



MANUAL OF DOCTRINE AND GOVERNMENT

OF THE

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

IN

ZIMBABWE

**SCHEDULE
MANUAL OF DOCTRINE AND GOVERNMENT**

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1. PREAMBLE

The following is the Manual of Doctrine and Government of Brethren In Christ Church in Zimbabwe. It is composed of three parts, namely; Constitution, Faith and Doctrine, and By-Laws and Organization. This Manual of Doctrine and Government is not a substitute of the Word of God. The Bible is our final authority. (Joshua 1:8, Isaiah 40:8, Luke 16:21-23, Ephesians 1:22). This manual is designed to help us in the organizing and coordinating of our Christian witness so that it will be effective and united. (1 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:3, 13).

The constitution presents the basic structure, operational functions and statements of faith of the church; in the doctrinal section these statements of faith are more fully developed; the By-Laws and Organization provide in detail for the administrative structure and its functions, state conditions for the membership in the group and give guidance in Christian living.

As this “Manual of Doctrine and Government” is received and used in a spirit of whole-hearted cooperation, may it be an instrument, which will further unity, promote spiritually and efficiency in the Church’s programme. It is no substitute for dedicated, Christ-centred Christian living and will only bring unity in operation as the members are united in the bonds of Christ.

Having stated that, this Manual Doctrine and Government is entirely committed to the owner of the church, with the conviction that man can plan, but it is God who makes the plans to prosper.

Rev Joel P. Ndlovu <i>(Chairperson)</i>	Bishop Sindah Ngulube <i>(Bishop)</i>	Mr Gorenhamo N. Muzarabani <i>(Secretary)</i>	Mrs Nellie Mlotshwa <i>(Committee Member)</i>
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Rev Hlanganani Dube <i>(Member)</i>	Rev Dr Bruce Khumalo <i>(Committee Member)</i>	Rev Ayibongwe Hlongwane <i>(Secretary)</i>	<i>(Committee Member)</i>
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2. PART ONE CONSTITUTION

Article I Name

The name of the organization shall be the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe.

Article II Object

The purpose of the organization is to promote worship of the Almighty God and to spread His gospel.

Article III Membership

The Membership shall consist of those baptized having confessed their sins and professed Christ as Savior, who accept the Creed, Doctrines and Practices of the Brethren In Christ Church in Zimbabwe and who have been received into membership according to regulations for the reception of members as may be determined from time to time.

Article IV Government

The ultimate authority of the organization in policy and doctrine shall be vested in the General Conference composed of representatives from the Church. The administration under General Conference shall be the Congregational Council, which is the basic unit of local Church government, District Councils, and General Conference Board.

Article V Amendments

Section 1

Amendment or repeal can be made to the Constitution of the Brethren in Christ Church as adopted by the following procedure:

The petition to amend or repeal shall be presented to General Conference. In the event of General Conference approval by a two-thirds majority, the petition shall then be considered by the Constitutional Review ad hoc committee elected by General Conference for an in-depth study of the said petition for presentation to the District Councils. If the petition is accepted by a majority vote of the District Councils, it shall then be presented to the next General Conference for confirmation by a two-thirds majority vote of Conference.

Section 2

- a. The Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe can be amended as proposed and recommended to the General Conference by the Board of Ministry and Doctrine.
- b. The Articles of Faith and Doctrine of the Brethren In Christ Church can be amended only by a two-thirds vote of two successive General Conferences.

Section 3

- a. The By-Laws of the Brethren in Christ Church can be amended or repealed only by a two-thirds vote of two successive General Conferences.
- b. Should it be necessary to suspend and/or implement temporarily any clause or any amendment of the By-Laws after the first two-thirds vote, pending a second two-thirds vote, this may be done by a three-fourths vote of all registered members of General Conference.

3. PART TWO ARTICLES OF FAITH AND DOCTRINES

Article I Creed

I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus, His only Son, our Saviour and Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and buried; He descended into hell, the third day arose again from the dead, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the father Almighty, from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the sanctification of believers, the resurrection of the body and everlasting life. Amen.

Article II Revelation and Scripture

We believe that it is the nature of God to make Himself known. God made Himself known to humanity in many ways, most clearly in the Bible. We believe and accept the divinely inspired Bible as the authoritative Word of God. (John 1:1–2, 18; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1–2; 11:6)

The nature and God’s sustaining care of it speak of His existence and power. God has also placed a sense of right and wrong in human hearts.

Throughout history God has acted to make Him known to humankind. God revealed Himself by making a covenant with Abraham, a covenant of community that would reveal God and His will to all the people. His relationship, words, and acts with the Israelites have revealed His personality and purposes known in order to provide salvation to all who respond in faith and obedience.

By so doing, God was preparing for the time when He would make Himself known pre-eminently through His Son, Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1:1–2:2; 12:1–3; Deuteronomy 7:17–8:2; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Isaiah 46:9; Matthew 1:23; John 1:3–5, 14; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 11:3)

The Bible reveals God. The Bible narrates and reveals God’s action in creation, in people events, in His saving acts for Israel, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in the life of the Church.

The Bible is the inspired message of God, written by people in their own dialects and settings. The Holy Spirit guided the processes of selection and transcription through which the Bible was passed on to us. The Bible is the authoritative and reliable Word of God.

We believe that the Bible, composed of the Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testament (27 books), is God’s inspired written Word. The Old Testament is the record of God’s saving acts for Israel and of His redemptive purpose for all people. It contains numerous prophecies, many of which are fulfilled in the New Testament. The New Testament further reveals God in the person and work of Jesus Christ, whom God sent to be the Saviour of the world and to establish His church.

The Old Testament prepares the way for the New Testament, while the New Testament fulfils and clarifies the Old Testament. They complement each other in a unified message. (Isaiah 55:10–11; Jeremiah 36:1–3; John 5:39; Romans 15:4; 1 Timothy 1:15; Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1–2)

Article III God and Creation

The Bible in Genesis 1: 1 declares God to be the eternal source and foundation of everything. The Bible proceeds to reveal the person, nature, and character of God who forever is—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1–2; Psalm 24:1–2; Hebrews 11:3)

We affirm and believe that there is one sovereign, true, and living God, creator and protector of all things. God is knowledgeable of all things, is all-powerful, and transcends time and space. God

as a personal being reveals His righteousness, truth, and grace to all humanity. Everyone is called to respond to Him in reverence and obedience. God is holy, just, good and perfect. God's love is a bridge between Himself and us, reaching out in redemption to draw us to Himself.

God's revelation has been progressive. True God transcends human language and perception; He has made Himself known in Scripture, involved in human history through Jesus Christ His Son, and lives in us by the Holy Spirit. Our understanding is opened by God, by the Bible through the Holy Spirit. As believers, we bow before Him in worship. (Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:3–4; 33:27; Psalm 45:6; 48:14; 100:5; Daniel 6:26–27; Matthew 3:16–17; John 14:16–17, 26; Acts 14:15–17; 1 Corinthians 2:11–16; Ephesians 2:8–10; 1 Timothy 1:17; James 1:17; Revelation 16:7)

God is the sole creator of everything, visible and invisible. All creation had an end and dependent upon the infinite Creator. The creation of God was perfect in all aspects. God is the governor of all creation; however, by the power of His will, God has given us the role of caretaker of the earth. Therefore we should be responsible stewards by cultivating and preserving and using earthly resources. (Genesis 1–3; 1 Chronicles 29:11–12; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 26:7–11; Psalm 19; 102:25; Romans 5:12–19; Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 19:6)

God established order and relationships within His creation, uniting it in all its parts. God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, but remains distinct from His creation. God is supernatural; He does not depend on the creation for His being. (Genesis 1–2; Exodus 20:1–17; Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 16:20; Psalm 104:24; Proverbs 21:3; Isaiah 58:13–14; Micah 6:8; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 12:8; 19:1–12; 25:40; Mark 2:27; Romans 2:13–15; 14:5–6; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 18–20; 13; Ephesians 4:29–5:2; 5:21–6:4; Colossians 1:16–17; 1 John 3:14)

Article IV Humanity and Sin

Man and woman were created in God's image. Persons are different from all other forms of creation, having both spiritual and physical characteristics. Physically, the body of a person was made from the elements of earth. This body grows, matures, and eventually dies. People also reflect certain moral and spiritual aspects of God's nature—intelligence, creativity, moral discernment, spiritual awareness, and freedom of choice. People as spiritual beings are created to have an intimate relationship and fellowship with God. We can only find peace from a right relationship with God. (Genesis 1:26–28; 2:7–9, 15–20; 9:1–6; Psalm 8:3–8; 90:1–6; 139:13–16; Ecclesiastes 12:1–7; Acts 17:26–28)

To be made in the image of God means having the capacity to make moral choices. The fact that we have the freedom to choose makes us responsible for our decisions and liable for their consequences.

While the Scripture says God gave humanity the capacity to choose, God also knows the end from the beginning and in His wisdom and grace is working out His eternal purposes within human history. (Genesis 2:16–17; Deuteronomy 30:15–20; Matthew 7:13–14, John 1:11–12; Romans 12:1–2; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 22:17)

Humanity was created sinless and innocent, living in harmony with God and creation. The evil entered the human family when Adam and Eve yielded to Satan's temptation. Their nature became sinful because they chose to disobey God. All their descendants became sinful because

the sinful nature was passed on through them. Satan is the personal embodiment of evil and the original source of sin. (Genesis 3:1–19; Psalm 51:5; Isaiah 14:12–15; John 8:44; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1–3; 6:10–12)

Humans are unholy, self-centred, self-willed, and rebellious toward God because they are corrupted by the sinful nature. All humanity stands guilty before God in character and conduct. On our own, we cannot achieve salvation and reach the righteousness acceptable to God. Through the sinful human family, sin disturbs the social order, divorcing persons from God, from one another, from themselves, and from the rest of creation. We see the effects of sin in the breakdown of humankind relationships and family structures, in social and economic systems that violate God's order and ignore human dignity, in philosophical systems that deny God and deify humans, and in religious systems that distort truth and create illusions of reality.

In a world system permeated by satanic influence, sin is spread by human wickedness and the powers of evil. At the personal level, sin arises from the inner inclination toward disobedience and rebellion. (Psalm 53:1–3; Isaiah 59:1–8; 64:6–7; Romans 1:18–32; 3:9–20, 23; 5:12; 6:23)

Article V **Jesus Christ and Salvation**

God's plan of salvation for sinful humankind is central to God's eternal purpose and is fully revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ was truly divine and truly human. (Ephesians 1:3–14; Titus 2:11–14; Hebrews 1:1–3; 1 Peter 1:3–5)

Jesus Christ is a distinct person of the Godhead, in perfect equality and unity with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He is infinite and is fully God. He is the Creator of all things and is the Source and Sustainer of life.

Jesus Christ in the fullness of time took the human likeness, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He was God incarnate—God in the flesh—and lived on earth as a man, fully human, yet without sin. He grew physically and mentally, and experienced hunger, thirst, fatigue, rejection, and the range of human emotions. He was tempted in every way, but remained sinless. He obeyed and submitted to the Father. He served a servant and compassionately responded to those in need. Jesus was the good model to humanity and called people to follow Him. (Matthew 1:20–23; 3:13–17; 6:33; 7:28–29, 9:35–36; 12:25–28; 26:26–29; 28:18–20; Mark 1:14–15; 14:61–62; Luke 1:26–2:33, 52; 4:1–21; 22:44; John 1:1–14; 3:16; 13:1–17; 14:8–11; Galatians 4:4–5; Philippians 2:5–11; Colossians 1:15–20; Hebrews 4:14–15)

In His death and resurrection the work of redemption was realized. It was God's purpose in Christ to redeem humanity from the guilt and power of sin and to deliver them from the rule of the Devil, so that all who believe would be saved through divine favor and fellowship.

Jesus Christ's suffering and sacrificial death provided complete atonement for sin. His death and resurrection established the only way for reconciliation between a holy, just God and sinful humankind.

Jesus Christ is the risen, Lord and Saviour. He possesses all authority in heaven and on earth. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church and at the end of time; all things in heaven and on earth

will be brought under His rule. All humanity will bow before Him and He will reign forever. We confess that Jesus is Lord and acknowledge His authority in our lives. (Psalm 22:1–18; Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Matthew 27:27–28:20; John 3:16–17; Acts 1:9–11; Romans 5:1–11; 1 Corinthians 15:20–28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:9–10; Philippians 2:9–11; Colossians 1:21–22; Hebrews 1:3; 7:24–25; 9:11–28; 12:2; Revelation 11:15)

The ministry of the Holy Spirit makes the salvation provided by death and resurrection of Jesus Christ effective. The Holy Spirit awakens humanity to their need, gives them enablement to acknowledge their guilt, and calls them to respond to God in faith and obedience.

The response of faith is a personal reliance on God's grace and a turning from sin to righteousness. Repentance involves an acknowledgement of sin. It is expressed in genuine sorrow, forsaking sin, and a change in attitude toward God, preparing for the continuing ministry of the Holy Spirit. Repentance includes willingness for reconciliation and restitution. (Luke 3:7–9; 5:31–32; 18:9–14; 19:8–9; John 16:5–15)

All who come to Christ in faith are born again, receive the Holy Spirit, and become children of God. They are acquitted of all guilt for sin, are granted the righteousness of Christ, and are reconciled to God. Persons thus justified by grace through faith enjoy peace with God, are adopted into God's family, become part of the church, and receive the assurance of eternal life. They become new creatures in Christ, regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (John 3:1–17; Acts 2:41–47; Romans 5:1–11; 8:14–17; 10:9–10, 13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 4:6–7; Ephesians 2:1–10; Colossians 1:22–23; Hebrews 3:14; 1 Peter 1:3–5; 1 John 2:24–25)

We believe that God's grace provides for more than forgiveness of sin. As the Spirit works in the life of the believer, he or she is led forward in sanctification to a full surrender and commitment of the motives and will to Christ. This results in freedom from the control of sin and in empowerment to live the holy life. The Holy Spirit fills persons yielded to God and equips them for effective witness and service. (Luke 11:11–13; John 20:21–22; Acts 1:8; Romans 6:1–14; 8:1–17; 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 5:16–25; Ephesians 1:13–14; 3:14–21; 1 John 1:9)

The salvation provided by our Lord Jesus Christ will be consummated for the believer in the joy of heaven and the full realization of the Kingdom of God. In the glorified bodies they will be free from all the effects of sin. Restored in the likeness of Christ, they will worship God and reign with Christ throughout eternity. (Matthew 24:13; John 14:1–3; 1 Corinthians 15:35–58; 2 Corinthians 5:1–10; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Revelation 5:9–10; 21:1–4)

Article VI

The Holy Spirit and the Church

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine person who eternally coexists with the Father and the Son. We affirm that the Holy Spirit was present and active in creation, is seen throughout the Old Testament, and is also revealed more explicitly in the New Testament. The life in the Holy Spirit was reflected most clearly in the earthly life of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is also seen working at Pentecost; he came from God to continue the work of the ascended Christ, as Jesus had promised His followers. (Genesis 1:2; John 3:34; 14:16–17, 15:26; Acts 2; 10:38; Hebrews 9:14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 3:24)

The Holy Spirit works in humanity, convicting persons of sin and bringing them to repentance and faith and guiding them to fullness of life in Christ.

He is the Counsellor who is always present with God's people and reminds them of all that Jesus said and did. He is the Spirit of Truth who guides the believer, and serves as the guarantee of the eternal inheritance promised in Christ.

The Holy Spirit prays for the believers in harmony with God's will. The Holy Spirit helps the children of God in their need, cleanses and sets them apart for holy living, and empowers them for service. The Holy Spirit provides leadership in the corporate life of the church, inspiring unity, worship, and service.

The spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to all believers according to His sovereign will and purposes. The Bible points at many different gifts, given for the building up of the church and for ministry in the world. He directs the church in setting apart persons for leadership. It is the responsibility of the Church to discern and encourage the use of the gifts of the Spirit in its life and ministry. (John 14:26; 16:7–15; Acts 1:8; 13:2–4; Romans 8:26; 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:1–12; 2 Corinthians 6:16–7:1; Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:3–12; 5:18; 1 Peter 4:10–11; Revelation 2–3)

Jesus Christ established the church to be God's new community through the Holy Spirit. Christ Jesus is the Head of the church, the redeemed community. The Word of God and will are authoritative among the church.

Those who trust Jesus as Saviour and follow Him as Lord consist the Church. They are a church working out their salvation to live a holy life, remain loyal to the church, and to foster oneness within the body of Christ.

We believe that this covenant is expressed in a commitment to the local congregation, where the integrity of our discipleship is lived; to the denomination, where relationships with a wider fellowship of God's people are realized; and to the body of Christ throughout the world, by which we fulfill the prayer of Jesus that we all may be one.

Worship, fellowship, discipleship, and mission are the essential functions of the church. In worship, we bring our wholehearted devotion to the Lord God. We believe that in fellowship, we live out our deep commitment to love one another.

In discipleship, we follow the call of the Lord Jesus to obey and to teach all things commanded by Him. We uphold that it is our mandate as the church to proclaim the gospel to all people and minister to human need as Jesus did.

As a family of believers we practice mutual accountability among our members. We subscribe to the steps outlined by Christ: first, going privately to the one who sins against us; then, if necessary, returning with one (1) or more witnesses; and finally, if needed, involving the congregation.

We seek to deal and respond to sin with compassion and concern. We believe that church discipline must be restorative to maintain the integrity and purity of the church's fellowship and

witness. (Matthew 5:13–16; 18:15–35; 20:26–28; 28:20; John 1:12–13; Acts 2:41–47; 15; Romans 1:16; 2 Corinthians 2:5–11; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 2:19, 22; Philippians 2:2–16; Colossians 1:18; 2 Timothy 2:2; Hebrews 10:24–25; 1 John 3:16–19.)

It is our belief that Jesus Christ commissions the church to make disciples of all humanity. It is the mandate of the church to share the gospel in every culture and stratum of society. Church growth is sharing the gospel so that people may come to the knowledge of the saving faith in Christ and to responsible membership in the church. The people of God are also called to be a redemptive influence in the world, confronting corporate sin and seeking to overcome evil with good. They are to be a voice for righteousness, peace, and justice.

We believe that God ordains government leadership in the society. We pray for our country, the world and those who are in authority. We believe loyalty to Christ and the church, which is transnational, takes precedence over loyalty to the state. We uphold that selective involvements in the affairs of government are appropriate for believers if loyalty to Christ and the principles of His Kingdom are carefully guarded, and if such participation will enhance one's Christian witness and service. (Proverbs 29:7; 31:9; Daniel 6:1–3, 10; Micah 6:8; Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:29; Romans 13: 1-7)

We are called to love our enemies just like Christ. We are people of peace and reconciliation, called to suffer and not to fight. We respect those who hold other interpretations, however, we believe that preparation for or participation in war is inconsistent with the teachings of Christ. We do not subscribe to all other acts of violence which devalue human life. As a church, we affirm active peacemaking, sacrificial service to others, as well as the pursuit of justice for the poor and the oppressed in the name of Christ. (Matthew 5:44-48; Luke 6:27-36; Romans 12:19-21)

We affirm that those who follow Christ are strangers and pilgrims in the world, called to share the light of Christ and positively influence the world. We do not conform to the fallen, broken world. We believe that nonconformity calls us to reject the world's unrestrained materialism, its sensualism, and its self-centredness. We seek to express the values of God's Kingdom by a lifestyle of modesty and simplicity. (Matthew 5:13–14, 26:52; 28:18–20; Mark 16:15; John 18:36; Acts 4:18–21; 5:29; Romans 1:14–15; 12:2; 13:1–4; 1 Corinthians 10:23, 31; 2 Corinthians 5:16–20; 1 Peter 2:9–17, 21–23; 1 John 2:15–17)

Article VII

Church Ordinances

We believe that the ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are to be observed in obedience to our Lord's command.

Section 1. Baptism

We affirm that the baptism of believers is a public witness that they have received Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and are becoming part of the community of faith. We uphold that baptism by immersion symbolizes the believer's submission to Jesus Christ and identification with His death and resurrection. We believe that baptized believers must commit themselves to the membership covenant, thereby affirming their loyalty to the church. (1 Corinthians 12:13, 1 Peter 3:21, Acts 10:48, Acts 22:16, Colossians 2:12, Galatians 3:27, Luke 3:16, Mark 16:16, Luke 3:21-22, Mark 1:4-5, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 8:36-38, Ephesians 4:4-6, Acts 16:31-33, Acts 2:38-41, John 1:29-33, Matthew 3:11-17 Ephesians 4:4-6, Romans 6:1-18)

Section 2. Lord's Supper

We uphold that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus and is celebrated by His followers in remembrance of the Lord's death and resurrection and in anticipation of His return. We affirm that the bread and the cup represent the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is our belief that participating in the communion service symbolizes our unity with believers of all times and places. We are to examine ourselves in the light of Scripture before approaching the Lord's Table. We affirm that reconciliation with God and with brothers and sisters in Christ is an essential preparation for participation. (Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians 10:16, 1 Corinthians 11:24, Acts 20:7, Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:26, Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:17-20, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, John 6:53-58)

Article VIII Marriage and Divorce

We believe that the Christian marriage ceremony witnesses to God's order and design for the union of a male and a female in a lifelong commitment of love and fidelity.

We believe that marriage vows are affirmed and the marriage is celebrated in the context of the congregation, which is called to support the couple in their life together. We believe that husband and wife are to follow Christ's covenantal, self-sacrificing love for the church and the church's loving response to build a strong family.

Marriage is an inseparable union between husband and wife divinely instituted by God. (Ephesians 5:25; Matthew 19:5-6; Matthew 19:6; Romans 7:2-3; II Corinthians 6:14; I Corinthians 7:11, 39; I Timothy 5:14)

Article IX The Last Things

We believe the final destiny of all things lies in God's hands. It is our belief that creation will be renewed in Christ in God's time. We affirm that our Lord shall reign forever. (Psalm 110:1; Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:19-20; Revelation 11:15)

We believe that the return of Christ in power and glory is certain and may occur at any time. We subscribe to the Lord's teaching that no one knows when He will come. We accept that the Bible teaches us the conflict between God and Satan, good and evil, will intensify as we approach the end of this age, the coming of Christ. All the enemies of God will be conquered and the reign of God will be established forever at Christ's return.

We also believe in the promise of our Lord that we shall live eternally in His presence, and that brings great encouragement to the people of God. We are joyously expectantly watchfully and diligently waiting for the return of Christ. (Matthew 24:36-51; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 2; 2 Peter 3:11-18; Revelation 19)

We affirm that death in the Christian community is a time of both sorrow and hope. We subscribe to the fact that human ties that are broken bring grief, but our belief in Christ's second coming is an affirmation of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

We believe that following death, the believer's spirit is present with the Lord. The Bible promises the bodily resurrection of the dead, both believers and unbelievers. We believe that those who die in Christ, along with the faithful believers alive at His return, will rise and will receive new, glorified bodies, which will be free from infirmity and death. While, the lost will await a resurrection unto condemnation.

We believe that when death comes to the community of believers, the funeral provides an opportunity to focus on the risen Lord. We uphold that it's the congregation's responsibility to respond compassionately with the bereaved. We affirm that death reminds us of our mortality and the hope of the resurrection. (Matthew 28:16–17; 28:19–20; Mark 10:1–12; 16:16; Luke 2:22; John 13:1–17; Acts 2:38–39; Romans 6:3–6; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:1–16; 23–34; 15; 2 Corinthians 5:1–8; Ephesians 5:21–33; 1 Timothy 5:10; James 5:13–18; 1 Peter 3:21)

We believe that God's judgment will be right and just at the close of the age. Those who have trusted Him and obediently followed Jesus as Lord will not be condemned. God will reward them according to their faithfulness. The unsaved, however, will be punished with everlasting destruction, eternally shut out from the presence of God because they have rejected His offer of salvation. (Psalm 92:7; John 3:18; 5:25–29; 1 Corinthians 3:10–15; 15:27–28; 2 Thessalonians 1:5–9; Revelation 20:10, 14; 21:22–27; 22:3)

4. PART THREE BY-LAWS AND ORGANIZATION Government and Property

Article I General Conference

Section 1. Function and Meeting

- a. The General Conference is a representative body through which the denomination acts to carry out its objectives.
- b. Legislative and policy-making powers are vested in the General Conference.
- c. There shall be insofar as possible an Annual General Conference.
- d. The time and place of meeting shall be directed by General Conference before the close of each conference.
- e. To expedite conference business, there shall be a voting membership.

Section 2. Relationship to the Brethren in Christ Church international

- a. The Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe is an integral part of the Brethren in Christ Church throughout the world; and as such maintains a direct relationship with the Brethren in Christ Church throughout the world by delegate representation elected by the General Conference Board on behalf of General Conference in Zimbabwe.
- b. All workers sent by organizations which are partners with the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe shall be answerable to the General Conference, through the office of the Bishop.

Section 3. Membership of Conference.

- a. Voting Membership of General Conference shall be composed of church members in Good standing who have reached the age of 18 years, and shall consists of;
 - b. ordained and licensed ministers, and their spouses,
 - c. one appointed pastor per congregation,
 - d. one elected deacon per congregation,
 - e. evangelists,
 - f. all members of General Conference Boards,
 - g. all members of Standing Committees, and Special Committees,
 - h. delegates chosen by organized congregations in the ratio of two delegates per 100 members or part thereof, and
 - i. members seated by special privilege.
- j. Church members in good standing may attend as observers and may contribute to deliberations but have no voting rights.

Section 4. General Conference Officers

- a. The officers of the General Conference shall consist of a chair and an assistant chair, a secretary and a treasurer.
- b. The Bishop shall chair the General Conference.
- c. The assistant chair for the ensuing conference year shall be elected from the District Overseers and shall serve no more than two years consecutively.
- d. The duty of the assistant chair is to assist in the chairing of General Conference.
- e. The Bishop shall be elected as indicated in Part Three, Article VII of the Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ church in Zimbabwe.
- f. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected by the General Conference from nominees presented by the nominating Committee and shall serve for a period of two years and shall be eligible for reelection.
- g. The bishop will be accountable to the General Conference Board through its chair.
- h. The officers will serve the General Conference in line with their duties as church leaders.
- i. Clerical appointments deemed essential to the expedition of General Conference business may be made by the chair, in consultation with the secretary.

Section 5. General Conference Nominating Committee

- a. There shall be a nominating committee composed of the chair of the general conference board, who shall chair the committee, bishop, assistant conference chairperson, secretary and two members from each District Council area.
- b. The elected members shall be elected by General Conference from names nominated by the respective District Councils to serve for two ensuing General Conferences.
- c. The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be to present to General Conference at least two nominees for vacancies for all conference officers, Boards and Committees

whose election is not specifically provided for in the Manual of Doctrine of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Section 6. General Conference Board

1. Composition

- a. There shall be a General Conference Board composed of the chair, Bishop, assistant conference chair, secretary and treasurer of the General Conference, district overseers, one elected member from each district who shall be the chairperson of the District Committee, one representative from Men, Women and Youth Fellowships, two appointed members, and chairpersons of Administrative committees who shall be elected by General Conference.
- b. The Conference Board Chair shall be elected by General Conference from nominees submitted by the Nominating Committee to serve a two year term and shall be eligible for re-election.
- c. The Conference Board Chair shall not be a Church employee.
- d. The assistant chairperson will be elected from the membership excluding the General Conference officers. The Conference Secretary shall serve as the executive secretary of the General Conference Board.
- e. The Conference Secretary shall be elected by the General Conference from nominees presented by the Nominating Committee and shall serve for a period of two years and will be eligible for re-election.
- f. The elected members shall be elected by General Conference from at least two names nominated by the respective District Council to serve a two-year term and are eligible for re-election.
- g. The representatives from Men, Women and Youth Fellowships shall be elected by General Conference from nominees presented by their respective fellowships to the Nominating Committee.
- h. The terms of one half of the elected members shall expire each year.
- i. There shall be at least one member from each district.
- j. Appointed members shall be appointed for a two-year term and are eligible for re-appointment. These shall be appointed by the General Conference chairperson.

2. The functions and duties of the General Conference Board

- a. The General Conference Board will meet at least quarterly and will carry out most of its work through the executive committee, which is responsible for the administrative functions of the General Church.
- b. The General Conference Board will authorize and oversee the work of the General Church through the executive committee.
- c. The General Conference Board will establish policies and ratify the work of the executive committee that involves any legal matters and other denominational issues.
- d. The General Conference Board will serve as the Board of Directors, and as such will, function in legal matters on behalf of the denomination and will authorize the bishop in signing on its behalf in all legal matters.
- e. Be responsible to General Conference for the sale and disposition of funds resulting from the sale of Church property.
- f. Receive in trust, gifts, or bequests of personal property or monies as given to the Brethren in Christ that are not designated for any particular project or given to any stated board and will invest the same according to the church's investment policy.

- g. To make plans and arrangements for General Conference.
- h. To expedite conference business when conference is not in session. In the event of an emergency situation arising within the church, the General Conference Board may take such action as deemed necessary and present it for review and or ratification at the next General Conference.
- i. To fill Board and Committee vacancies until the ensuing General Conference.
- j. To present a general report of their activities, and that of the Standing Committees, during the conference year, to General Conference.
- k. To co-ordinate the business of conference Boards and Committees by receiving their minutes and annual reports.
- l. To ascertain that conference decisions and counsel is followed through by respective conference committees.
- m. To provide supervision until the convening of the next General Conference for any District Council area in which a vacancy in the Overseer's Office may occur.
- n. To receive recommendations for salary reviews, wages and conditions of service for employees serving at the Head Office.
- o. To receive from the Finance Board the recommended budget projections for the church and institutions, review, approve and submit the same to General Conference for approval.

Section 7. Executive Committee

1. Composition

- a. There shall be a Executive Committee composed of the Bishop, Church Institutional Administrators, the Education Secretary, Overseers and the Administrative Secretary.
- b. The Executive Committee may meet possibly monthly as it would be responsible for work on the ground to execute policies.
- c. The Bishop shall chair the Executive Committee.

2. Functions of the Executive Committee

- a. Provide strategic leadership for the general church.
- b. Proposes to the General Conference Board denominational ministry priorities and establishes goals for implementation.
- c. Recommends to the General Conference Board the establishment of departmental teams and task forces from time to time as deemed necessary for the effective functioning and growth of the church.
- d. Coordinates the evangelism and church planting strategies of the church.
- e. Corporately administers personnel and funding within approved budgets.
- f. To oversee and direct the daily operations of the organization.
- g. To carry other ministerial and business functions of the church
- h. Report regularly to the General Conference Board

Section 8. Finance Board.

1. Composition and Accountability

- a. There shall be a Finance Board composed of the Chairperson elected by the General Conference, Bishop, Chairperson of the General Conference board, General Conference Treasurer, General Conference Secretary, who shall serve as ex-officio members, and five members elected by General Conference,
- b. Elected members shall not be full time church employees.

- c. The elected members shall be chosen from nominees presented by the Nominating Committee. They shall serve for a period of two years and shall be eligible for re-election.
- d. One half of the elected members' term of office shall expire each year.
- e. The Finance Board shall present reports to General Conference Board and General Conference.

2. Functions and Duties of the Finance Board.

- a. To spearhead the stewardship functions of the church and to ensure that policies are set for the sourcing, handling and use of church finances for the church and its institutions.
- b. Regulate and exercise control over all church related finances as directed by the General Conference.
- c. Review annual financial reports of all church related accounts and report on the general financial status of the church to the General Conference.
- d. The Board shall from time to time inform the church at large about the church's financial status.
- e. The Finance Board shall present denominational accounts to the General Conference.
- f. Recommend Reviews of salaries, wages and conditions of service of employees of the church and its institutions.
- g. To prepare budget projections for the church and its institutions as may be applicable.
- h. To recommend the approval of, and monitor, major spending and investments in the church and its institutions.
- i. The Finance Board shall from time to time cause the external auditing of the financial accounts of the church and its institutions.

Section 9. Standing Committees and Administrative Committees

1. Standing Committees

- a. There shall be Standing Committees to perform the various functions of the Church as determined by the General Conference Board.
- b. The Standing Committees shall be composed of a chair appointed by General Conference Board from its members, and four members who shall be full church members elected by General Conference for a two-year term and who shall be eligible for re-election.

2. Administrative Committees

- a. There shall be administrative committees which shall supervise and deliberate on issues relevant to church institutions as determined by the General Conference Board.
- b. Administrative Committees shall be composed of a chairperson, elected by General Conference; five members elected by General Conference and not more than three members representing the institutions concerned as determined by General Conference Board.
- c. Their function shall be to supervise and deliberate on issues relevant to the institutions concerned and to report to General Conference Board.

Section 10. Board for Ministry and Doctrine

1. Composition

- a. The Board for Ministry and Doctrine shall administer the credentialing process and facilitate the equipping of the Church's ministers. It shall preserve the historical and doctrinal integrity in the life of the church.

- b. The Board of Ministry and Doctrine shall be composed of five members, elected by General Conference from persons who are spiritually mature and experienced in Ministry. They are to be qualified in Theology and leadership and uphold the Doctrinal distinctives of the church, and desirably they should be ordained. The Conference Chair, who shall be the chairperson of the Board, the Assistant Conference Chair and the Principal of the Bible School who shall normally be ordained, shall serve as Ex Officio members of the Board. The Board will organise itself by electing the secretary every two years.

2. Duties of the Board for Ministry and Doctrine

- a. Implement the credentialing functions outlined in the Manual of Doctrine and Government.
- b. Develop a leadership development programme for the Church.
- c. Approve qualifying students for ministerial training.
- d. Review critical issues of doctrine and practice of the church.
- e. Administer, maintain and evaluate the ministerial credentials of church ministers.

Section 11. Special Committees

Special Committees may be appointed as need arise and determined by the general conference Board.

Section 12. Terms of the BICC governance for Boards and Committees

- a. The term of office for elected members of General Conference boards and committees shall be two (2) years unless otherwise stated by General conference.
- b. Elected/ appointed General Conference boards and committees members shall serve no more than two (2) terms consecutively.
- c. In the event of a vacancy by any other means the Nominating Committee shall choose a substitute until the next General Conference.
- d. No person may serve in more than two (2) committees at the same time except as required by the provisions of the Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe, or as may be approved by General Conference.
- e. No person shall serve in a committee meant to supervise him/her unless provided for in the manual of doctrine and government of the Brethren in Christ church in Zimbabwe or as may be approved by General Conference.
- f. Unless otherwise provided for, each General Conference board/committee shall organize every two years by ballot, electing officers as may be considered necessary.
- g. In electing BICC Boards and Committees, cognizance must be given to the breadth and diversity of church membership to allow for a fair representation.
- h. In electing BICC Boards and Committees care should be exercised to note that there is no conflict of interest of elected members which may directly or indirectly jeopardize the discharge of their duties.
- i. Elected General Conference Boards' and committees' members shall be Bonafide members of the Church and be in good standing.

Article II

District Council

Section 1. Functions and Meeting

- a. There shall be insofar as possible an annual District Council meeting in each organized district, which shall be composed of a minimum of ten organized congregations with at least five hundred full church members.

- b. It shall be the function of District Council to consider local business and present issues and recommendations to General Conference Board.
- c. The time and place of meeting shall be directed by General Conference Board
- d. To expedite Council business, there shall be a voting membership.

Section 2. Membership

Voting Membership of District Council shall be composed of church members in good standing within the District area who have reached the age of 18 years, and shall consist of;

- a. all ordained and licensed officials and their spouses,
- b. pastors,
- c. deacons,
- d. all members of District Committees, and Special Committees,
- e. delegates chosen by congregations in the ratio of two delegates per 100 members or part thereof, and
- f. members seated by special privilege.
- g. Church members in good standing may attend as observers and may contribute to deliberations but have no voting rights.

Section 3. District Council Officers

- a. The officers of the District Council shall consist of a chair and an assistant chair, a secretary and a treasurer.
- b. The Overseer shall chair the Council.
- c. The Assistant Chair for the ensuing council year shall be elected from the Ordained / Licensed Pastors from the District, from nominees submitted by the District Nominating Committee, and shall serve no more than two years consecutively.
- d. The duty of the assistant chair is to assist in the chair of Council.
- e. The Overseer shall be elected as indicated in Part Three, Article VII of the Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ church in Zimbabwe.
- f. The secretary and Treasurer shall be elected by the Council from nominees presented by the nominating Committee and shall serve for a period of two years and shall be eligible for re-election.
- g. The Overseer will be accountable to the District Council Committee through its chair.
- h. The officers will serve the District Council in line with their duties as church leaders.
- i. Clerical appointments deemed essential to the expedition of District business may be made by the chair, in consultation with the secretary.

Section 4. District Administration

1. Composition

- a. There shall be a District Committee composed of the Chair, Overseer, Council Assistant Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and at least fourteen elected members, among which there shall be one representative from the Men, Women, and Youth Fellowships, elected by the District Council to serve for a period of at least two years and may be eligible for re-election.
- b. The District Chair shall not be a Church employee.
- c. The Assistant Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer will be elected from nominees presented by the nominating Committee,
- d. The representatives from Men, Women and Youth Groups shall be elected by Council from nominees presented by their respective groups to the nominating committee,

- e. And the other members shall be elected by Council from nominees presented by the nominating committee, to serve a two-year term and are eligible for re-election.

2. Functions and Duties of the District Committee

- a. Assist and advise the Overseer in promoting the administration, spiritual life, financial support and evangelistic outreach of the district.
- b. Make plans and arrangements for the District Council.
- c. Expedite business of the District Council when the Council is not in session.
- d. Fill District Committee vacancies until the following District Council.
- e. Present various reports of various activities to the District Council.
- f. Co-ordinate business of District Standing Committees.
- g. Submit the District Budget and all financial reports to the District Council and Finance Board.
- h. Submit all minutes to the General Conference Board.

Section 5. District Nominating Committee

- a. There shall be a Nominating Committee composed of the chair of the District Committee, who shall chair the committee, Overseer, assistant District chairperson, secretary and seven elected members.
- b. The elected members shall be elected by District Council to serve for a period of two years.
- c. The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be to present to the District Council at least two nominees for vacancies for all District officers and Committees whose election is not specifically provided for in the Manual of Doctrine of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Section 6. Special Committees

Committees may be established as necessary under the authority of the District Council.

Article III Organized Congregation

Section 1. Function and Purpose

It shall be the responsibility of the organized congregation to provide an effective ministry of evangelism, Bible instruction and pastoral care to meet the needs of the community.

Section 2. Leadership

The ministry referred to in section 1 above shall be under the direction of the pastor, assisted and advised by the Congregational Committee as herein after defined, who shall work in close co-operation with the congregation under the supervision of the District Overseer.

Section 3. Appointment and Duties of the Pastor

1. Every organized congregation shall have a pastor appointed by the Overseer in consultation with the Congregational Committee, and approved by the General Conference Board.
 - a. The Congregational Committee of the Church (less the Pastor and Church employees), the Overseer (or designate), or other selected members by the church or Congregational Committee shall serve as the Pastor search Committee which shall present name(s) to the Congregational Council.
 - b. The Search Committee shall be headed by the Overseer.

- c. A detailed job description shall be availed by the Congregational Committee upon engagement.
- d. The decision of salary shall rest with the Congregational Committee in accordance with the guidelines set by Finance Board.
- e. The Bishop shall have the right to veto the decision if the assignment is in conflict with the smooth governance of the church

2. Duties of the pastor shall include;

- a. Giving spiritual direction in line with the vision, mission, objectives and values of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe,
- b. Giving guidance and making sure that the policies of the church are adhered to,
- c. Providing overall pastoral care to the congregation.
- d. Chairing Congregational Council.

Section 4. Formation and Organization of Committee

- a. Any congregation having five or more adult members and as determined by the overseer shall be encouraged to organize more fully as a congregation.
- b. There shall be a Congregational Committee of no less than five members composed of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Pastor, one deacon (where applicable), the Sunday school superintendent, one representative from Men, Women and Youth fellowships, and at least two other committee members.
- c. The Chairperson, Assistant Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer will be elected from nominees presented by the Nominating Committee,
- d. The representatives from Men, Women and Youth Groups shall be elected by Congregational Council from nominees presented by their respective groups to the Nominating Committee,
- e. Elected members shall be elected every two years by the congregational council from nominees presented by the nominating committee.
- f. Sub-committees may be established as necessary under the authority of and with the supervision of the Congregation committee.

Section 5. Functions and Dissolution of Congregational Committee

- a. The Congregational committee shall assist and advise the Pastor in upholding and promoting the spiritual life, financial support and evangelistic outreach of the congregation in line with the Manual of Doctrine and Governance of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe and policies as stipulated from time to time.
- b. The Congregational Committee shall be responsible for the safe and proper handling of all church assets.
- c. A minimum of two persons shall receive, count and record all offerings and collections. All disbursements shall be made at the direction of the committee and in accordance with organizational policies.
- d. Money due for district administration, as well as the central administration shall be forwarded monthly to the respective treasurers. Money remaining after above deductions shall be used for local church needs. All minutes and financial records shall be submitted to the District Overseer for review and be kept as permanent records of the congregation to be passed on to succeeding officers.
- e. At least, half yearly reports shall be made to the congregations.
- f. Under no conditions shall church funds be mixed with personal funds.

- g. It is the responsibility of the Congregational Committee to maintain an asset register which shall be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and internal audit, and operate church property for the benefit of the congregation.
- h. All items for congregational council consideration shall be submitted to council through the Congregational Committee.
- i. A Congregational Committee shall at all times work under the direction of and in close cooperation with the District Overseer.
- j. Where necessary, in the interest of the church as a whole, a Congregational Committee can be dissolved by the Chairman of the District Council after consultation with the District Committee.

Section 6. Congregational Nominating Committee

- a. There shall be a Nominating Committee composed of the chair of the Congregational Committee, who shall chair the committee, secretary, Pastor, one Deacon, Sunday School superintendent and four elected members.
- b. The elected members shall be elected by the congregation to serve for a period of two years.
- c. The duties of the Nominating Committee shall be to present to the Congregation at least two nominees for vacancies for all Congregation officers and Committees whose election is not specifically provided for in the Manual of Doctrine of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Section 7. Membership

The membership of the organized congregation shall consist of full church members, associate church members and class members as defined in Part Three, Article VIII of The Manual of Doctrine and Governance of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe.

Section 8. Church Services

The services shall ordinarily consist of regular Sunday School, Sunday worship services, church members, class members, prayer, women, men, youth, children, bible study, cell group meetings, evangelistic services and other special services as authorized and arranged from time to time to meet specific needs.

Section 9. Congregational Councils

- a. There shall be a Congregational Council whose functions shall include preparing for the District Council and considering local church issues
- b. Congregational councils shall sit at least three times a year.
- c. The Congregational Council shall be chaired by the pastor.
- d. Voting membership shall be composed of all local church members in good standing aged eighteen years and above, and members seated by special privilege.
- e. All items for District Council consideration shall be submitted through the Congregational Council.

Article IV

Property and Trusteeship

Section 1. Acquisition, Disposal and Mortgage of Property

The Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe shall have the right;

- a. To acquire by purchase, lease, donation or bequest, or other mode of acquisition, movable and immovable property,
- b. To sell, donate, exchange, partition or dispose of by any mode of alienation, movable and immovable property,
- c. To lease out, mortgage movable and immovable property,
- d. To invest funds of the Church in such securities as it may deem fit and to vary, realize or deal with such investments.
- e. All church property acquired as such shall be subject to the control and direction of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe through its trustees. Such control shall be manifested by the provisions contained in the *Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe*. Title to such property shall be taken in accordance with the provisions of this, Article IV.
- f. All church property herein refers to local church property, district property, institutions property, and head office property.

Section 2. Board of Trustees

- a. The Trustees in Zimbabwe shall consist of the chairman of General Conference, the Administrative Secretary as ex officio members and four elected members chosen by General Conference for a period of four years.
- b. The Trustees shall organize annually by electing a chair. The Administrative secretary shall be responsible for safekeeping of all legal papers pertaining to church property.
- c. The Trustees shall be entitled to deal with all Church property, subject to the provisions of this Article IV and shall hold in safe custody all deeds or other legal papers.
- d. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to oversee arrangements for the upkeep and repair of Church property and for adequate insurance, where necessary. All purchase, disposal, mortgage and disposition of immovable property shall be made by permission of the General Conference.

Section 3. Control Of church property

- a. As provided in section 1 of this article all church property shall be under the control of the General Conference and shall be subject to its by-laws.
- b. No property shall be disposed without the approval of the General Conference Board, as recommended by the Trustees, and shall be reported to general conference for ratification.
- c. The proceeds from the sale of church property shall be at the disposal of the local church, district, institution or department or body originally holding that property in trust subject to the terms and conditions of disposal directed by the General Conference Board.
- d. The provision of this Section 3 may not apply to the sale of property given as donation to General Conference and its constituent entities, such property shall not be disposed in a manner contrary to the intention of the donor.

Section 4. Title to Property

All property of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe shall vest in “The Trustees of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe”.

Section 5. Property Restrictions

- a. Church property shall not be mortgaged to meet current expenses.
- b. All purchase of Immovable Property, or erection of a church building shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees for consideration, advice and approval by General Conference.

Article V Church Head Offices

The Head office of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe will be located at 92 Hebert Chitepo Street, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Article VI Church Institutions

Section 1. Definition

Church institutions are those institutions that are initiated, owned and administered by BICC, which provide an important ministry consistent with the objectives and values of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe. Such institutions shall be run in a mutually supportive relationship with the church. In case they report a surplus income over expenditure, as in those generating income, such income shall be used in accordance with the finance policies as stipulated by the Finance Board.

Section 2. Accountability

Church institutions are accountable to the General Conference through the General Conference Board and their respective committees and Trustees.

Section 3. Incorporation

Where necessary, such institutions may be incorporated. Charters shall be approved by the General Conference Board and ratified by General Conference. The referred to charters shall include the following provisions, among other things:

- a. Acquisition, Disposal, mortgage of property according to the Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe or as directed by General Conference.
- b. The Majority of the members of the Trustees or as they may be called (Who shall be appointed by the General Conference Board), shall be Members of the Brethren In Christ Church.
- c. The Executive Officer related to the institution shall be appointed by the General Conference Board and shall be an Ex Officio member of the Board.

Article VII Church Officials

Section 1. Classification

Church Officials shall be classified as follows: Bishop, Administrative Secretary, District Overseers, Ordained Ministers, Licensed Ministers, Deacons, Evangelists and Pastors. All church officials shall be full church members in good standing.

Section 2. Appointment and Duties

A. Bishop

i. Appointment

- a. The Bishop shall be elected from the ordained ministers by the General Conference at the beginning of the conference business session.
- b. The General Conference Board less the bishop shall comprise a Bishop's Nominating Committee who shall present a name or names to General Conference.
- c. The Chair of this Bishop's Nominating Committee shall be the General Conference Board chair, and the General Conference Secretary shall be the returning officer.
- d. The Bishop's Nominating Committee shall appoint a Bishop's Search Committee composed of five senior members of the church whose duty shall be to search for eligible names, communicate with individuals and present outcome to the Bishop's Nominating Committee.
- e. The General Conference Board shall present the Bishop's Search Committee to the General Conference a year prior the election of a Bishop.
- f. The Bishop's Nominating Committee shall present names of possible standing candidates to District Councils and final nominees to General Conference for election.
- g. The Bishop shall serve for a period of five years and shall be eligible for re election, and shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms.
- h. The Bishop shall not serve after 65 years of age.

ii. Functions and Duties

- a. The Bishop shall be the administrative head of the spiritual life of the church.
- b. The Bishop shall be empowered to sign legal documents on behalf of the church.
- c. Responsible and in charge of Leadership training and development in the church.
- d. Responsible for the growth of the church.
- e. Carry the vision of the church.
- f. Responsible for the enforcement of church policies.
- g. Responsible for the assignment of Overseers.
- h. Assist and supervise Overseer.
- i. Chair the General Conference.

B. Administrative Secretary

i. Appointment

- a. The Administrative Secretary shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and recommended to the General Conference Board for ratification by the General Conference.
- b. The Administrative Secretary shall serve for a period of five years and shall be eligible for re appointment.
- c. He/She shall be accountable to the Bishop.
- d. The Administrative Secretary shall not serve after 65 years of age.

ii. Functions and Duties

- a. General administration of the church
- b. Co ordinate BICC Institutions
- c. Supervision of Administrators
- d. Head the Secretariat function of the Church.
- e. Serve as Secretary for the Executive Committee.

C. Overseer

i. Appointment

- a. The district overseer shall be an ordained minister.

- b. The General Conference Board (less the district overseers) shall comprise an Overseers' nominating committee which shall present a name or names to General Conference.
- c. The Overseer shall serve for a period of five years and shall be eligible for re-election.
- d. The Overseer shall not serve after 65 years of age.
- e. The Bishop in consultation with the District Committees and with the approval of the Executive Committee, and as ratified by the General Conference Board, (less the overseers) shall have the right to re-deploy the overseers.

ii. Functions and Duties

- a. Oversee and administer day to day operations of the District.
- b. Responsible and in charge of Leadership training and development in the District.
- c. Responsible for the growth of the District
- d. Carry the vision of the church and District
- e. Responsible for the enforcement of church policies.
- f. Responsible for the selection and appointment of Pastors
- g. Assist and supervise Pastors
- h. Chair the District Council.

D. Ordained Minister

i. Qualifications

- a. The Spiritual qualifications for a minister should be the same as those given in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-16. He must give clear testimony to the new birth and evidence of the anointing of God upon his life.
- b. He should be able to teach and lead others and give evidence of divine call to this sacred office. He must affirm to a sincere belief in the article of faith as adopted by the Church and be willing to be directed by the decisions of the Church.
- c. The educational qualifications for a minister shall be a minimum of a First degree in Theology or its equivalent as deemed satisfactory by the Board for Ministry and Doctrine.

ii. Method of Selection

- a. A person can become a candidate for the ministry (i) by presenting himself because of a personal call of God or (ii) by accepting the call of the Church.
- b. The names of the candidates shall be presented through the District Overseer to the Board for Ministry and Doctrine, who shall recommend the name to the General Conference Board.
- c. The candidate must be approved doctrinally by the Board for Ministry and Doctrine before ordination.

iii. Rights and Duties

The minister's rights and duties shall be to preach the Gospel wherever opportunity affords, to give pastoral care to his congregation as assigned, to solemnize marriages provided he is a legally registered marriage officer (where such is required), to officiate at funerals and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Bishop.

E. Licensed Ministers

i. Description

- a. A licensed minister is one who is granted a license by the Board for Ministry and Doctrine.
- b. The candidate shall be one of excellent moral and spiritual character.

- c. He shall reflect a sincere concern for the ministry of the Word. This concern shall be shown through his spiritual activities, his study and zeal for training for the work of the ministry.

ii. Eligibility

- a. The applicant must be a holder of or working towards attaining a first degree in Theology, or its equivalent, as determined by the Board for Ministry and Doctrine.
- b. He must be engaged regularly in ministerial service to the Church, or in a ministerial work which is approved by the Church if that work is not specifically Brethren in Christ.
- c. The licensed applicant, with the approval of the District Overseer, shall apply to the Board for Ministry and Doctrine through the Bishop, working in consultation with the Executive Committee.
- d. He must obtain a satisfactory recommendation from his home church.
- e. He must be approved doctrinally by the Board for Ministry and Doctrine, which will be responsible for issuing the license.

iii. Privileges

- a. A licensed minister shall be authorized to use his credential for the preaching of the gospel whenever a church credential may be required.
- b. A licensed minister shall enjoy the same privileges, as an ordained minister while his license remains valid.

iv. Term of License

- a. A ministerial license shall be granted for a period of one year. It may be renewed upon a record of satisfactory service, a proper recommendation by the District Overseer, and if the need for the service is justifiable.
- b. A licensed minister is directly responsible to the District Overseer working in consultation with the Bishop and the Board of Ministry and Doctrine.

F. Deacon

- i. Deacon shall be chosen, by the congregation, which they will serve, for a period of five years and are eligible for re-election.

The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of individuals in the Congregation and District.

ii. Qualifications

Deacons and nominees for the deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible (see 1 Timothy 3:8-12)

ii. Functions and Duties

- a. The duties of the deacon shall be to assist the District Overseer and Pastors in the spiritual functions and social administration of the church.
- b. The deacons shall inform and assist the overseers and pastors, as may be the case, in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the district and congregation, respectively.
- c. Their responsibilities may include the following:
 - 1) Assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel

- 2) Assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church
- 3) Caring for the needy and administering the needy fund
- 4) To care for the physical needs of the church. (Acts 6:1)

G. Evangelists.

Evangelists shall be appointed by the District Committee and approved by the Executive Committee, and shall serve in holding evangelistic services where assigned.

H. Pastors.

Pastors shall be appointed according to Part Three, Article III, Section 3 of The Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe and shall serve in charge of the spiritual life and services of the local church to which they are assigned.

Article VIII Church Membership

Section 1. Classification

Members shall be classified as follows: - full church members; associate church members and class members.

Section 2. Definition of Church members

- a. Full church members shall be those who have been received into the church on the basis of their personal knowledge and testimony of God's saving grace and their acceptance of their obligations as presented in the membership standards.
- b. Associate church membership may be extended to those who give evidence of salvation, desire baptism and communion, but who for one reason another cannot become full members. General Conference may further define and apply this classification in harmony with the above statement.
- c. Class members are those who have repented of their sins and professed salvation. They shall be enrolled in a catechumen's class where they shall be taught and prepared doctrinally for church membership. Upon satisfactorily completing this study their names shall be presented through the pastor to the district overseer as applicants for church membership.

Section 3. Reception of Full and Associate Church Members

- a. Candidates for full church membership may be received into the church by the taking of membership vows followed by baptism through immersion. Those who are full members of other churches and who have been baptized through immersion may upon confession of their faith and acceptance of the doctrine of the Brethren in Christ Church be received into the church by right hand of fellowship.
- b. Candidates of Church membership who do not meet the qualifications of full church members but who do meet the qualifications for associate church members may be received into associate church membership.

Section 4. Membership standards

Membership standards in the Church include the following:-

- a. Christian stewardship that recognized one's responsibilities to the church in the practice of systematic and scriptural giving, attendance at the appointed services of the church and the dedication of one's personal talents and abilities to assist in the programme of the church.
- b. The scriptures teach that modesty and simplicity are principles to be observed as pertains to dress and personal appearance. (I Peter 3:4; I Timothy 2:9).
- c. The general life of the membership shall be lived as "separated from the world". Extravagance, lustful indulgence in pleasure and worldly entertainment, careless business practices, etc, are not consistent and productive of an effective Christian witness. Occupational activity should harmonise with scriptural teaching.
- d. Affiliation with the Brethren in Christ Church does not permit membership in any secret order or oath-bound society.
- e. Individuals living in adultery are not eligible for church membership.
- f. The use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks disqualifies for membership in Brethren in Christ Church.

Section 5. Duties of Members

1. To the Church.

- a. Diligently exercise to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ", by the practice of Bible reading, prayer and increased activity in personal witnessing.
- b. Co-operate with and promote the interests of the congregation in which membership is held. Such activity shall include faithful attendance at the appointed services, giving tithes and offerings for the support of the local church programme and the general church budget for evangelistic outreach and benevolent causes and active contribution with one's talents and abilities in serving and advancing the interests of the congregation.
- c. In promoting fellowship and the spirit of Christian brotherhood, avoid schismatic activities, exercise due Christian consideration to the weak brother and when differences do arise use the course for reconciliation as Christ outlines in St. Matthew 18, verses 15-17 and 21-22.

2. In the Home

- a. Develop and promote a Christian atmosphere in the home. Means such as family worship, planned and adapted to the various age groups in the home, exercise of Christian discipline and a co-operative spirit on the part of husband and wife in the economic, social and spiritual planning for the home are of vital importance.
- b. Care should be exercise so as not to over-extend in the matter of financial obligations. In consideration of the ethics of Christian brotherhood it is frequently appoint of wisdom to secure competent counsel and advice from fellow Christian business men, church leadership and other responsible individuals before becoming involved in a business venture with marked monetary or moral implications.

3. General

- a. Conversation shall be in a manner that becomes a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. One is to avoid all use of profane and indiscreet language, exercising care to refrain from exaggeration and repeating of rumours and reports and remembering to speak with kindness and thoughtfulness concerning those within and without the membership.

- b. The membership is to emphasize both by example and precept a careful observance of the Lord's Day. Give special care to observe it as a day of worship and rest.

Section 6. Discipline of Church Members

- a. A church member who violates the membership standards and/or duties of church members as outlined in Section 4 and 5 of this article, may be suspended or expelled from membership. After a full attempt at reconciliation according to Matthew 18:15-22, the local organized congregation, meeting in closed session, may suspend one's membership stating the relevant conditions. The Bishop, as General Conference Chairman, or the assistant chairman in cases where the chairman may be disqualified by proximity or involvement, after consultation with General Conference Board any declare a member suspended or expelled from the fellowship unconditionally. Membership may also be suspended by the District Overseer or by the Bishop.
- b. Any officer who violates the membership standards and/or duties as outlined in Section 4 and 5 of this Article shall be suspended or terminated from membership and/or duties by the General Conference Board pending approval by the General Conference.
- c. A member disciplined by the local church may appeal to the district overseer. A member disciplined by the district overseer may appeal to the Bishop. A member disciplined by the Bishop may appeal to the General Conference Board whose decision shall be final.