

DUNKARD BRETHREN

CHURCH POLITY

November 1, 2021

Transition Version

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Notwithstanding, whereto we have already attained let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things.

DUNKARD BRETHREN

CHURCH POLITY

In order to preserve the unity of the faith and the identity of the Church of the New Testament, the following statement is a declaration of the principles, practices and doctrines for which the Dunkard Brethren Church stands.

The New Testament is our creed. We heartily subscribe to all of its holy teachings and emphasize the following for which we earnestly contend as the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

ARTICLE I – The Deity

Sec.1. The Godhead is One, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14; Matt. 17:5; 28:19)

Sec.2. The Father, along with the Son and the Holy Spirit, is the Creator and the Sustainer of all things, who works all things after the counsel of His own will. (Gen 1; Mal 2:10; Psalms. 97:10; Acts 2:23; 1 Cor.12:6; Eph. 3:9; Phil. 2:13; John 1:3; Col. 1:16)

Sec.3. The Son is the promised Messiah, Redeemer, and Savior of the World. (Gen. 49:10; Isa. 9:6; John 1:29; Rom. 3:24; Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2: 5-6)

Sec.4. The Holy Spirit, through the Word, is the Convincer of the world and the Comforter and the Sanctifier of the children of God. (John 14:16:17, 26; 16:7-11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2,22)

Sec.5. The Son and the Holy Spirit are divine, one in essence, nature, attributes and purpose with the Father. (Matt.1:23; Jn.1:1-3; 10:30; 17:21-22; 1 Cor. 2:11; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9)

Sec.6. The Godhead is three in relation, office, work and name. (Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; Heb. 1:5; Rom. 8:26-27; 2 Cor. 13:14)

ARTICLE II – Man by Nature

Sec.1. Man's disposition and nature are shaped by the law of heredity and his own volition in choosing the right and the wrong. (Prov. 23:7; 2 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 3:1-8; Rom. 1:18-28; Gal. 5:19-21)

Sec.2. Man is morally free to choose and to act as his will directs. (Joshua 24:15; Matt. 11:28-29; Luke 10:42)

Sec.3. Man fell from his original state of purity and innocence by voluntary sin, and by that act his soul was doomed to eternal damnation, apart from Divine intervention. (Gen. 3:6,24; Rom. 5:12, 18; 1 Cor. 15:22; Mark 10:14)

ARTICLE III – The Atonement

Sec.1. The meritorious righteousness of Christ and his substitutionary suffering and death are the only ground or source of redemption and forgiveness of sin. (1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 5:18; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 1:15)

Sec.2. The atonement is free, unlimited, and unconditional to all the unaccountable part of humanity. The atonement is free and unlimited, but conditional to all accountable persons. (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Luke 18:16; Mark 16:15-16; 1 John 3:7)

Sec.3. By the atonement, mankind was redeemed from the "original" or "Adamic" sin and is now accountable for individual sin only. (John 1:29; Gal.3:13; 4:4-5; Heb. 10:10; 2 Cor. 5:19)

ARTICLE IV – General Principles

Sec.1. The Old and New Testaments present the only revelation of God's will to mankind. Both were divinely inspired by the moving of the Holy Spirit upon His chosen servants. (John 5:39; 12:49; 14:24; 2 Tim.3:16-17; Gal. 1:11-12)

Sec.2. The New Testament presents the principles of the Christian Church and the plan of salvation through the Gospel of Christ. (Mark 1:1, 15; Mark 16:15; Acts 2:37-38; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-2)

Sec.3. Election is of the sovereign mercy of God, enabling us to believe the Word of God, through the Holy Spirit, so that we can choose a life of righteousness and service. (John 6:44; John 15:16; 1 Peter 1:1-2; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4-6; 2 Peter 1:10)

Sec.4. This life is the only period of probation; those who reject God's offer of mercy will be eternally lost. (Matt. 11:29; John 5:29, 40; Matt. 23:37)

Sec.5. The future state of the righteous (saved) will be eternal happiness in heaven. The future state of the wicked (lost) will be eternal punishment in hell. (Rev. 22:3-5; Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2 Cor. 5:1; John 14:2-3)

Sec.6. The Millennium will be one thousand years of the peaceful reign of Christ at the end of this age. (1 Thess. 4:13-17; Rev. 20:4-6)

Sec.7. The judgment will be at the appointed time when God will judge the world in righteousness. (John 5:22; 12:48; Rom. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 14:7)

Sec.8. The dead will be judged based on the things written in God's books and rewarded according to their works. (Matt.16:27; Rev. 20:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:10)

Sec.9. At the final judgment, the righteous and the wicked will be assigned to their appropriate eternal destinations. (Dan. 12:2; Gal. 6:8; John 5:28-29; Matt. 25:34, 41, 46)

Sec.10. The Bible plainly teaches a literal six-day creation, including man being created by God. (Genesis 1:1-2:2) Thus, evolution, theistic or otherwise is a false teaching which aids Satan's efforts to discredit the Creator. The inerrancy and divine inspiration of the Bible support the belief in the literal six-day creation.

ARTICLE V - The Law of Pardon

Sec.1. Faith, abstractly, is the assent of the mind to the supernatural origin of the Bible and to all of its revealed truth. Concretely, it is taking God at His Word and is manifested by humble obedience to it as prompted by the spirit of love. (Heb. 11:1, 6; Jude 1:3; Gal. 5:6; Jas. 2:20, 22)

Sec.2. Repentance is a cessation from sin with awareness and sorrow that sin is displeasing to God. Further, repentance is turning from the love and practice of sin to the love of truth and practical righteousness. (Isa. 1:16-17; Isa. 55: 7; 2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 14:15; 17:30)

Sec.3. Confession is a voluntary renunciation of sin and the admission of truth and right. It includes faith in Jesus, vitalized by works of loving obedience. (Matt. 3:6; Matt.10:32; Phil.2:11; James 5:16; Rom. 10:10)

Sec.4. Baptism in purpose, along with faith, repentance and confession is for the remission of sins. (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:37; Tit. 3:5)

Baptism in mode is immersion. In form it consists of trine immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt 28:19; Mark 1:5, 8; Matt 3:6; Acts 8:38-39)

Kneeling or bowing is the scriptural posture for baptism. (John 19:30; Rom. 6:4-5)

Sec.5. The “new birth” is a change made in the soul of man by which the choices, the affections and the desires of the heart are changed from a love of things, worldly and fleshly, to a love of things, spiritual and heavenly. This change is accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God. (1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Cor. 4:15; John 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4; Phil. 3:1-2)

ARTICLE VI - Church Ordinances

Sec.1. Feet-washing is a New Testament ordinance, instituted by Jesus Christ, to be observed among God’s people until the return of the Master who instituted it and gave his own example of it. (John 13:1-17; 1 Tim. 5:10; Matt. 28:20)

Sec.2. The Lord’s Supper, instituted by Jesus Christ on the night of His betrayal, is a full meal to be eaten by his people. The feet-washing and communion are also to be practiced until his return. (John 13:30; Luke 22:20; John 13:2-4; 1 Cor. 11:23-25)

Sec.3. The Communion, instituted by Jesus Christ, consists in partaking of the bread and the cup in a worthy manner, at the close of the day, in connection with, but following feet-washing and Lord’s Supper. (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22-24; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:21-26)

Sec.4. The holy kiss is a divine ordinance to be kept and perpetuated in the Church. It is observed when we meet for worship, at Love Feasts in connection with feet-washing, between the supper and the communion, and on other occasions. (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor.16:20; 2 Cor.13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26-27; 1 Peter 5:14)

Sec.5. Veiling or covering their heads in times of prayer or prophesying is God’s design and the Biblical mandate for Christian women. A plain white cap, covering the head, meets the scriptural requirement. (1 Cor. 11:1-16) The small round cap is not considered as meeting the scriptural requirement for a covering.

Sec.6. We believe the anointing of the sick is an appointment of the Lord, and that it was intended to be perpetuated in His Church. At the request of an ill member, the Elders of the Church are contacted to do this work. “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” (James 5:14)

The scriptural specification is for the anointing to be performed by two Elders. In practice, the Church has permitted a Minister, or a Deacon to assist an Elder, when a second Elder is not available. (James 5:14; Matt. 10:8)

ARTICLE VII – The Christian Day of Worship and Graces

Sec.1. The First Day of the week is the Christian Sabbath and is to be kept as a day of rest and worship. (Matt. 28:1; Acts 20:7; John 20:1; Mark 16:2)

Sec.2. Sanctification, righteousness, holiness and perfection are cardinal doctrines and graces of the New Testament and these are attained and experienced by Christians to the extent and degree that they, in loving obedience, manifest the fruits thereof. (John 17:17; Heb. 10:10; 1 John 3:7; Acts 10:35; 1 Thess. 4:7, 5:23)

Sec.3. We believe that civil government is ordained of God for the care and protection of the good and for the punishment of those who do evil. (Rom 13:1-7) Kings and rulers should be prayed for, (1 Tim. 2:2), and honored and obeyed (Heb. 13:17), so far as their laws do not conflict with the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 5:29) As King of kings and Lord of lords, His laws are to be obeyed by the inhabitants of both heaven and earth. (Rev. 19:16)

Sec.4. We believe the Bible is God's Holy Word by which we understand the will and grace of God. To aid in Scripture memorization among our members and our children, to help avoid confusion and to promote sound doctrine in our services, the Authorized King James Version of the Bible shall be used in our Sunday School, Bible Study, and church services. Exceptions may be made where languages other than English are necessary.

ARTICLE VIII - Nonconformity and Nonresistance

Sec.1. Affiliation with the civil government in accepting duties of which any Gospel principle is violated, or one's Christian character is endangered, is incompatible with Bible teaching. (1 Pet. 3:9; 1 Thess. 5:22; Rom 12:17-21) All members of the Dunkard Brethren Church are admonished to give heed to the example of humility and simplicity of life which Jesus left us in every feature of our daily lives. We advise all of our members not to take part in politics or political matters.

The Dunkard Brethren Church has not taken a stand against Social Security and leaves the matter to the individual regarding participation in the program.

Sec.2. We believe that the principle of non-resistance is clearly taught in the scriptures, and therefore has been accepted as a doctrine of the Church. In support of our position, we offer the following: Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6); His kingdom is not of the world and His servants do not fight (John 18:36); the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (2 Cor. 10:4); we are to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44); overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21), and pray for them which despitefully use and persecute us (Matt. 5:44). Learning the art of war and participating in carnal warfare or in any branch of the military establishment, at any time, is forbidden by the Scripture. The Boy and Girl Scout movements and other organizations requiring a uniform, or having any military features fall under the same condemnation. (Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Gal. 5:19-22; Matt. 26:52)

Members of the Dunkard Brethren Church who enter any branch of the military service or work in the defense contracting industry cannot be retained as members without a change of occupation.

Sec.3. Participation in games, plays and performances, that are manifestly sinful is contrary to the Gospel and to a pure heart. This also applies to membership in labor unions which engage in un-Biblical activities. (1 Thess. 5:22; John 3:19; John 17:15; 1 Pet. 4:3-5.) Our members are not permitted to own or have television in their homes. In homes where one is a member and the other is not, the member will not be held responsible for having the television, provided he or she faithfully tells the church that they have no part in it. While there may be acceptable uses of the Video and related equipment, members are asked to conscientiously guard their homes from the detrimental spiritual effects of commercial entertainment videos, in that they pose the same spiritual dangers as the movies and television.

Recognizing the dangers of the types of obscene material which are easily accessible through the Internet and other computer technology, members are admonished to heed the principles of Scripture which declare that believers should set no wicked thing before their eyes. This is especially applicable in the area of "making no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." All activities should ultimately serve to draw one into a closer relationship with Christ. (Psalms 101:3; 2 Tim. 2:22; Rom. 13:14; Gal. 5:16-18)

Members do not buy or sell lottery tickets, or take part in any form of gambling. Members should not attend theaters or dances. The Dunkard Brethren Church is conscientiously opposed to coeducational physical education by Junior High and High School students that violates the principles of modesty. (1 Peter 2:11)

Sec.4. Affiliation with secret societies or lodges is a violation of the Scriptures. We, The Dunkard Brethren Church, shall not take part in the Ecumenical Movement, the National Council of Churches or any similar organization. (John 3:19-21; 18:20; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Matt. 10:26; Mark 4:22)

Sec.5. Conforming to the harmful fashions of the world, including, but not limited to: wearing hats by Christian women and neckties, gold, rings and bracelets by either sex to adorn the body, is contrary to the scriptures and is a sign of a proud heart. (Rom. 12:2; 1 Peter 1:14; 1 Pet. 3:3-5; 1 John 2:15-17; Luke 16:15)

Sec.6. Members of the Dunkard Brethren Church shall abstain from the use of intoxicating or addictive substances, such as narcotics, nicotine, marijuana, or alcoholic beverages (except as directed by a physician). Using, raising, manufacturing, buying or selling them by Christians is inconsistent with the Christian lifestyle and testimony. Members of the Dunkard Brethren Church who do so should be counseled in love and forbearance. If they manifest an unwilling or arbitrary spirit, they subject themselves to the discipline of the church, even to expulsion in extreme cases. We implore members to accept the advice and counsel of the church and abstain from all of the above. Since members are to be examples to the world (Romans 14:20-21)

indulgence in any of these activities disqualifies then for Church or Sunday School work or as delegates to District or General Conference.

Sec.7. Instrumental music and accompaniment will not be used in the house of God. In keeping with our Anabaptist tradition and the apparent New Testament pattern of worship, we encourage the use and development of acapella singing in our congregational worship. (Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 14:15; Col. 3:16.)

Sec.8.

1. Brother is forbidden to go to law with Brother. (1 Cor. 6:1-5)

2. Members should always consult the Church before going to law and should receive its approval before using the law.

3. Effort should be made to adjust collections of what is due without going to law. If reasonable efforts to adjust matters fail, the Church is at liberty to grant permission to use the law. Causing distress to those who owe should be avoided, especially if dependents are involved.

4. The creditor should not impose greater hardship on the debtor than he himself is under in the circumstances.

Sec.9. Our ethical calling in God's service demands honesty in all of our professional business activities. It is in harmony with the teachings of the Scriptures and of the Dunkard Brethren Church for its members to be involved in professions where truthfulness is allowed to be exercised. (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Sec.10. Taking or subscribing to the civil oath, except by affirmation, is forbidden in the Scriptures. (James 5:12; Matt. 5:34-37)

Sec.11. We, as the Dunkard Brethren Church, Inc., seek exemption from the 1983 Social Security Amendments affecting churches, inasmuch as these regulations of involuntary application and enforcements of Social Security are contrary to a sincerely held Biblical conviction that the government should not tax God or His Church. (Matt. 22: 17-21; Eph. 1:21-22; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18)

Sec.12. We oppose the practice of abortion, which is murder. (Matt. 19:18; 1 Pet. 4:15; 1 John 3:15; Exodus 20:13) We believe that human life, from conception, is a sacred creation of God. (Jer. 1:5) Therefore, we believe that non-spontaneous abortion violates the sanctity of human life, and the commandments of God. (Luke 1:15; Isa. 49:1)

Sec. 13. The Dunkard Brethren Church is opposed to any homosexual practices and in order for such a person to be a member of the Dunkard Brethren Church, they must be regenerated, forsaking these practices, in accord with the scriptures. (I Cor. 6:9-10; Rom. 1:22-28; Gen. 19:1-14)

Dress and Adornment

I. In prayerfully examining the scriptural basis for Christian attire, we find Jesus and the Apostles taught honesty and simplicity of life, including modesty in dress and manners.

The scriptures refer to dress and adornment in the following ways:

a. Jesus condemned anxious thought for raiment in Matt. 6:25-33; Luke 12: 22-31.

b. By direct teachings as stated in 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:3-5.

c. The general teachings on nonconformity to the world which apply to dress are Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 1:14-15; 1 John 2: 15-17.

II. Study shows that both the early Church and the early Brethren taught strongly and uniformly against extravagance in dress and taught consistently in favor of scriptural plainness.

III. The Minutes of Conference show that the Church has, throughout Her entire history, stood firmly against the fashions of the age and extravagance in all manner of living. It has taught faithfully the principles of simplicity of life and personal appearance. Furthermore, the Conference has, periodically, adapted means and methods with the view of maintaining scriptural simplicity in dress in the Church body.

The scripture teaches the concept of plain and modest dress as an obligation. It does so with few rules and methods of application. The scriptural teachings oppose the plaiting of the hair and the wearing of jewelry and costly clothing and promote plainness and simplicity in dress and adornment. We believe that a form that agrees with the spirit of these teachings is helpful in maintaining these principles. Therefore, based upon former Church General Conference decisions we submit the following restatements:

1. The brethren are to wear plain clothing and the standing collar coat.
2. The Brethren are to wear their hair and beards in a simple and scriptural manner. (1 Corinthians 11:14)
3. The sisters are to attire themselves in modest garments, free from ornaments and unnecessary decorations. Plain bonnets and hoods are to be the headdress, and the hair is to be worn in a becoming Christian manner.
4. The veil is to be worn in times of praying and prophesying (1 Cor. 11:1-16) The plain white cap is regarded as meeting the requirement of the scriptural teaching on the subject.

5. Gold for ornamentation and jewelry of all kinds shall not be worn.

6. No brother will be installed into office as Minister or Deacon who will not pledge himself to observe and teach the order of dress.

7. No brother or sister may serve as a delegate to District Meeting who does not observe the order of dress. No brother shall serve on a discipline committee who does not observe the order of dress.

8. It is the duty of the official body of the church to faithfully and intelligently teach the simple Christian life in manner of dress. Presiding Elders are required to teach and to see that the simple life in general is taught and observed in their respective congregations.

9. All members are urged, in the bond of brotherly love and Christian fellowship, to teach and exemplify the order of the church in dress as a suitable application of "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." (1 Pet. 3:4)

The above is interpreted to forbid cutting the hair and wearing short and sleeveless dresses. In order to provide adequate modesty, the length of the sister's dress should be at least mid calf or longer.

ARTICLE IX - Powers and Functions

Sec.1. The church is of Divine origin and is a Theocratic Democracy. It is necessary for evangelizing, Christianizing, and ultimately saving the people of the world. (Acts 20:28; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:11-13; Acts 2:41, 47)

Sec.2. The authority of the church over the individual, in the application of scriptural principles, as understood by the Church, is Biblically based. (Matt. 16:19; 18:17-18; John 20:23; 2 Thess. 3:6)

Sec.3. The duty of the church to materially support the ministry, as appropriate, is recognized. The plural, non-salaried ministry is supported by the scriptures and has been the practice of the Brethren for over 300 years. (1 Cor. 9:7-14; John 10:12-13)

Sec.4. Sisters are encouraged to participate in congregational life in various ways, but a female official in the Church or a female in the preaching ministry is without Scriptural authority. (Luke 8:3; Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 14:31; Rom. 16:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:11-12)

ARTICLE X – Marriage

Sec.1. The marriage relation is of Divine appointment, being instituted by God, confirmed by Christ and taught by his Apostles. The love and wisdom of our Heavenly Father was strikingly displayed in His plan of placing the inhabitants of the earth into families. The constitution of the man and woman and their mutual dependance upon each other, as our Savior clearly showed, was designed and appointed from the beginning. This illustrates the sacredness of the marriage relationship. Established in Eden, it has been perpetuated throughout time, by which God has sought to promote the welfare of the human race. Historical examples, both positive and negative, have accumulated which prove that the highest interests of humanity center in marriage and the family. Marriage is an institution of sacred importance, therefore, it should be entered into with an understanding of all the sacred obligations belonging to it.

We believe marriage is appointed by God to be a lifelong covenant of love between one man and one woman. Diligent effort must be made to build and maintain that marriage in a Christian manner. If problems arise, an attempt for reconciliation and restoration of the marriage is always our obligation in this sacred relationship. (Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

Sec.2. Weddings shall be conducted in such a manner that the principles of simplicity, humility, and sobriety are not violated, keeping in mind that a wedding is a spiritual event, not merely social in nature.

Sec.3. Divorce on the part of Christians, except for the cause of fornication is forbidden in the Scripture. (Matt.5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11; I Cor 7:11)

If a man or a woman marries a second time while the first companion lives, or if he or she marries a divorced person, they will not be received or held in Church fellowship unless they live in separate residences and are celibate and not in the marriage relationship.

If a man and woman have been legally and scripturally married and then separate and divorce, they can be held in full fellowship if they become reconciled and remarried. This is conditional on the basis that neither party has been involved in any other marriage with another person. Repentance and renewal of their vows to the church is required.

Sec.4. Because of the sacredness of serving as an Official in the church (1 Tim. 3:1-16; Titus 1:6-7), no brother who has been divorced or who marries a divorced woman shall be placed in official position as a Deacon, Minister or Elder.

Sec. 5. Dunkard Brethren Ministers and Elders shall perform marriages or ceremonies only between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman.

ARTICLE XI – Membership

The Church is composed of persons who covenant to be loyal to the principles of the Gospel, as understood by the Church.

By conviction of sin, conversion and confession of our sins, by faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as revealed to us by the Bible, and by trine-immersion baptism, we enter into covenant relationship with one another as one Body in Christ Jesus. Thus, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, we mutually agree to walk together in Christian love, to strive together for the advancement of the Church in knowledge, holiness and prosperity, to promote spirituality, humility and peace, and to sustain its worship, ordinances and doctrines. We agree to cheerfully contribute of the means that God gives us for the building of churches, for supporting the ministry when needed, for missionary work, for supporting the poor, and for every other good work that tends to the enlargement of Christ's Kingdom on earth and for the good of its subjects.

We also engage to live truthful and exemplary lives before the world, to have private devotions in our families, and to religiously instruct and educate our children. We agree to labor for the physical and spiritual good of our neighbors and those with whom we associate, to be honest and upright in all of our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our conduct. We are to watch over each other in brotherly love, pray for each other and aid each other in sickness and distress, ever remembering the best of all rules, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Sec.1. We believe that the home and the Church are the two most vital institutions established by God for the educating of our children. Recognizing the great importance of a Christian environment in which to religiously instruct and educate our children, we, therefore approve, recommend, and encourage each congregation, where feasible, to establish a school. (Deut. 6:6-9; Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 2:8; Prov. 19:27; Prov. 22:6)

Sec.2.

1. An applicant for membership from another denomination who has knowingly been dis-fellowshipped, or who left that denomination because of his own offense(s), is required to make a good-faith effort to right the wrong(s) committed in that denomination before being taken into membership in the Dunkard Brethren Church.

2. Members may be accepted into the Dunkard Brethren Church from religious groups of similar faith and practice, who have been baptized by trine immersion for the remission of sins, after being fully instructed as all applicants for membership. They are asked to make the usual answer of acceptance, approved by the Church Council.

3. Former members of the Dunkard Brethren Church may be received back into fellowship. If their membership was terminated because of an offense, they are asked

to acknowledge their transgression, ask for the forgiveness of the Church, and promise to live faithfully thereafter, which is followed by favorable action of the Church body.

4. If former members desire to return to membership in a congregation other than where it was previously held, the consent of the original congregation should be obtained. This does not require their return to the former place of membership for that purpose.

Sec. 3.

1. Loyal, faithful and true officials, after accepting the instructions and requirements applying to all applicants for membership in the Dunkard Brethren Church, may be accepted in their respective office as follows:

- a. Ministers and Deacons, in the same office.
- b. Elders may be accepted as ministers only.
- c. Their placement in office is to be approved by an affirmative vote of the Congregation.
- d. The method of placement into office, in such cases, is the regular installation service as given in the Church Manual.
- e. In all Councils involving officials, the Discipline Committee of the District shall be in charge, with the cooperation of the Presiding Elder, so as to avoid accusations of congregationalism.

2. Former Brethren who were officials returning to membership in the Dunkard Brethren Church are governed by the decision of 1944 General Conference, which follows:

- a. If a Deacon resigns or is removed from his membership in the Church and affiliates himself with another denomination or separate group and then returns to membership in the Dunkard Brethren Church, he shall not be reinstated into office sooner than one year afterwards. A two-thirds vote of approval by the congregation is required.
- b. If a Minister resigns or is removed from his membership in the Church and affiliates himself with another denomination or separate group and then returns to membership in the Dunkard Brethren Church, he shall not be reinstated into office sooner than eighteen months afterwards. A two-thirds vote of approval by the congregation is required.
- c. If an Elder resigns or is removed from his membership in the Church and affiliates himself with another denomination or separate group and then returns to membership in the Dunkard Brethren Church, he shall not be reinstated into office sooner than two years afterwards. The approval of the

District Elders and a two-thirds vote of approval by the congregation are required.

- d. An official who has been removed from his office, membership or both, but did not affiliate or fellowship elsewhere, may be reinstated into his office according to conditions specified by the Church Council when he was removed from his office. If no condition was stated, then Items a., b., and c. above might be followed as a suggestive guide, giving due consideration to the circumstances and conditions applying to each case.
- e. Fidelity and steadfastness are necessary for the prosperity and upbuilding of the Church and for accomplishing satisfactory and successful service to the body of Christ. Therefore, the loss of membership of an official means loss of his office.

3. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman. We believe that all forms of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5,13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1;6-9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)

4. We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

CHURCH COVENANT

The Elder or Minister in charge presents the Church's position on non-resistance, not being involved in secret societies, not going to law against another, not swearing an oath, nonconformity in dress, not engaging in divorce, and not participating in amusement that compromises holiness. The Elder or Minister in charge then asks the applicant for membership the following, "Are you willing to conform to the teaching of the scripture as understood by the church?" Answer: "I am." Then Matthew 18:10-22 is read, followed by, "Are you willing to be governed by this scripture in the adjustment of difficulties that may arise?" Answer: "I am."

BAPTISM

Baptism is administered in water. When the applicant enters into baptism sincerely, having a good conscience toward God, it is followed by the baptism of the Holy

Spirit. Being born of water and of the Spirit brings about the entrance into the Kingdom of God here on earth.

After the applicant answers that they are willing to conform to the scriptures as understood by the church, Matthew 18:10-22 is read. Following this reading, he or she is asked if they are willing to be governed by that scripture in the adjustment of personal difficulties that may arise.

After an affirmative response, the applicant is led into water of sufficient depth so that when kneeling the water will cover the body when bowing forward during immersion.

When the applicant is properly settled upon their knees, they are asked the following three questions, to which they respond affirmatively.

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He brought from Heaven a saving Gospel?
2. Do you willingly renounce the Devil with all the sinful pleasures and practices of this world?
3. Do you covenant with God, through Christ, to be faithful unto death?

The Elder or Minister administering baptism then says: "On this confession of faith which you have made before God and these witnesses, I baptize you for the remission of sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," timing the three immersions of the applicant with the words as spoken.

While the one baptized remains the kneeling, the administrator lays his hands on their head and prays for the forgiveness of their sins, the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit's comforting influence and guidance, and that their name be written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Upon coming out of the water the one baptized is received by a handshake and/or a holy kiss denoting they are now a part of the Body of Christ, the Brotherhood, and the local Church family.

THE CHURCH VISIT

There is no direct Scriptural authority for the church visit, but it has been a practice in the Church as a means to an end. The desired end is that all members may be in unity and peace, so they may participate in the Communion services in a worthy manner. (I Cor. 11:27)

As a part of their official duties, the church visit is made by the Deacons. Ministers or Elders have the liberty to assist or perform the church visit if they consider it best in cases where Deacons have little or no experience in this work. When necessary, lay-members may also be called upon to assist in the visit.

The design of the visit is to determine the spiritual condition of the members. There may be a need to clarify and address any questions or struggles existing in the members' minds regarding their faith or practice. It is the responsibility of those making the visit to inquire into the nature of such difficulties or issues, and if possible, to assist in resolving the problems.

If conflict between members is revealed during the visit, those involved should be instructed to implement Matthew 18. If resolution is not achieved, the issue must be addressed by the church.

The visit is made prior to the Love Feast Services. It is best if two brethren go together from home to home. The visit is important and should be made with great care.

Enough time should be taken with each family to have a season of worship and prayer.

The following questions are suggested to accomplish the purpose of the visit:

1. Are you still in the faith of the Gospel, as you declared when you were baptized?
2. Are you, as far as you know, at peace and in union with the church?
3. Will you still labor with the Brethren for an increase in holiness, both in yourself and others?
4. Do you wish to share anything that you consider needful or valuable regarding the spiritual growth or prosperity of the Church?

After all members have been visited, the Deacons or others who have made the visit will present a report to the church council, so the necessary arrangements can be made for a Love Feast service.

CHURCH LETTERS

1. Members, moving from one congregation to another, who are in accord with the current decisions of General Conference and who are in good standing with the sending congregation are granted letters of recommendation upon approval by that congregation when there are no valid scriptural objections.

2. When members move from a congregation, their letters of membership shall be properly considered within six months by the congregation.

A. If a letter is not granted, they will be notified at once of conditions whereby it may be granted.

B. When granted, it is the duty of the Clerk to see that the member receives the letter.

3. These church letters are considered invalid if they are not presented as soon as possible to the congregation where the member currently resides or if any serious misconduct occurs prior to presentation.

4. A church letter shall be presented by the member to the Presiding Elder of the receiving congregation. This shall be done prior to the Council at which the letter will be considered.

5. Officials moving into a congregation shall, before being received in their official standing, pledge in the presence of the congregation and the Presiding Elder, to support and defend the principles of the Gospel on all points, as held and practiced by our Brotherhood. Then, by an affirmative vote of the congregation, they shall be accepted in their official capacity.

CHURCH TRIALS

1. Church trials are conducted with fairness and equality.

2. Matthew 18 applies to all strictly personal matters. Trespasses of a general nature are handled on general principles.

3. Members accused of trespasses may be tried in the congregation where they reside, regardless of where their letter is held.

4. After all reasonable effort has been made to correct the wrong, withdrawal of membership is the last resort.

5. When a member who has been disfellowshipped or an official who has been removed from office requests reconsideration and reinstatement, the congregation where he currently resides may restore his membership or office. If he has moved since being disfellowshipped or removed from office, restoration is also contingent upon approval of the congregation from which he moved.

6. All actions regarding church trials are to be respected by the local membership and all other congregations.

ARTICLE XII – Love Feast Services

1. Examination service, whether held in immediate connection with the ordinances or separated from them by an intermission, consisting of singing; suitable scripture; prayer, kneeling; reading 1 Corinthians Chapter 11, in whole or in part; examination sermon; examination prayer, kneeling, privilege and invitation to both brethren and sisters to offer short prayers audibly; and closing with the Lord's Prayer; singing.

2. Love feast service proper: Opening devotional, consisting of singing; appropriate scripture; prayer, kneeling.

3. Feet-washing: Reading John 13, whole or in part; washing and wiping of feet, followed by the salutation of the holy kiss.

4. Lord's Supper: Table uncovered; asking of a blessing by a brother, standing, while the members remain seated and bow their heads; eating of the Supper in reverence and silence; returning of thanks by a brother, standing, while members remain seated and bow their heads; covering of tables.

5. Communion of the bread and cup: reading of John 19 while the officiating Elder or Minister prepares the bread by separating the strips; the salutation; asking a blessing on the bread by the officiating Minister, standing and holding a piece thereof, while the members remained seated and bow their heads; the breaking of the bread by each member to the next, brethren to brethren and sisters to sisters, the officiating brother starting the breaking among the brethren and a sister, to whom is handed the bread by the officiating brother, starting it among the sisters. The members in breaking the bread to one another, use the words: This bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ; asking a blessing on the cup by the officiating Minister, standing and holding the cup, while members remain seated and bow their heads; passing the cup in the same manner as the bread, each to the next, using the words: This cup of the New Testament is the communion of the blood of Christ.

6. Closing devotions: Singing, general prayer by one of the Elders or ministers present, all kneeling, members and others, closing hymn.

7. General: The officiating brother makes appropriate remarks and gives such suggestions and directions as may be necessary from time to time during the progress of the services, and he as well as other ministering brethren speak on the services as circumstances allow during the services; during the passing of the cup singing is thought appropriate. The clearing of the tables may be done at such time as suits the convenience of the local congregation.

Equipment – In order that we may think and do the same thing over the brotherhood, the equipment for love feast purposes should be uniform.

1. Table covers should be wide enough to cover supper.

2. Towels should be of sufficient length so that they may gird the users; towels with strings or ties should not be used.

3. The vessel used in feet-washing should be of material so as to answer the description of basin as nearly as possible.

4. Table equipment: The soup should be eaten from a common and not from individual plates or dishes, so as to correspond to the time-honored practice of the

church as well as the scripture which shows the dipping into, or eating from a common, not individual dish.

METHODS AND GOVERNMENT

of the

DUNKARD BRETHERN CHURCH

Methods

1. Loyalty to the faith and order of the church is essential to her welfare and success. Therefore, only brethren and sisters who believe and observe the doctrines and practices of the church are placed on programs at District and General Conferences.

2. Members composing General and District Conferences must be true representatives of the church in appearance and in full sympathy with its Doctrines and Practice.

3. These members are supplied with credentials, by the church sending them, showing the date and Conference for which, that Credential blank is to be used.

Government

This government is maintained through General, District and Local Church Conferences.

General Conference

1. All Elders present constitute the Standing Committee, and these with all Ministers and Deacons present are the voting body of Conference.

2. General Conference adopts rules to govern in its deliberations and in the conduct of its business.

3. General Conference exercises original jurisdiction in matters that may originate in its body, and appellate jurisdiction in matters of a general nature that may be sent up to it from the local churches through District Conference.

4. Decisions made by General Conference shall be fully respected by the churches, until they shall be made void by the same authority.

District Conferences

1. One Elder may hold a District meeting when it has been legally called and announced.

2. Either brethren or sisters may serve as delegates to District Meetings.

3. District Conferences are composed of delegates, three from a church, from a number of churches, most conveniently located to work together and convenes annually.

4. District Conferences are governed by such rules as may be deemed most suitable to their needs.

5. District Conference has original jurisdiction in matters that may originate in its body, and appellate jurisdiction in matters sent up from the local churches.

6. Decisions of District Conference shall be respected by the churches composing it, but appeals may be made from such decisions direct to General Conference by any church or party affected. Queries may not be appealed to General Conference.

7. Matters affecting the local churches, the district or the general Brotherhood are proper subjects for the District Conference to handle and its decision is final, except in matters affecting the General Brotherhood, or in which an appeal is made.

8. Churches shall arrange for the expense of delegates to District Conference; such delegates must be in harmony with the Doctrine and Practice of the church and manifest the same in their general appearance.

Church Councils

1. A majority of officials in official council favoring an item of business makes it business for the church council.

2. On all important matters each member 16 years of age and over should vote, "Silence for consent", not sufficient.

3. A minority when acting in harmony with decisions of General Conference cannot be overruled.

4. Local Church Councils are composed of the members present at such church councils, which convene quarterly, or on special occasions.

5. Each church has a Presiding Elder who presides at its councils, or appoints some other qualified Elder or Minister to do so.

6. Matters affecting the local church, the district or the General Brotherhood are proper subjects for the church council to handle, and its decisions are final on purely local matters.

Rules for General Conference

1. All questions, with their answers, for discussion, shall be read by the Reading Clerk, after which the Moderator shall declare the same the business of the meeting.

2. No one shall speak more than twice on the same question. The first speech shall be limited to fifteen minutes and the second to five minutes.

3. The reading of any question may be called for the second time, but not oftener if there be objection made.

4. No one shall speak without first addressing the Moderator and being recognized by him.

5. The Moderator shall require every brother, when speaking, to confine his remarks to the subject before the meeting.

6. Any brother, using personalities or derogatory statements in his speech, shall be called to order by the moderator; he shall not be given the floor to speak during that Conference until he has withdrawn the objectionable statements.

7. The Moderator shall decide who has the right to the floor and when his time expires.

8. The Moderator shall decide when the discussion on each subject shall close and when the question shall be put on the final passage. But if objection be made to his ruling, an appeal must immediately be made by motion, seconded by three members, then the conference decides the matter. All members present shall have the right to participate in the discussion of all questions before the meeting.

9. Motions or amendments to the answers in papers that are presented to General Conference shall not be entertained by the Moderator until the one presenting the paper has opportunity to explain it, and its merits are discussed by the Meeting; then, if there is not a union of sentiment in the Meeting, the Moderator may entertain amendments to the answer.

10. All queries or petitions with their answers shall be voted on by ballot. All other business optional, by ballot or otherwise.

11. All queries shall require a two-thirds majority to pass; motions shall require a simple majority only.

Church Officials

1. In all elections for church officials, members 16 years of age or over are entitled to vote.

2. The Eldership or Bishopric is the highest office in the Church. Elders are advanced from the ministry to the Eldership in the congregation where they reside and hold their membership. The authority to ordain elders shall be and is vested in the elders of the District; the request may originate in the official body of the congregation, the Presiding Elder of the congregation, or in the District Elders' Meeting. All Elders except for age and experience are of equal rank officially, being ordained by the laying on of hands of the Presbytery, a committee of two elders being appointed by the district Elders for that purpose.

3. Elders elected as Presiding Elders have oversight of local churches. All Elders present at General Conference, and who constitute Standing Committee, have oversight of the Brotherhood at large. They, with the Ministers and Deacons present, compose General Conference; they preside in District Conferences and in local church councils, ordain other elders, anoint the sick, solemnize marriages, officiate at Communion, preach the Gospel, baptize and see that the principles and usages of the church are respected and carried out in the lives of the membership, they themselves being examples to the flock in obedience and holiness of life.

4. At their ordination, which is based on the approval of the membership as expressed by private vote, each candidate, individually, covenants and promises to teach, respect and enforce the Doctrine and Practice of the Church and all these methods by which the church seeks to promote the cause of Christ, and maintain the principles of the Gospel.

5. Ministers and deacons are elected by the members of the congregation where they hold their membership. In accordance with apostolic example, it is recommended that a message on the qualifications of church leadership and general admonition against electioneering be preached a week or two ahead of the election to give time for prayer and fasting. Election shall be by ballot with each member appearing before the Election Committee and casting his (her) vote.

Upon their promise to respect and enforce the doctrines and practices of the church, and the methods by which the church seeks to fulfill its mission in the world, they are

installed in office by the laying on of hands and prayer, by the Presiding Elder of the congregation and an Elder or Minister appointed by the District Elders. No Elder or Minister of the local congregation in which an election is held shall be allowed to serve on the election Committee, so as to avoid influencing in any way the members coming before it.

6. Ministers preach the word, baptize, assist Elders in anointing, solemnize marriages, officiate at Communion, in all things being an example to the believers in humility and holiness of life. They may also, in case of necessity, hold church councils.

7. Deacons are chosen to serve the Church in the capacity of stewards, attending to the temporal and financial activities of the church. They serve at Communion, visit the sick, care for the poor, assist in the ministry, investigate troubles, pay the Church Visit and may in extreme cases administer baptism and assist in anointing.

Committees

1. General or District Conferences may grant requests for committees when they feel every reasonable effort to settle difficulties has failed.

2. Committees report their work to the body appointing them. In cases of appeal the work of the committees becomes final when ratified by the body appointing them.

3. Committees shall say who shall pay their expenses, except in case of appeal, the expenses shall be borne by the party losing the case. Committees may, in cases of appeal, require the appellant to deposit sufficient funds with the proper treasurer to cover the estimated expenses.

Conducting Services

1. Our worship services are conducted in a reverential manner, consisting of preaching, predominately kneeling in prayer, and congregational singing. Use of the Lord's Prayer is encouraged, as it is an appropriate and simple seeking of God's will and blessing.

2. When services and programs, other than regularly scheduled worship services, such as weddings, school programs, Thanksgiving and Christmas services, Vacation Bible Schools, etc., use the church property, they are conducted in a manner consistent with our beliefs. These services and programs are not held to the format outlined in #1 and are left to the discretion of the local congregation.

3. Officials or members from churches of similar faith and practice may be called upon to assist at our services, except in communion, under the direction of the local

official body, with the Presiding Elder. This does not prevent others from taking part in funeral services when requested by the friends.

Sisters' Aid Societies

The Church sees no objection to a simple organization for business purposes, but admonishes that all worldly methods of raising money be avoided.