS AND DEACONESSES**

#### **SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS AND DEACONESSES**

The qualifications of a Deacon/Deaconess shall be in accordance with the guidelines of Acts 6:1-8 and I Timothy 3:8-13. A Deacon/Deaconess can be married, single or divorced. In summary, a deacon or a deaconess is a hands-on extension of the Elder Team that is called by God to meet the felt needs of the local church.

Any Deacon/Deaconess candidate must faithfully attend the training classes and have been an official, active, member of the church for at least one year in the life of the church.

#### **SECTION 2. PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

A Deacon/Deaconess is an authorized, official in the church that is a hands on extension of the Elders who assist them in meeting the felt needs of the body of STBC.

Deacons/Deaconesses free up the Elders to govern, study and pray.

Deacons/Deaconesses are not responsible for governing the body, but they are responsible for overseeing their respective area of ministry in the church.

Deacons/Deaconesses are publicly ordained before the body of STBC, and they are accountable to their various Elders and the Senior Pastor.

Any Deacon/Deaconess who is specifically a teacher of any age group must sign a contract stating that they will uphold and teach in accordance with the various doctrinal positions of the church.

#### **SECTION 3. CONFIRMATION, APPOINTMENT AND TERM**

In a private interview, Deacons/Deaconesses will be confirmed by the Elders in accordance with their burden of ministry, giftedness, personal spiritual integrity, and the timing of the Lord. All Deacons/Deaconesses must have faithfully attended the training classes and have been an official, active, member for at least one year in the life of the church.

A Deacon/Deaconess will serve in their respective area of ministry for a minimum of two years, or they voluntarily step down, or unless they spiritually disqualify themselves in some manner. In such cases, the Elders will minister appropriately to the individual Deacon/Deaconess and notify the congregation if necessary.