

**BY-LAWS**

**AGAPE NEW TESTAMENT FELLOWSHIP**

ARTICLE I

1.0 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 An individual who wishes to join the Church should express this desire to one of the Elders and attend the membership classes. An announcement will be made to the congregation that the individual is being considered for membership. Any Biblical reason for not taking him/her in should be shared with the Elders. Examples of Biblical reasons, but not limited to, are repeated drunkenness; physical abuse; currently active in immoral sex, including fornication, pornography, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, sex with children, molesting children, (refer to Exhibit 1, "Human Sexuality", which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended); active involvement in the occult, including idolatry and witchcraft; a man and a woman living together without a marriage license; etc., as written in I Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, and Revelation 21:8. A special meeting of the Elders will be held where the individual will be asked to share his/her testimony and will receive information and instruction concerning Church membership. If all is satisfactory, the person will be taken into membership during a regular service when he/she will be asked to share his/her testimony, receive a charge from the Pastor, be prayed for and receive the Right Hand of Fellowship from the members. Letters of transfer are encouraged as good protocol and will be duly recorded by the Church Secretary. Rom. 10:9 and 10
- 1.2 Each member has the responsibility to intercede in prayer for the body, encourage one another in assembling together, exercise his/her gifts to edify the body, cheerfully support the body as God prospers him/her, refrain from gossip and seek to unify the body. Heb. 10:25; I Cor. 14:26, 32, 33, 39 and 40; Luke 6:38; II Cor. 9:6 and 7; Prov. 6:16-19; James 5:16; I John 5:16
- 1.3 Each member has the privilege of casting a vote on each issue brought before the congregation and should feel free to contact any officer or the Board concerning matters of the Church.
- 1.4 Those members who for one (1) year have failed to attend or support the Church and have not responded to contact by the Elders, shall be notified that they have been placed on an Inactive Roll by the Elders. After the member has been on the Inactive Roll for two (2) months and failed to respond, he/she shall be dropped from the membership of the Church on recommendation of the Elders.
  - 1.4.1 A person on the Inactive Roll can activate his/her membership by attending three (3) out of four (4) consecutive Sunday morning services and submitting a formal request to the Elders.
  - 1.4.2 A member may request to be placed on the Indefinitely Inactive Roll, in which case he shall remain an inactive member for an indefinite period of time

and have no voting privileges.

- 1.5 Upon request from another organized Church or individual, the Elders shall approve letters of transfer or dismissal.
  - 1.5.1 If a member approaches an Elder and tells him/her that he/she is leaving the church, the member should be released from membership after the Elder has written and signed a documentation and shared it with the rest of the Elders.
- 1.6 The following procedure shall be used in discipline:
  - 1.6.1 If a member of the Church feels that he/she has been wronged by another member, he/she should prayerfully follow the procedure outlined by our Lord Jesus for the correction of a brother or sister (Matthew 18:15-17). The offended member will go to the offender and discuss Biblical objections to his/her actions in the hope of being reconciled with him/her (Galatians 6:1). If the offender will not hear him/her, the member will return with one or two other members who will be witnesses to the discussion. If the situation continues unresolved, the matter shall be taken before the Elders for resolution.
  - 1.6.2 If a member is openly living in disobedience to the Word of God, the Elders shall repeatedly visit the member following the procedure of Matthew 18:15-17 in a spirit of humility and love with the desire to restore the member to a right relationship with God. Galatians 6:1 Disobedient to the Word of God includes, but is not limited to, physical abuse, current sexual immorality including fornication, pornography, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, sex with children, molesting children, (refer to Exhibit 1, "Human Sexuality", which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended); occult practices, including idolatry or witchcraft; creating discord, dissension and undermining the authority of the Elders; disobedience to the Elders; repeated drunkenness; illegal drug use; repeated lying; a man and a woman living together without a marriage license; etc., as written in I Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, Hebrews 13:17, and Revelation 21:8.
  - 1.6.3 If a situation of Section 1.6.2 remains unresolved, the Elders shall ask the member if he/she wishes to resign as a member of the Church. If he/she does not elect to resign, a special congregational meeting announced two (2) weeks in advance shall be held. This meeting shall be of members only. At this time, the member will be accorded a full opportunity to be heard before the members. A vote shall be taken to determine if the member shall be excommunicated in the hopes of bringing him/her to repentance. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present shall so direct. If a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is not received, the member shall be exonerated. Matt.18:17, I Cor. 5:5-13

## 2.0 THE PRESIDING ELDER OR SENIOR PASTOR

- 2.1 The term Pastor in the Constitution refers to the Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor of the Church who represents the Elder Board on a day-by-day basis in leading the Church and is mutually submissive to the Elder Board.
  - 2.1.1 If a serious disagreement between the Presiding Elder and Elder Board cannot be resolved, it should be brought to the congregation for resolution

at a preannounced meeting.

- 2.2 When a vacancy in the position of Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor occurs, the Elders shall act as the Pulpit Committee to recommend one (1) candidate at a time for Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor to the Church. In a special meeting, the Church shall vote after hearing the candidate. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present in favor of the candidate is required to extend a call to the candidate for an indefinite period of time. If necessary, additional candidates shall be found and recommended until a Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor is selected. The Elders shall preside at an installation service for the new Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor. The qualifications of a Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor are listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- 2.3 The Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor may terminate the relationship with a thirty (30) day written notice to the Elders.
- 2.4 Vote of Confidence - see Section 3.3 of this article.
- 2.5 The Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor is the leader or shepherd of the Church and has the broad responsibility and authority due that office.
- 2.6 Some of the duties of the Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor are: minister the Word of God, intercessory prayer, preside at the worship services, minister to the sick and needy, comfort the bereaved, visit the members, be an example to the congregation. I Peter 5:1-4 and Acts 6:4
- 2.7 The Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor shall make a monthly report to the Elders and Church Board. The report shall include the number of visits made to members and prospective members, hospital visits, counseling sessions, services conducted and other meetings conducted or attended.
- 2.8 The Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor may serve as ex-officio member of any duly organized board or committee of the Church.
- 2.9 The Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor and/or Elders shall water baptize approved candidates.
- 2.10 Correction of a Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor - see Section 3.15 of this article.

### 3.0 ELDERS

- 3.1 Members knowing those who have the scriptural qualifications for the office of Elder, or one aspiring to the office, should contact the Elders. Acts 14:23, I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 Those who are considered qualified for the office by the current Elders will be brought before the congregation for a vote. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present will constitute election to the office for an indefinite period of time. An ordination service will be held for the new Elder. All Elders receive a license of ordination as an Elder.
  - 3.1.1 The Elder Board is made up a Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor (called Pastor in the Constitution) and all the other Elders serving in the local congregation. All of the other Elders are equal in authority irregardless of their credentials or salary. There are many people in the congregation who are called to ministries, even pastoral ministries, who do not have a call to be an Elder at Agape New Testament Fellowship. The call to Elder is a call to spiritually govern a body of believers. An individual may be called to a pastoral ministry, have credentials and be paid a salary but not be ordained as an Elder at Agape New Testament Fellowship, and, therefore, be under the authority of the Elder Board the same as all other ministries

in the congregation. The leaders of ministries in the congregation and Board members shall make up the leadership team for the purposes of Receiving training and equipping and carrying out the vision of direction of the Church. The leadership team is under the authority of the Board of Elders.

- 3.1.2 An Elder may also be called other names by the congregation if their assigned focus of ministry warrants it, i.e. Co-Pastor, Pastor, Youth Pastor, Pastoral Counselor, Counselor, etc.
- 3.2 An Elder may resign with a thirty (30) day written notice to the Elders.
- 3.3 An Elder may request a vote of confidence at any time for his/her own information. He/she shall announce his/her request for a vote of confidence to the Church. After the request, there shall be a waiting period of two (2) weeks, during which time any member having a scriptural objection to the ministry of the Elder involved should bring it to his/her attention. At the end of the waiting period, the vote of confidence shall be held. A vote of confidence is strictly for the Elder's information.
- 3.4 The Elders shall supervise the spiritual welfare of the Church. Some of the duties of the Elders are: minister the Word of God, intercessory prayer, wait upon the Lord for direction, be examples to the congregation, pray for them, visit the members. Acts 6:4, 15:6, 20:28; James 5:14
- 3.5 The Elders shall meet once each month to consider the spiritual matters of the Church. Special Elders' meetings for specific purposes will be held as needed. They shall appoint a Secretary who will keep minutes and post them on the bulletin board.
- 3.6 The Elders shall interview and instruct candidates for water baptism and Church membership.
- 3.7 The Elders shall hear cases where one or more of the parties have followed the procedures of Matthew 18:15-17 in the spirit of Galatians 6:1 as outlined in the sections of these By-Laws.
- 3.8 The Elders shall give spiritual counsel to Church officers who request aid as outlined in the sections of the By-Laws.
- 3.9 The Elders shall approve the Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor's vacation plans and fill the "pulpit" in his/her absence.
- 3.10 The Elders shall review the Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor's salary annually and submit it for recommendation to the Church Board.
- 3.11 The Elders shall plan the services, obtaining special speakers or groups to minister as they are led by the Holy Spirit. In situations where they are receiving direction which would have long-range effects on the Church, the direction should be presented to the congregation for confirmation.
- 3.12 The Elders shall act as the Pulpit Committee in securing a new Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor.
- 3.13 The Elders shall review the qualifications of those seeking ordination or other credentials, such as a restricted license to minister, a license to minister, and full ordination as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and make a recommendation to the congregation. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those members present at a preannounced congregational meeting shall give consent. The credentials will be given at a special service. Those receiving credentials will be under the authority and leadership of the Elder Board.

- 3.13.1 The focus of ministry of each Elder is determined by the Board of Elders on the basis of congregational needs, calling and giftings, since the qualification of Eldership is character.
- 3.13.2 Elders or Pastors chosen to perform marriages and funerals by the Elder Board shall be listed in the front of the Agape New Testament Fellowship "State Book" next to the Articles of Incorporation, with the effective dates.
- 3.13.3 Any salary given an Elder or anyone else in the congregation and his/her corresponding responsibilities is to be voted upon by the congregation.
- 3.13.4 Credentials will be revoked if the holder is no longer an active member of Agape New Testament Fellowship, no longer serving in an Agape New Testament Fellowship sponsored ministry, or is under discipline as outlined in paragraph 1.6 of Article 1 of the By-Laws, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those members present at a preannounced congregational meeting.
- 3.13.5 The Board of Elders may require regular written reports from those who receive a salary from the Church, those who are serving as missionaries and those leading an Agape New Testament Fellowship sponsored ministry outside of the local congregation. The Elder Board may approve a person for ministry-at-large if they have served at Agape New Testament Fellowship and are clearly being accountable to the Board of Elders. These people would keep appropriate credentials as determined by the Elder Board.
- 3.14 The Elders shall, as needed, appoint and oversee Deacons who will care for the property of the Church.
- 3.15 If a member of the Church feels that he/she has been wronged by an Elder or Senior Pastor or that an Elder or Senior Pastor is falling short of the scriptural duties for the office of Elder or Senior Pastor (Titus 1:5-9), then he/she will prayerfully follow the procedure outlined by our Lord Jesus for the correction of a brother or sister (Matthew 18:15-17). The member will go to the Elder or Senior Pastor alone and discuss Biblical objections to his/her ministry with him/her with the hope of being reconciled to him/her (Galatians 6:1). If the Elder or Senior Pastor will not hear him/her, the member will return with one or two other members who will be witnesses to the discussion. If the situation continues unresolved, the matter shall be taken before the Elders. The Elders shall proceed on the basis of I Timothy 5:19 and 20; and, if the situation warrants, a special congregational meeting for members only will be called. A vote to determine whether the Elder or Senior Pastor is to correct himself/herself shall be taken. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present shall so direct. If a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is not received, the Elder or Senior Pastor shall be exonerated. If the Elder or Senior Pastor does not repent within the time specified by the Elders, they will ask for his/her resignation.

#### 4.0 CHURCH SECRETARY

- 4.1 At the annual October business meeting of the congregation, or at a special meeting called for that purpose, a Church Secretary shall be elected for a term of one (1) year.
- 4.2 The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of congregational and Church Board

meetings (see Section 8).

- 4.3 The Secretary shall keep a record of all members who join or leave the Church. He/she shall keep a record of attendance at the services and congregational meetings and Church Board meetings.
- 4.4 The Secretary shall write letters of correspondence under the direction of the Church Board, Elders or the Pastor, as well as notices required by law and these By-Laws and the Constitution.
- 4.5 The Secretary shall maintain a file of all correspondence, Pastor's reports and information and a congregational roll.
- 4.6 The Secretary shall prepare an annual report listing the highlights for each month of the previous year.
- 4.7 The Secretary shall take care of all duties regarding the copier, keep the address list current, and prepare the Church calendar.
- 4.8 At the expiration of his/her term of office, he/she shall deliver all books, papers, and property of the Church to his/her successor or to the Church Board.
- 4.9 The Secretary shall have authority to appoint others to assist him/her in performing the secretarial duties.

## 5.0 CHURCH TREASURER

- 5.1 At the annual October business meeting of the congregation, or at a special meeting called for that purpose, a Church Treasurer shall be elected for a term of one (1) year.
- 5.2 The Treasurer shall disburse Church funds under direction of the Church Board. Proper records shall be kept of all these transactions and made available for auditing. The Treasurer's monthly report shall be posted no later than two (2) Sundays after the Board meeting.
- 5.3 The Treasurer shall prepare a monthly financial statement of the Church for each Board meeting. He/she shall also prepare an annual financial statement.
- 5.4 Church funds shall be deposited in the name of the Church in a bank selected by the Church Board. The Treasurer shall maintain all bank accounts.
- 5.5 The Treasurer shall keep a record of giving for all members and other persons on request and report to them at the end of the year the record of their own giving for their personal records.
- 5.6 The Treasurer shall count, record, and deposit the monies received at each service.
- 5.7 The Treasurer shall keep petty cash under the direction of the Church Board.
- 5.8 The Treasurer shall keep a file of operational expenses, bank statements and canceled checks, invoices, monthly and annual Treasurer reports and correspondence.
- 5.9 At the expiration of his/her term of office, he/she shall deliver all monies, records and property of the Church to his/her successor or the Church Board.

## 6.0 SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

- 6.1 At the annual October business meeting of the congregation, or at a special meeting called for that purpose, a Sunday School Superintendent shall be elected for a term of one (1) year.
- 6.2 The Superintendent shall, with the Elders' approval, appoint Sunday School teachers from the membership, workers, and committees as needed. He/she shall

coordinate the activities of the Sunday School staff.

- 6.3 The Superintendent shall review all materials used in the Sunday School and should consult with the Elders on any questionable material, major changes in program, or other concerns of a spiritual or managerial nature.
- 6.4 The Superintendent shall report to the Church Board the material and physical needs of the Sunday School as they occur.
- 6.5 The Sunday School Superintendent shall keep the Sunday School roll.

## 7.0 MUSIC DIRECTOR

- 7.1 At the September Board meeting, the Board shall appoint a Music Director for a term of one (1) year. The Elders shall support and oversee the Music Director. This appointment shall then be announced at the annual October business meeting of the congregation.
- 7.2 The Music Director shall guide the congregational singing and accompaniment in cooperation with the Pastor.
- 7.3 The Music Director shall obtain special music for the regular services as directed by the Lord.
- 7.4 The Music Director shall coordinate the music for special services.
- 7.5 The Music Director shall consult with the Elders concerning the needs of the musical ministry of the Church.
- 7.6 The Music Director shall report to the Church Board any materials or physical needs of the Music Department as they occur.
- 7.7 The Music Director shall appoint, with the approval of the Elders, assistants as needed.

## 8.0 CHURCH BOARD

- 8.1 The Church Board shall consist of the following members: Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor, Elders, Secretary, Treasurer, Sunday School Superintendent, Youth Director, Board Members-at-Large. The Senior Pastor shall preside over the meetings or may appoint someone else to lead.
  - 8.1.1 If an officer resigns before the end of his/her term, the Elders shall make a recommendation for Church Board approval for a member of the congregation to fill the office for the rest of the term.
- 8.2 The Board shall meet at least once each month. Special meetings necessary to transact Church business in the interim between meetings may be called by the Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor or two other Board members. Sixty (60) percent of the members shall constitute a quorum for Church Board meetings. The preannounced meetings are open to any member or invited guests.
- 8.3 The Board shall represent the Church in matters of business between congregational meetings. Major decisions which are not part of routine Church operation or which will have long range effects on the Church should be presented to the Church membership for a vote.
- 8.4 The Board shall review suggestions or complaints presented in writing or in person by members of the Church.
- 8.5 The Board shall review the reports of the Presiding Elder or Senior Pastor, Elders, and any committees it appoints.
- 8.6 The Board shall recommend to the congregation any new offices desirable for the Church.

- 8.7 The minutes of each Board meeting relative to the congregation shall be posted on the Church bulletin board no later than two (2) Sundays after the meeting has been held. It is the responsibility of every member of the congregation to clarify any questions that might arise concerning the Board's actions.
- 8.8 The Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee of three (3) members of the Church in good standing for the annual Church elections. The committee shall prepare a list of names of offices to be filled and nominees for each position. The membership may nominate from the floor providing permission has been given by the person whose name is to be presented.
- 8.9 The Church Board reserves the right to refuse the use or rental of the building. For general guidelines, see our policy entitled, "Policy for the use of the Church Facilities (Other than a Scheduled Church Activity) Lending of the Building and Property Policy".

## 9.0 AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 Proposed amendments to the By-Laws signed by three (3) members of the Church shall be published two (2) weeks prior to the congregational meeting.
- 9.2 A quorum for considering the By-Laws change shall be fifty (50) percent of the members.
- 9.3 A two-thirds (2/3) majority of members voting shall constitute adoption.

## 10.0 MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 10.1 The Elders shall state, when the meeting is announced, whether or not it shall be open to friends of the congregation.

## 11.0 FISCAL YEAR

- 11.1 The fiscal year of the Church shall begin January 1<sup>st</sup> and end December 31<sup>st</sup>.

## 12.0 UNAUTHORIZED EXPENDITURES

- 12.1 Any expenditures in excess of \$500 and not authorized in the regular annual budget must be authorized by the Church Board or, in emergency situations, by the available Deacons and Elders.

## 13.0 MAINTAINING TAX EXEMPT STATUS

- 13.1 The Church 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.
- 13.2 The Church shall not discriminate on the basis of race.

## 14.0 DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS

- 14.1 From time to time the Church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions; but all suggestions, except for Agape Barnabas Outreach and the Food Pantry, shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Church Board. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the Church other than to use the contribution for the general



furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article VI, 1.0 of the Church Constitution.

14.2 Agape will not be a “middle man” for any funds designated for a specific organization or individual. Such offerings should be dispersed directly by the giver.

#### 15.0 BENEVOLENCE FUND

15.1 The Church has established a Benevolence Committee for the purpose of meeting legitimate needs of people in the community or within the Church without violating Article VI, 1.0 of the Church Constitution. Before consideration, the person making the request shall fill out the Benevolence Request Form.

15.2 The Benevolence Committee shall consist of a minimum of 3 members, appointed by the Church Board.

#### 16.0 YOUTH DIRECTOR

16.1 At the annual October business meeting of the congregation, or at a special meeting called for that purpose, a Youth Director shall be elected for a term of one (1) year.

16.2 The Youth Director shall assist the Elders in securing leaders for the various children’s and youth groups. The Youth Director may or may not lead one of the groups.

16.3 The Youth Director shall publish a Fall and Spring schedule of meeting dates for the children’s and youth groups. The leaders are to give the dates and times of the meetings to the Youth Director by August 1st and December 1st of each year.

16.4 The Youth Director shall be a resource to the children’s leaders and youth leaders -- praying for them; listening to their concerns and encouraging them; bringing appropriate concerns to the Elders or Church Board; coordinating expenditures within the annual budgeted monies.

16.5 The Youth Director shall serve on the Church Board and represent the children’s and youth ministries.

#### 17.0 BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

17.1 At the annual October business meeting of the congregation, or at a special meeting called for that purpose, up to four Board Members-at-Large shall be elected for a term of one (1) year.

17.2 The Board Members-at-Large shall assist the Board in routine matters of monthly Church business.

#### 18.0 WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

18.1 All those working with children must follow the procedures listed in Exhibit 2, “Reducing the Risk Insurability”, which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and hereafter amended, to assure proper relationships and protection against abuse.

#### 19.0 ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

19.1 For procedures when someone causes a disturbance during a service, see Exhibit 3, which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended.

19.2 For procedures on fundraising, soliciting, and announcements, see Exhibit 4,

- which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended.
- 19.3 For procedures regarding infectious diseases, see Exhibit 5, which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended.
- 19.4 For procedures on civil government, see Exhibit 6, which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended.
- 19.5 For procedures regarding proper attire for Sunday morning services, see Exhibit 7, which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended.
- 19.6 For procedures regarding children at Sunday morning worship, see Exhibit 8, which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended.
- 19.7 For procedures regarding lawsuits between believers, see Exhibit 9, which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended.
- 19.8 For procedures regarding the Christian work ethic, see Exhibit 10, which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended.
- 19.9 For procedures regarding the responsibilities of believers when ministering and receiving ministry, see Exhibit 11, which is incorporated as if fully set out herein and as hereafter amended.

### **EXHIBIT 1 - "HUMAN SEXUALITY"**

The unfolding of God's plan for human sexuality is not to be discovered in nature, in instinct, or in the fads of society, but in His Word, the Bible. Bible references are from the King James, New American Standard, and New International Versions. The Scriptures clearly state that the design of our bodies and the gift of sexuality were created by God for a threefold purpose:

- 1) to provide companionship and to relieve loneliness on the deepest human level (Genesis 2:18, 23-25),
- 2) to provide the setting for reproduction and the continuation of life, where physically possible, as commanded by God (Genesis 1:28, Psalms 127:3-5), and
- 3) to reflect on earth the sustaining, self-sacrificing love that Jesus Christ has for His bride, the Church (Isaiah 62:1-5, Ephesians 5:23-33).

While the Bible does not instruct us in all particulars regarding sexual matters, much is very clear. For disciples of Jesus Christ, sex outside of marriage (fornication) is specifically condemned (Mark 7:21, I Corinthians 5:9-13, I Corinthians 6:15, Galatians 5:19-21, Revelation 21:8). The distribution of birth-control drugs or devices to unmarried people of any age, for the prevention of conception or disease, attempts to avoid the unwanted results of fornication. This current practice refuses to deal with the fact that fornication, itself, is a serious sin in God's sight. Adultery, the physical union of a married person with someone other than his/her married partner, is breaking a covenant that was made before God and is prohibited consistently in the Old and the New Testaments. The practice of homosexuality (sexual relations between two people of the same gender) is presented in Scripture as completely incompatible with Christian commitment (Leviticus 18:22, I Corinthians 6:9, Romans 1:24-32) and is a sin against the design of creation. Bestiality (sexual union with animals), incest (sexual union with others who are closely related by blood or by marriage), pedophilia (sexual union with children), pornography, and necrophilia (sexual relations with a

dead person) are, likewise, condemned by God in His Word (Leviticus 18:1-23, I Corinthians 5:1).

When the Bible categorizes the above as being sins, it is not to pronounce hopeless judgment upon those with past or present involvement in them. God is diagnosing a spiritual condition that needs to be repented of, cleansed, and healed. Sexual sin is still sin, and the remedy for it is the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to make all things new (I Corinthians 6:11, Galatians 5:16-18, II Corinthians 5:17). We, at Agape New Testament Fellowship, acknowledge God's commandments and standards regarding the sexual conduct of Christians. We also acknowledge that the blood of Jesus Christ can atone completely for the deepest and most ingrained of sexual sins, and that those who confess and repent of such sins can maintain full standing with Christ and in His Church. This must be recognized by the Fellowship, even when the confessing sinner must live with the consequences of his or her misdeeds.

Individuals who blatantly proceed to live in sinful sexual practices will come under Church discipline as listed in the Church By-Laws.

To reduce the risk of abuse of children and teens in a society that is out of control and comply with requests of our insurance company, we purpose to continue our practice which has been carried out since the early 1980's. When deemed necessary, the Church Board and Ushers will be notified that the person is not to be left alone with a child or teen. This includes, but is not limited to, bathrooms, rooms in the Church or trailer, isolated places on the Church grounds or cars in the parking lot. Additional precautions might include a background check on individuals attending the Church. We also believe that this policy helps a recovering homosexual, pedophile, or rapist in continuing their recovery by removing temptation.

## **EXHIBIT 2 - "REDUCING THE RISK" INSURABILITY**

### **Recommendations to protect our children and insure insurability as a Church:**

Two (2) adults on every outing such as trips, Agape Kids, Bullfrogs and Butterflies, teen events and meetings, and VBS, unless permission slips have been signed by parents agreeing to a single adult being present.

Every new leader, teacher, and helper working with children and teens must fill out an application and be interviewed by the Youth Director or Sunday School Superintendent and approved by the Elders.

Every leader, teacher, and helper working with children and teens must have a background check.

The leader or class teacher must be a member of Agape New Testament Fellowship. A non-member or teen can lead or teach a specific meeting with an adult member present.

In times when the congregation size limits the availability of teachers and children's workers, the following may serve in these specific ways only:

An adult who has attended the church for more than 1 year, has a background check, and is approved by the elders may minister to a group of children on the church property when other groups are also meeting.

Two teens who are 16 years or older, have attended the church for more than 2 years, and are approved by the elders may minister together to a group of children on the church property when other groups are also meeting.

Consideration of gender will be made when possible.

Attendance records, including names and dates, should be recorded for each class, meeting, and outing. They will be submitted to the Secretary for filing.

Permission slips will be needed if leaders and teachers are permitted to express "hugs of appreciation" in the absence of parents. They will be kept on permanent record.

Any physical discipline of the child will be carried out by the parent or guardian. Non-physical discipline will be carried out at the discretion of the leader.

### **EXHIBIT 3 - SOMEONE CAUSING A DISTURBANCE DURING THE SERVICES**

It is a privilege to attend the services of Agape New Testament Fellowship. People attend our services voluntarily. We desire to conduct our services in such a manner that the Lord is glorified at all times and that each person attending has the opportunity to concentrate on what the Lord is saying and doing.

Each service will have designated leaders. Unless otherwise specified, the Pastor and/or Elders will be the designated leaders.

If a person causes a disturbance, such as:

- talking profusely out loud while others have the floor,
- standing up and arguing with the speaker,
- shouting out profanity,
- shouting out condemnations and accusations,

irregardless of whether they are rebellious, mentally ill, acting in anger, or whatever other reason, they shall be warned once by the designated leaders and/or ushers. If they continue, they shall be asked to leave and be escorted out by the ushers, who will seek to help them in the church foyer or parking lot. If they become violent, the ushers/leaders/ helpers shall restrain them from harming others or themselves, and the police shall be contacted. Things shall be done so the services can continue and the person is not left alone on any part of the church grounds.

### **EXHIBIT 4 - SOLICITATION**

No one shall make sales, take orders, or solicit financial support inside the church building; provided, however, that the Church Board may allow any individual who comes before it to solicit funds inside the church building for a church-related project. The Elders may publicly announce their approval of a project; but no individual shall publicly announce, either by standing up in church or by using the Prayer Hotline, that the Elders have approved a project.

Guest ministries coming with the permission of the Elders may set up a table in the foyer area of the church to distribute or sell items approved by the Elders. Individuals may sell small, inexpensive items, such as candy or Girl Scout cookies, outside the church building.

#### **EXHIBIT 5 - PROCEDURES REGARDING INFECTIOUS DISEASES, INCLUDING HIV POSITIVE/AIDS/HEPATITIS B (ETC.)**

We must respond to the current AIDS (HIV) and infectious disease crisis, ministering both spiritually and physically to all afflicted and protecting those who are not afflicted. Because the AIDS (HIV) virus and all infectious diseases are a serious threat to our world, and because persons infected with these often look to the Church for support or spiritual guidelines, this policy is set forth.

Because we believe the Bible to be the only inspired Word of God (Matthew 25:36; John 8:10-11; Jude 22; James 2:1-9; Proverbs 22:3; Proverbs 27:12), our Sunday morning services are open to everyone. We believe that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ can deliver individuals from the power of sin and disease. However, individuals who blatantly proceed to live in sinful practices that spread disease without the desire of repentance cannot become members of the Church or serve in a responsible position in the Church; and they will be asked to leave.

As in all personal matters, except those that are life threatening, confidentiality will be maintained by all professional and lay members of the congregation. At the same time, we would like persons with AIDS (HIV) and other infectious diseases to give written permission to disclose their diagnosis to those in spiritual leadership, others in the congregation who would be in a position to help and encourage the individual, and/or the congregation at large. Designated Church Board personnel will be made available to work with individuals or families. If the person does not give permission, they will not be discriminated against.

According to the most recent research, the AIDS virus spreads through infected persons to others by sexual intercourse, direct blood transfer, organ transplant, contact with certain bodily fluids, improperly sterilized medical and dental equipment, intense kissing, injection drug use and sharing of needles (including tattooing and body piercing). The virus also can be passed from infected mothers to their babies during pregnancy, at birth, or shortly after birth (possibly through breast milk).

**AIDS EDUCATION:** Proper education can dispel fear, instill hope, and enhance ministry; therefore, we are committed to educating ourselves and our community regarding

AIDS. Because of the nature of this disease, our educational policy reaffirms our belief in celibacy outside heterosexual marriage, monogamy within marriage, and the honoring of the human body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

**PREMARITAL TESTING:** Because AIDS is transmitted sexually, and because AIDS is passed on from mother to newborn infant, the pastors and counseling staff are advised to recommend that individuals exposed to the possibility of AIDS (HIV) infection be tested for AIDS and share those results with their prospective marriage partner.

**NURSERY AND SUNDAY SCHOOL:** As it is current policy, children with symptoms of illness, such as experiencing a fever in the last 24 hours, a thick runny nose discharge or known to have an infectious disease, are to remain with their adult guardians. Children with behavioral problems, such as habitual biting, may be excluded from the nursery or Sunday School classes.

Those adults, teens, or children who have any infectious disease should not serve in the nursery or toddler class. Children testing positive for HIV/AIDS are encouraged to participate in Sunday School and Church activities. When bleeding occurs for any reason, "Universal Precautions" shall be enacted by the staff on hand, using equipment from the first aid kits. The congregation will be trained once every two years in these procedures.

**KITCHEN POLICY:** All individuals who work directly with food preparation and serving must remove themselves from such tasks when there is physical evidence of any gastrointestinal or respiratory tract illness or other infectious disease, or there are exposed skin lesions.

We further reaffirm our belief that man has been created in the image of God. Therefore, we are opposed to any form of sanctioned suicide, euthanasia, or failure to provide treatment or care for AIDS patients.

The congregation reserves the right to change this exhibit as new information becomes available.

## **EXHIBIT 6 - CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the Church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the Church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God (Ephesians 5:21-24; Hebrews 13:7 and 17; I Peter 5:1-3; I Peter 2:13-14; Romans 13:1-7).

## **EXHIBIT 7 - PROPER ATTIRE FOR SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES**

Proper attire for Sunday morning services should be modest and show respect and reverence for God. We should not be a stumbling block to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Colossians 3:17 - “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Ephesians 5:8-10 - “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.”

If anyone sees someone wearing immodest or disrespectful attire, they should talk to one of the Elders and let the Elders take care of it.

### **EXHIBIT 8 – CHILDREN AT SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP**

Parents bring their children to worship, to train them up in the Lord. We desire to keep the focus on the Lord. For these reasons, our policy is that during the Sunday morning worship services, we expect those under 18 to be under the supervision of a ministry leader, their parents, or other responsible adult.

### **EXHIBIT 9 - LAWSUITS BETWEEN BELIEVERS**

We believe the Church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members; therefore, we believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the Church to resolve personal disputes. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian’s insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice, slander, or greed (I Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32).

### **EXHIBIT 10 – THE CHRISTIAN WORK ETHIC**

God established the rule that idleness is not good; therefore, all of us who are able should work. “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” II Thessalonians 3:10 Since we are all required to work, either in the home or outside the home, God has given us important work principles in His written word, the Holy Bible. As Christians, these principles form our work ethic.

The overriding principle is found in Colossians 3:17, 23, 24, “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him...Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” We are to do the best job that we can do, because we are doing it unto the Lord for His glory and honor.

The fact that we are doing it unto the Lord is not an excuse to disobey those who we are working under. In fact, the opposite is true. We are to submit and stay under authority so that we honor our Lord and prosper ourselves. Some examples are: in marriage, “Wives, submit to

your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” Colossians 3:18 and “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Ephesians 5:21; in parent/child relationships, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ – which is the first commandment with a promise – ‘that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth’.” Ephesians 6:1-3; and in slave/master relationships, “Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.” Colossians 3:22

If we need help, we are to call out to God for intervention and direction. One of God’s names is Jehovah-Jireh, “Jehovah’s provision shall be seen”. This is not an excuse to sit back and do nothing. It is a promise that as we sincerely seek employment and service of our Lord, He will direct our paths and grant us favor. Likewise, in the Lord’s prayer, we read, “...Give us this day our daily bread...”. We need to be specific in our prayers and ready to do our part in obedience to the Lord as He directs us. To widows God writes, “The widow who is really in need and is left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.” I Timothy 5:5

God also directs families to care for those disabled or widowed and not able to work. “But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.” I Timothy 5:4; “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” I Timothy 5:8; “If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.” I Timothy 5:16

### **EXHIBIT 11 - RESPONSIBILITIES OF BELIEVERS WHEN MINISTERING AND RECEIVING MINISTRY**

#### **Agape New Testament Fellowship services:**

Those who request to bring sermons or teachings are required to receive the elders’ approval. They will be asked direct questions about their background, what they intend to speak on, and other hard questions that would help the elders discern their credibility and intent. The elders will observe their attitude. Those who are not willing to be under the authority of the elders will not be permitted to speak. The elders will correct what is not sound doctrine and good theology by first addressing it with the person and then giving the correction to the congregation.

The elders will seek the flow of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit during our services. They will lovingly redirect the service when needed.

The elders will confront and correct those ministering occult beliefs or a mix of scriptures and occult beliefs. If they choose not to receive correction, they will not be allowed to attend further services.



We will continue to have an open microphone for the purposes of prayer and scripture reading during our prayer and praise services.

Communion is God's ordinance for all believers. The senior pastor and elders will warn people to take communion in a "worthy manner". The decision to take communion is the person's responsibility. It is up to the parent or guardian to decide whether or not the children under their care are ready to take communion. The elders will not refuse to serve communion to someone on the basis of differences in theology, doctrine, or practices within Christianity.

### **Responsibilities of believers when receiving ministry:**

People receiving ministry are responsible to accept a person ministering to them or refrain from receiving ministry from that person.

People receiving ministry are responsible to give direction to those ministering to them as they ask questions such as: "Does this witness to you?"; "I encourage you to do something that you could not do before."; "I encourage you to see your doctor to verify your healing."; "Would you like us to continue praying for you?"; etc. etc.

If people receive personal prophecy from a person, they have the responsibility to accept it as from God, reject it as not being from God, or put it on the back burner until God shows them whether it is from Him or not.

If people receiving ministry are not treated with respect, receive condemnation from those ministering, or the ministry is out of order, they have the responsibility to inform one of the elders.

### **Responsibilities of believers when ministering to others:**

Almighty God is the healer. All of us need to guard against spiritual pride and give God the glory and honor for the healing.

Those ministering at the altar at the end of regular services, or at a healing service, are to have taken the in-house training using the Global Awakening Training Manual or have completed equivalent training approved by the elders of Agape New Testament Fellowship.

The Holy Spirit does the ministry. We are the vessels. We should not be forcing anything on the people receiving ministry, such as pushing them down or commanding them to do something they are clearly hesitant to do.

No one is to accuse a person of not being healed because of too little faith.

People receiving ministry are always free to declare that they do not want to continue. At that point, those ministering should stop.

No one should tell anyone to stop taking medicines.

Those ministering are to give the decision making to the person receiving by asking questions like the ones listed above in the receiving ministry section of this exhibit.

People are free to receive medical treatment or not receive medical treatment without being condemned. It is their decision. An example would be a person who is diagnosed with cancer is free to choose to receive, or not receive, radiation or chemotherapy.