

THE POTTER'S WHEEL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Molded into Kingdom People

CHURCH CONSTITUTION

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Preamble

For the purpose of establishing and maintaining a place for the worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father; to provide for Christian fellowship for those of like precious faith where the Holy Spirit may be honored according to our distinctive testimony; to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands, we, whose names appear on the local church roster on the date below, do hereby recognize ourselves as a local church in fellowship with Open Bible Faith Fellowship, and shall adopt the following articles of church order and submit ourselves to be governed by them.

The Potter's Wheel Christian Fellowship is recognized as self-governing with the inherent right to sovereignty in the conduct of its own affairs. This local church shall voluntarily enter into full cooperative fellowship with churches of like precious faith associated with Open Bible Faith Fellowship, with headquarters at Windsor, Ontario; and shall share in the privileges and assume the responsibilities enjoined by that affiliation.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF	
Church	The Potter's Wheel Christian Fellowship
City	Gatineau, Quebec, Canada
Adopted this	
Certified (signed) by	
	Andre Bigras Senior Pastor
	John MacDonald Secretary

Articles

1 - NAME

This local church shall be known as The Potter's Wheel Christian Fellowship.

2 - DEFINITION

This local church affiliated with Open Bible Faith Fellowship shall:

- 2.1 Assume all financial obligations in providing a place of worship and its operation, and adequate salary for its pastor, together with car allowance and suitable housing. Suitable housing shall be understood to mean an adequate dwelling, together with utilities such as heat, water, hydro and telephone or financial provision for such services, and car allowance.
- 2.2 Assume responsibility in contributing to the support of Open Bible Faith Fellowship district office with which it is affiliated.
- 2.3 Have properly qualified leadership of sufficient maturity available for selection, and be able to maintain standards of discipline and doctrine over its covenant partners.
- 2.4 Petition Open Bible Faith Fellowship for status as a local church. In order to obtain this status, it is required that a duly called congregational meeting be held, in which there shall be:
 - 2.4.1 The adoption of the Statement of Faith; and
 - 2.4.2 The acceptance of the Local Church Constitution and By-Laws.
- 2.5 Ensure that a credential holder of Open Bible Faith Fellowship is established as pastor of the local church or one whom Open Bible Faith Fellowship approves.
- 2.6 Be duly registered as a charity under the Income Tax Act.

3 - PREROGATIVES

- 3.1 This local church shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament Scriptures, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ... till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:3, 13).
- 3.2 This local church shall have the right to govern itself according to its constitution and by-laws and any affiliate constitutions and by-laws in force at Open Bible Faith Fellowship.
- 3.3 This local church shall have the right to develop policies and procedures which guide its operation as determined by the Board or the congregation, and subject to Board approval.
- 3.4 This local church shall have the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purpose; all in accordance with its constitution and by-laws or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended.

- 3.5 The activities of this local church shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its covenant partners, and any profits or other accretions to the organization shall be used solely to promote its objectives, in accordance with its constitution and by-laws or as the same may be hereafter modified or amended.
- 3.6 In the event of dissolution or winding up of the organization, all its remaining assets after payment of liabilities shall be distributed to Open Bible Faith Fellowship for its continuing ministries.

4 - STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe most assuredly that the Holy Scriptures are God's final revelation and constitute our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This local church, by virtue of its affiliation with Open Bible Faith Fellowship, shall accept the Statement of Faith, as approved by Open Bible Faith Fellowship, and which is appended to this constitution (Appendix A).

5 - ORDINANCES

- 5.1 The ordinance of baptism by immersion in water (Matthew 28:19) shall be administered to all those who have repented of their sins, and have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, and who give clear evidence of their salvation (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12).
- 5.2 The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be regularly observed as enjoined in the Scriptures (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

6 - PRACTICES

- 6.1 Dedication of children
- 6.2 Prayer for the baptism with the Holy Spirit
- 6.3 Prayer for the sick
- 6.4 Christian marriage
- 6.5 Christian burial of the dead

7 - COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

- 7.1 Definition
- Covenant partnership is an official commitment to unite with the local church for the purpose of:
- 7.1.1 Receiving instruction from God's Word (I Timothy 4:13; II Timothy 4:2);
- 7.1.2 Equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12);
- 7.1.3 Serving and edifying one another through the proper use of spiritual gifts (Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:4-31; I Peter 4:10-11);
- 7.1.4 Participating in the ordinances of the local church (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42); and
- 7.1.5 Proclaiming the gospel to unbelievers (Matthew 28:18-20).

7.2 Benefits

The benefits of covenant partnership include but are not limited to:

7.2.1 Accountability

The body of believers along with the pastor and the Board allows for a loving accountability that provides an umbrella of spiritual protection to the covenant partner.

7.2.2 Spiritual Development

Covenant partnership provides a fitting context for believers to discover and use their spiritual gifts through serving and edifying others. This includes being served and edified in return.

7.2.3 Leadership Development

Covenant partnership provides individuals with the opportunity to pursue and serve in positions of leadership under the guidance of the pastor and the Board. All officer and leadership positions of the local church are limited to covenant partners.

7.2.4 Voting Privileges

Covenant partnership provides individuals with the right to vote on motions arising from business meetings as defined in Article 9.

7.3 Responsibilities

Persons desiring to become covenant partners of this local church shall give credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. They shall give evidence of compliance with the biblical standard of Christian practice and manifest spiritual growth by giving evidence of the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22,23 NIV).

They shall refrain from "acts of the sinful nature: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like" (Galatians 5:19-21 NIV). Sexual immorality shall be interpreted to mean pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships (1 Corinthians 6:15-18; 7:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4), and all forms of homosexual activity, along with other practices deemed inexcusable for Christian conduct, and which place a person under God's judgment (Romans 1:26-2:11).

They shall indicate a desire to live in harmony with this body of believers, shall accept the doctrinal standards as set forth in the Statement of Faith, shall regularly attend services; and shall be regular and financial supporters of this local church.

7.4 Covenant partnership shall consist of the following:

7.4.1 Regular Covenant Partners

Persons 18 years of age and over who fulfill the requirements of Article 7.3 shall be known as regular covenant partners.

7.4.2 Associate Covenant Partners

Persons 18 years of age and over who fulfill the requirements of Article 7.3 and who are temporarily residing in the community, and who desire to fellowship with the church and serve in some capacity. Such partnership does not qualify for voting privileges at congregational business meetings.

7.4.3 Junior Covenant Partners

Persons between the ages of 12 and 18 who fulfill the requirements of Article 7.3 may be eligible for junior covenant partnership. Such partnership does not qualify for voting privileges at congregational business meetings.

8 - PASTOR AND LEADERSHIP

8.1 Pastor

8.1.1 Nominations for pastor shall be submitted to the local church congregation by the Board of Deacons, after consultation with Open Bible Faith Fellowship and the departing pastor.

8.1.2 The pastor must be one who holds credentials with Open Bible Faith Fellowship or one whom Open Bible Faith Fellowship approves.

8.2 Officers

The officers of this local church shall be the pastor, secretary, treasurer, and such other officers as may be determined by this local church from time to time.

8.3 Board of Deacons or Board

The Board of Deacons shall consist of the pastor and not fewer than four (4) covenant partners as Deacons (if more, the exact number and the resolution authorizing the same must be duly recorded in the church minutes). After the setting in order of the church and the creation of the Board of Deacons, the lay covenant partners of the Board of Deacons shall be selected in accordance with the resolution of this church. The pastor shall act as chair of the Board of Deacons. When a pastorate becomes vacant, an authorized representative of Open Bible Faith Fellowship shall be sought out to act in the full legal capacity of the pastor in consultation with the Board of Deacons. The authorized representative shall arrange to supply the pulpit with suitable ministry until such time as a new pastor has been duly installed.

8.4 Council of Elders

The Council of Elders shall consist of the pastor and not fewer than two (2) covenant partners as Elders (if more, the exact number and the resolution authorizing the same must be duly recorded in the church minutes). After the setting in order of the church and the creation of the Council of Elders, the lay covenant partners of the Council of Elders shall be selected in accordance with the resolution of this church. The pastor shall act as chair of the Council of Elders.

9 - BUSINESS MEETINGS

9.1 Annual Congregational Business Meeting

The annual congregational business meeting shall be held in the month of March each year on a suitable date unless otherwise decided by the Board of Deacons.

9.2 Special Business Meetings

Special business meetings may be called by:

9.2.1 The pastor;

9.2.2 The secretary of the Board upon written order of a majority of the Board;

9.2.3 The congregation by petition made up of no less than one-half (1/2) of regular covenant partners. Such petition shall be handed to the Board, whose duty it shall be to give notice of such meeting.

9.3 Notice of Business Meetings

Two weeks (14 days) notice shall be given of the annual congregational business and special business meetings from the pulpit and posted and publicized in the local church. It shall include date, time and purpose of the meeting.

9.4 Agenda

The agenda shall be prepared by the pastor and Board. An agenda item may be submitted for consideration to the Board of Deacons by a covenant partner of the congregation in good standing. It must be in writing, signed, and in the possession of the Board of Deacons at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

10 - PROPERTY

All real estate owned by this local church shall be held by the local church in its corporate name as a local church of Open Bible Faith Fellowship.

The acquiring and disposal of real property shall be decided by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of regular covenant partners present at a duly called congregational business meeting.

In the matter of acquiring and disposal of any real property of this local church, this congregation shall be subject to all property regulations and applicable municipal, provincial and federal laws, where applicable.

11 - DEPARTMENTS

The departments of this local church may be Christian Education, Youth Ministries, Men's Ministries, and Women's Ministries. The Board shall have authority to institute such other departments of this local church as deemed necessary from time to time.

12 - AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any annual congregational business meeting of this local church or at any special congregational business meeting duly called for that specific purpose, provided that a copy of the proposed amendment has been presented in writing to the Board at least 30 days before the date of the congregational business meeting, and providing that notice of said proposed amendment shall have been given in the announcements of the said congregational business meeting.

A copy of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be available to any regular covenant partner between the time of the announcement and the time of the congregational business meeting on application to the secretary of the Board.

An amendment to be adopted shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of regular covenant partners present at the meeting. Such amendment shall not be contrary to the local church constitution and by-laws and affiliate constitutions and by-laws in force at Open Bible Faith Fellowship, and provincial and federal laws, where applicable.

By-Laws

1 - COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

1.1 Covenant Partnership

A Covenant Partnership Committee composed of the pastor and the Board shall receive applications for covenant partnership, shall make investigation relating thereto as it deems proper, and shall approve for admission into the local church those applicants who meet covenant partnership requirements.

1.2 Procedure for Application

1.2.1 Application for covenant partnership shall be received on a signed Covenant Partnership Agreement form (appendix B) whereby the applicant agrees to abide by the provisions of the local church constitution and by-laws including the terms of covenant partnership as stated in Article 7.

1.2.2 Applicants who have been approved by the Covenant Partnership Committee for covenant partnership in this local church shall be publicly received into the local church (Galatians 2:9) and may receive a covenant partnership card. Covenant partnership may be reviewed annually by the Covenant Partnership Committee.

1.3 Transfer

Covenant partners who move from another local church and desire to have their covenant partnership transferred should request a certificate or letter of transfer from their former local church for presentation to the Covenant Partnership Committee of this local church. Covenant partners who move to another local church shall be given, upon written request, a certificate or letter of transfer by the Covenant Partnership Committee of this local church.

1.4 Dismissal of Partnership

Grounds for dismissal of covenant partnership in this local church shall include the following:

1.4.1 Voluntary Resignation of Covenant Partnership

1.4.1.1 Voluntary withdrawal from covenant partnership in this local church or reception into the covenant partnership of another congregation;

1.4.1.2 Issuance of a transfer letter;

1.4.1.3 Absence from the regular services of the local church for three (3) consecutive months, upon issuance of a letter from the Covenant Partnership Committee noting this voluntary withdrawal.

1.4.2 Disciplinary Dismissal of Covenant Partnership

Upon the conclusion of disciplinary procedures according to by-law 6 of the local church constitution and by-laws which finds a covenant partner responsible for a failure under the causes of disciplinary action.

2 - PASTOR AND BOARD

2.1 Pastor

2.1.1 Appointment and Call

A call shall be extended to a pastor when the pastor receives a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the ballots cast by regular covenant partners at a meeting duly convened for that purpose.

2.1.2 Duties

The pastor shall be considered the primary spiritual overseer of the local church and shall, with the Board and Elders, direct all of its activities. (The pastor shall consult with the Board and Elders regarding the ongoing health and wholeness of the congregation and to ensure the appropriate ministries and programs are in place to accomplish the same.) The pastor shall arrange for all special meetings, missionary conventions or revival campaigns. The pastor shall act as chair of all the business meetings of the local church, and of the Board. The pastor shall be, ex officio, a member of all committees and departments. The pastor shall provide for all the services of the local church, and no person shall be invited to speak or preach in the local church without the approval of the pastor. No congregational or Board meeting shall be held in the absence of the pastor without the written authorization of the pastor.

2.1.3 Resignation

The pastor may resign by giving a minimum of one (1) month written notice to the congregation or to the Board by a letter addressed to the secretary of the Board of the local church. The pastor must also immediately notify Open Bible Faith Fellowship of this resignation.

2.1.4 Vacancy

When the pastorate becomes vacant, an authorized representative of Open Bible Faith Fellowship shall be empowered to act in the full legal capacity of the pastor, who shall arrange to supply the pulpit with suitable pulpit ministry until such time as a new pastor has been duly installed.

2.1.5 Pastor / Congregation Relationship

When difficulties have arisen between the pastor and the Board, Elders or congregation which do not involve the credentials of the pastor, but only the position as pastor, and which apparently cannot be resolved at the local level, the pastor, the Board, the Elders or a quorum consisting of not fewer than two-thirds (2/3) of the regular covenant partners of the local church shall have the right to appeal to Open Bible Faith Fellowship for help in resolving the impasse.

The refusal of a pastor to call a meeting of the Board shall constitute the Board's right to appeal to Open Bible Faith Fellowship.

If a satisfactory settlement cannot be reached, an authorized representative of Open Bible Faith Fellowship may call and preside over a congregational meeting.

If the authorized representative of Open Bible Faith Fellowship calls for a vote of confidence in the pastor, the roster for the vote shall include only those covenant partners who held partnership 60 days prior to the vote of confidence and shall exclude the pastor and members of the pastoral staff, as identified in the minutes of the Board, and their spouses, who shall not be included in the quorum necessary to have a congregational meeting. The vote shall require a simple majority in support of the pastor, for the pastor to retain the position as pastor. If such is not achieved, the pastor's duties shall be terminated immediately, and the pastor shall be given a minimum of one (1) month salary but not more than three (3) months salary with benefits and the use of the parsonage during that period, or the regular housing allowance if the pastor is not living in the church parsonage. If the pastor has served for a period of a minimum of two (2) years and has failed to receive the required majority in the confidence vote, or has complied with a request from the Board to resign, the pastor shall be given a maximum of three (3) months salary with benefits and the use of the parsonage during that period, or the equivalent housing allowance if the pastor is not living in the church parsonage.

2.1.6 Charges Involving Credentials

Charges in matters involving the pastor's right to hold credentials with Open Bible Faith Fellowship, their morality, integrity or doctrinal soundness must be made to Open Bible Faith Fellowship in writing, and properly signed by one who is willing to appear in person and give testimony concerning the charges. Charges thus preferred against a credential holder shall be dealt with according to provisions made in the constitution and by-laws of Open Bible Faith Fellowship.

In the event of a credential holder being charged under the Criminal Code and ministry is restricted; they shall continue to receive remuneration for a maximum of three (3) months.

2.2 Officers

2.2.1 Secretary - Treasurer

The secretary-treasurer shall be capable of performing such clerical duties as this office requires, and shall be appointed annually by the Board, and may be one (1) of its own members. The offices of secretary and treasurer may be filled by the same person, who may or may not be a member of the Board.

2.2.2 Duties - Secretary

The secretary shall be custodian of the records of the various congregational meetings and shall record the same in record books provided for that purpose. The secretary shall preserve the records of the local church and prepare reports as directed by the Board.

2.2.3 Duties - Treasurer

The treasurer shall be the custodian of the general funds of the local church and shall deposit the same in a chartered bank in the name of the local church, and shall disperse

such funds as authorized by the Board. The treasurer shall ensure that an accurate record of accounts is kept, and shall present a financial statement at the annual congregational meeting and at any other time when requested to do so by the Board or the local church congregation. The books shall be reviewed before the annual congregational meeting by financially qualified individuals appointed by the Board.

2.2.4 Duties - Other Officers

Departmental officers' terms of reference shall be outlined in the departmental constitution, as adopted by this congregation.

2.2.4.1 Sunday School Superintendent

The duties, including term of office, of the Sunday School Superintendent are detailed in the children's education departmental constitution appended to this constitution.

2.3 Board of Deacons

2.3.1 Qualifications

The qualifications for service on the Board of Deacons shall be determined and approved in accordance with the policy of this local church, as guided by such scriptural provisions as are cited in Acts 6:3, I Timothy 3:8-13, and Titus 1:5-9. The official Board of Deacons shall be comprised of covenant partners who are of good report and sound judgment, examples to the congregation in matters of stewardship, church attendance, and spiritual maturity, and seeking constantly, as sanctified vessels, to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; Ephesians 5:18).

2.3.2 Duties

2.3.2.1 The Board of Deacons is chosen to serve the church with the pastor in matters pertaining to the operation of the local church. They shall assist in the ministry of its ordinances and shall act in the examination of applications for covenant partnership, and also in the administration of the discipline of the local church. They shall appoint a recording secretary from among their members to record the minutes of their meetings.

2.3.2.2 A majority present in any meeting of the Board of Deacons shall constitute a quorum, provided that all the members have been notified to be present.

2.3.2.3 It shall be the duty of the Board of Deacons to ensure that an adequate compensation package is provided for the pastor, together with suitable housing facilities. Suitable housing facilities shall be understood to mean an adequate dwelling in good repair, together with utilities such as heat, water, electricity and telephone or financial provision for such services, and a vehicle allowance. An annual salary review shall be made.

2.3.2.4 A majority of the Board of Deacons shall have the right to ask the pastor to convene an official Board of Deacons meeting.

2.3.2.5 Where there is need for trustees, the Board of Deacons shall name at least three (3) of its members to act in that capacity.

2.3.2.6 The Board of Deacons, with the pastor, shall meet regularly for the transaction of routine business for the local church, the time and place to be announced by the pastor.

2.3.3 Accountability

2.3.3.1 To the Pastor

To support the pastor in his/her primary responsibility to his/her family; encourage and enable the pastor to a continual growth in leadership through continuing education, development, courses, seminars, and resources; assure administrative excellence in financial reporting, strategic planning, communication, labour relations and other assigned duties; assist in creating and implementing a vision and strategy for the church; assist in the development of that church as a disciple-making, equipping community; ensure a global missions strategy and commitment; respect and understand mutual accountability (Rom. 1:8); and provide covering, care, and nurture for the pastor.

2.3.3.2 To Other Members of the Board

Support the Board in their primary responsibility to their family; subscribe to the Deacon Code of Conduct (Appendix C); encourage and enable the Board to a continual growth in leadership through prescribed courses made available through Open Bible Faith Fellowship; assume responsibility for areas of expertise and giftedness to assure administrative excellence in the church; fulfill assigned duties as directed by the Board; assist in creating and implementing a vision and strategy for the church; assist in the development of the church as a disciple-making, equipping community; ensure that adequate resources are available for touching, reaching and discipling the community; ensure a global missions strategy and commitment; respect and understand mutual accountability (Rom. 1:8); and provide covering, care, and nurture for each member of the Board. It is expected that the Board will function in confidentiality and loyalty, and model personal discipleship, which will contribute to the well being, reputation, and respect of the entire Board.

2.3.3.3 To the Congregation

Model healthy family life and teach family values; ensure that adequate resources are available for touching, reaching and discipling the community; ensure clear communication of the vision, strategy and needs to the congregation; ensure that an adequate partnership process is in place (including education, ministry, accountability and discipline); assist the congregation in understanding their spiritual responsibility to serve, give, share and be involved; assist the congregation in understanding their responsibility to support the leadership in its vision and direction for the future and health of the church; and

assist the congregation to understand its role in, and commitment to, the community, as an agency of grace and spiritual light.

2.3.3.4 To the Community

Understand their role of modeling Christian values of grace, love and acceptance to the community; raising church awareness of the community's needs, and the responsibility of the church to the community; to pray for and encourage the leadership of the community; and uphold and communicate justice and truth in the community.

2.3.4 Term of Office

2.3.4.1 The term of office of all lay members of the Board shall be for (3) three years. A second term may be sought by existing members and approved by the Board. After a member has served for six consecutive years, the member will not be considered eligible to serve on the Board for a period of one (1) year.

In the event that suitable qualified candidates are unavailable, and to ensure the capacity, quality and continuity of leadership, existing Board members may be extended for additional one (1) year terms until candidates become available once again.

2.3.4.2 Termination of membership on the Board shall occur if any Board member, during the term of office, shall resign, move away, and cease to be a covenant partner of the congregation or be disqualified according to By-Law 1.4 of these by-laws. Provision is hereby made for the remaining members of the Board to appoint a successor until the next annual meeting.

2.3.5 Conflict of Interest

2.3.5.1 Board members shall not place themselves in a position where there is conflict of interest between their duties as Board members and personal interests. Every Board member who is in any way directly or indirectly interested in, or may be come interested in, an existing or proposed contract, transaction, or arrangement with the church or who otherwise has a conflict of interest by virtue of involvement of a family member or the involvement of an employer, partner, business associate, or a corporation that the member is involved with as either a director, shareholder, officer, employee, or agent, then such Board member shall declare a conflict of interest fully at a meeting of the board and withdraw from any discussion or vote.

2.3.5.2 The pastor, who serves as a member of the Board, or any member of the pastoral staff, shall absent himself/herself from a Board meeting when salary and allowance review is being considered.

3 - APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

3.1 Appointment of Board Members

To inaugurate the Board, the pastor will appoint the first Board member. Then the pastor and the first Board member will appoint the second Board member. Then the pastor and two (2) Board members will appoint the third Board member. Then the pastor and three (3) Board members will appoint the fourth Board member.

3.1.1 All subsequent Board members will be appointed by the Board from a yearly pool of qualified candidates nominated by covenant partners prior to the annual business meeting.

3.1.2 All members of the Board both current and new will be presented at the annual congregational business meeting.

3.2 Term of Office

3.2.1 Normal term is three (3) years

3.2.2 Rotation: two (2) terms, to a maximum six (6) years

3.2.3 Any exceptions to this procedure would require the approval of the Board and notification to the congregation.

3.2.4 The local church may provide temporary covenant partnership for another Open Bible Faith Fellowship credential holder and invite them to serve on the Board if so advised by the authorized representative of Open Bible Faith Fellowship.

3.3 Appointed Offices

It shall be the duty of the newly elected Board to fill all appointed offices for the ensuing year without delay.

3.4 Order of Business

The regular order of business for the annual congregational business meeting of this local church shall be determined by the pastor and Board which may include such items as:

- Devotional
- Reading of previous minutes by the secretary
- Report of treasurer
- Report of committees
- Unfinished business
- Selection of officers
- New business

- Adjournment

3.5 Quorum

Twenty-five (25) percent of the voting covenant partners shall be required to constitute a quorum. Those covenant partners who by reasons of health are unable to regularly attend church meetings may be omitted from the quorum calculation.

3.6 Parliamentary Order

In order to expedite congregational business meetings this local church shall be governed by the spirit of Christian love and fellowship and by the accepted rules of parliamentary procedure as outlined in Robert's Rules of Order, or Code Morin.

4 - DEPARTMENTS

All departments of this local church shall be responsible to the pastor and Board, and shall present monthly reports to the Board and annual reports at the annual congregational meeting.

5 - MEETINGS

5.1 Regular Church Services

The time and place of the regular church services shall be determined by the Board and the pastor.

5.2 No covenant partner or any number of covenant partners shall call any private, secret, business or devotional meetings without the knowledge and consent of the Board and the pastor. Failure to comply may give just cause for disciplinary action by the Board as provided for under By-Law 6.

6 - DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION

6.1 Nature and Purposes of Discipline

Discipline is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the local church is responsible. The aims of discipline are that God may be honored, that the purity and welfare of the local church may be maintained, and that those under discipline may be brought to repentance and restoration.

Discipline is to be administered for the restoration of local church covenant partners, while fully providing for the protection and advancement of the spiritual welfare of our local church. It is to be redemptive in nature as well as corrective, and is to be exercised as under a dispensation of both justice and mercy. The following shall be proceeded with only after all other avenues of Christian counsel and brotherly admonition have been attempted.

6.2 Causes of Disciplinary Action

Any proven act or conduct which, in the opinion of the Board, after a full investigation of the evidence may be determined to be in contradiction of the actions and principles as stated in the local church constitution and by-laws may give just cause for disciplinary action by the Board. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, among such causes for action shall be:

- 6.2.1 Any moral failure involving sexual misconduct or sexual deviation (including, but not limited to adultery, homosexuality, incest, sexual assault, pornography and improper contact with the opposite sex).
 - 6.2.2 Any moral or ethical failure other than sexual misconduct or any conduct unbecoming to a local church covenant partner (including, but not limited to deception, fraud, theft and assault).
 - 6.2.3 Any act or action of a local church covenant partner, which is the cause of serious discord or dissension, with or without malicious intent (Romans 16:17, 18; Proverbs 6:19).
 - 6.2.4 The propagation of doctrines and practices contrary to those set forth in the Statement of Faith of Open Bible Faith Fellowship.
- 6.3 Initiative
- 6.3.1 Authority

Occasions sometimes arise which make it necessary to deal with local church covenant partners who have reached the place where, in the opinion of the Board, endorsement can no longer be given. The Board, which has the authority to approve covenant partnership, also has the right to withdraw their approval and to dismiss covenant partnership.
 - 6.3.2 Board Responsibility

The Board is responsible to deal with allegations of misconduct according to the local church constitution and by-laws.

In the event that the Board finds itself compromised in any manner, or appearing to lack impartiality, it shall have the right to appoint a substitute committee to hear charges against a covenant partner.
 - 6.3.3 Statement of Conduct

Should a covenant partner admit to, or confess to a wrongdoing or misconduct to the Board, such as should require disciplinary action, then the Board shall exercise discretion as to the appropriate form of discipline.
 - 6.3.4 Reports, Rumors or Complaints

Should there be reports, rumors or complaints, written or unwritten, which appear to be persistent, serious, becoming publicly known and posing a detriment to the testimony of the individual or church, then the pastor shall use their judgment to discuss the matter with the covenant partner being accused, always in the presence of a member of the Board. The pastor and Board member shall exercise their discretion as to whether or not to commence an official investigation.
 - 6.3.5 Investigation of Reports or Complaints of Alleged Violations

Written and signed allegations of violations under By-Law 6 by a covenant partner shall be investigated. The pastor shall appoint two (2) members of the Board to investigate the allegation, having in mind that it is their responsibility to safeguard the covenant partner,

the local church and the fellowship. This shall be done to determine the credibility of the allegation.

6.3.5.1 Signed written allegations shall be filed with the Pastor and/or a member of the Board, by the complainant(s) describing the alleged violations.

6.3.5.2 The persons making the allegation shall be interviewed in order to ascertain the facts in the case and the reasons underlying the allegation.

6.3.5.3 The accused covenant partner shall be given an opportunity to be interviewed to discuss the allegation.

6.3.5.4 Should a covenant partner, when presented with the allegations, acknowledge a wrongdoing that requires disciplinary action, then the Pastor or the Pastor's designate shall report the acknowledgment of wrongdoing to the Board who shall initiate appropriate disciplinary action and a restoration program.

6.3.5.5 Should the covenant partner deny the allegations made, the investigators shall determine if the evidence merits a disciplinary hearing.

6.3.5.6 Where an accused covenant partner serves in a leadership capacity in the local church, such ministry may be restricted during the investigation at the discretion of the Pastor.

6.3.6 Legal Charges

6.3.6.1 Where a covenant partner has been legally charged under the Criminal Code:

6.3.6.1.1 No disciplinary procedures will be followed until the legal proceedings, including appeal, have run their course.

6.3.6.1.2 Continuing involvement in the local church leadership may be subject to restriction during the time of the legal proceedings at the discretion of the Board.

6.3.6.1.3 A guilty verdict of a covenant partner following the legal proceedings, including appeal, shall automatically precipitate disciplinary procedures by the Board.

6.3.6.1.4 Covenant partners may be eligible for participation in a restoration program upon request for reconciliation.

6.3.6.2 Should the allegations against the covenant partner be one of a violation which is required by law to be reported (including, but not limited to, offenses against minors), the Board shall report the accused to the appropriate legal authorities and delay their own investigation, until the appropriate legal authorities have opportunity to investigate.

6.3.7 Preparation and Filing of Charges

Allegations shall only be investigated when they have been made in writing, dated and signed by the complainant.

If, after due investigation, it is determined that a disciplinary hearing should occur, charges should be filed with the Board.

The person against whom charges have been filed shall be informed by registered mail of the charges at least 15 days before being called to appear before the Board for a disciplinary hearing. The hearing shall take place within 40 days of formal charges being delivered to the covenant partner, or the entire proceeding shall be rescinded. A copy of the charges shall be sent to the authorized representative of Open Bible Faith Fellowship.

The said covenant partner may be relieved immediately from local church involvement upon being notified of the charges.

6.3.8 Disposition of Allegations

6.3.8.1 If written allegations are made and signed, but the investigators conclude under the guidelines of the local church constitution and by-laws that no reason exists for a hearing, then the matter shall be dropped.

6.3.8.2 The pastor, or the pastor's appointee, may seek to counsel all parties involved and to bring to an end any continuation of rumours or conflicts related to the matter.

6.3.8.3 The complainant shall be informed in writing that the investigation has been concluded and the allegations dismissed.

6.3.8.4 There shall be no record of the investigation kept.

6.3.8.5 The covenant partner shall be informed in writing that the investigation of the allegations has concluded and no charges have been laid.

6.3.9 Disciplinary Hearing

In the event the investigators find the charges merit a hearing they shall request the pastor to arrange for a disciplinary hearing by the Board for the accused covenant partner. The covenant partner shall be requested to appear at the hearing.

To ensure the ability of the hearing committee to render an impartial judgment, no member of the Board of the local church may sit on the hearing committee when they have been party to the details of the investigation or any event or incident related to the alleged offense.

The pastor may attend the hearing as an observer but shall not participate nor be present when a vote is taken in the decision as to guilt or innocence. The role of the pastor is to be redemptive to all parties involved.

If the accused covenant partner refuses to appear at the hearing to offer a defence, the hearing will proceed and the accused covenant partner may be disciplined if found guilty of the charges preferred.

6.3.9.1 Chair

A member of the hearing committee shall be appointed by the pastor to serve as chair.

The chair of the hearing committee along with the pastor shall prepare an agenda and arrange for all matters of the hearing.

The chair shall appoint a recording secretary from the membership of the hearing committee.

6.3.9.2 Role of Investigators

6.3.9.2.1 The investigators shall bring a report to the hearing and offer evidence as discovered during the investigation procedures.

6.3.9.2.2 They shall not participate nor be present when a vote is taken in the decision as to guilt or innocence.

6.3.9.2.3 No evidence or comment regarding the evidence shall be given by the investigators or accusers in the absence of the accused covenant partner, unless the accused covenant partner has failed to, or has refused to, appear at the hearing.

6.3.9.3 Local Covenant Partner's Support

The accused covenant partner shall have the right to have another covenant partner of this local church present for support but not as an active participant in the hearing process. The supporting person may be the spouse of the accused covenant partner.

Legal counsel shall not be present for either side at the hearing.

6.3.9.4 The agenda and proceedings shall provide sufficient opportunity for the complainant and complainees to speak, offer evidence, cross examine, present witnesses, and to make a summation statement. It will be the role of the hearing committee to question and make inquiry of the participants and to seek to have all the facts, evidence and testimony duly presented and examined to ensure an objective decision.

6.3.9.5 The verdict shall be made by secret ballot in the absence of investigators, the complainant and the supporting member if present and the complainees. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote shall be required to determine guilt.

6.3.9.6 If it has been determined that guilt has been established, discipline shall be administered prayerfully and in the fear of God, in accordance with the Scriptures and as set forth in the local church constitution and by-laws.

6.3.9.7 Announcement of the Verdict

6.3.9.7.1 The verdict shall be communicated to the pastor and placed in the minutes of the Board. If the verdict is one of guilt, then the minutes of the hearing and any other relevant documents shall be maintained in a confidential file until the disciplinary process has been completed.

6.3.9.7.2 The pastor shall communicate the verdict in writing to the covenant partner and the complainant within five (5) days of the decision of the hearing committee.

6.3.9.7.3 If a guilty verdict is reached, the covenant partner shall be informed in writing of the right and process of appeal.

6.3.9.7.4 If the verdict is one of not guilty, then no record of the hearing shall be maintained.

6.3.10 Discipline

A covenant partner who has been found guilty of violating or who has confessed in writing to having violated any of the principles set forth in the local church constitution and by-laws, shall be subject to disciplinary action by the Board. Said discipline shall be administered in brotherly love and kindness. The Board shall weigh decisions on the basis of the offense itself.

A covenant partner who has confessed to, or been found guilty of, the charges may have their covenant partnership placed on probation, or suspended.

A covenant partner who refuses to enter the restoration program and does not complete the same shall have their covenant partnership dismissed.

6.3.11 Right of Appeal

The covenant partner shall have the right of appeal. The purpose of the appeal is to examine the process and the judgment rendered.

Any appeal of the decision by the hearing committee must be made in writing within 30 days of receiving the decision of the committee to the secretary of the Board. The Board shall request the authorized representative of Open Bible Faith Fellowship to appoint a committee to hear the appeal.

The appeal will be heard within 60 days of receiving the request for an appeal in writing.

The accused person will be present at this appeal, but if the accused person neglects or refuses to attend the hearing, it may proceed in the absence of the accused person. The decision of this appeal committee will be final.

The decision of the appeal committee will be communicated in writing to the covenant partner by the chair of the appeal committee within five (5) days of the appeal hearing.

Legal counsel shall not be present for either side at the appeal hearing, nor in any other investigative or disciplinary hearing provided for in these by-laws.

6.3.12 Restoration

In the event a covenant partner who has been found guilty of offense shows repentance and indicates a desire for continued fellowship with the local church,

the Board shall determine an appropriate restoration program, which would have in view the completion of a suspension period or the reinstatement of covenant partnership as applicable.

The program of restoration shall be administered in brotherly love and kindness.

The restoration program may include limitations of ministry involvement during the term of restoration.

6.3.13 Reinstatement of Covenant Partnership

Persons who have had their covenant partnership suspended and have successfully completed the restoration program may apply for reinstatement of covenant partnership by communicating their request to the secretary of the Board.

6.3.14 Waiver of Claim

Notwithstanding the provisions hereinbefore contained, covenant partnership of this local church shall be issued upon the condition that suspension of the covenant partner and withdrawal of the covenant partnership in the manner herein provided shall not give the suspended covenant partner cause for legal action against the pastor or any covenant partner taking part in the suspension proceedings; and the acceptance of the covenant of partnership agreement (Appendix B) or fellowship in this local church shall be evidence of a waiver by the covenant partner of all rights of action, causes of action, and all claims and demands against the local church or any representative of Open Bible Faith Fellowship by virtue of suspension proceedings and withdrawal of the covenant partnership or fellowship in this local church under the foregoing provision.

7 - RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRIVILEGES OF AFFILIATION

- 7.1 Recognizing the important services rendered to this congregation by Open Bible Faith Fellowship, this local church shall support their fellowship services and ministry to bring in the harvest of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This shall be accomplished by the local church forwarding an amount equal to ten (10) percent of its general fund offerings (does not include missionary offerings, building fund, or any other special fund) to Open Bible Faith Fellowship at regular intervals to support their ministry and fellowship services.

- 7.2 Accepting our responsibility under the great commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, as stated in Matthew 28 and Mark 16, this local church shall support the missionary program and policy of Open Bible Faith Fellowship, and shall take two (2) missionary offerings each year for this purpose.
- 7.3 This local church assumes the responsibilities of paying the moving expenses of an incoming pastor and the elected pastor's expenses incidental to attending the Open Bible Faith Fellowship annual conference and to any other Open Bible Faith Fellowship sponsored convention held for the benefit of its ministers.

7.4 Finances

7.4.1 This local church, prior to the making of application for loan from any source or incurring indebtedness on a purchase plan or otherwise when repayment is not to be made in full within 12 months of the date of the intended loan or where the intended indebtedness, together with all other indebtedness of the said local church, in the aggregate will exceed twenty (20) percent of the total amount of the previous year's gross revenues, then the local church shall consult with and obtain advice and guidance from Open Bible Faith Fellowship before proceeding with the requirements of By-Law 7.5.2 hereof.

7.4.2 This local church shall then obtain the approval of its covenant partners to the proposed action by resolution, passed at a duly called special or regular annual congregational business meeting.

7.5 Open Bible Faith Fellowship has the privilege to create policies which will allow local churches to request care and intervention from time to time.

8 - AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended at any annual congregational business meeting of this local church or any special congregational business meeting duly called for that specific purpose, provided that a copy of the proposed amendment has been presented in writing to the Board at least 14 days before the date of the business meeting, and providing that notice of said proposed amendment shall have been given in the announcements of the said business meeting.

A copy of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be available to any covenant partner between the time of announcement and the time of the congregational business meeting on application to the secretary of the Board.

An amendment to be adopted shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

Appendix A

STATEMENT OF FAITH

One True God

God has revealed Himself as the Creator of all things and the Redeemer of mankind. He is manifested as the Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1, Isaiah 43:11, and Matthew 28:19)

Scriptures Inspired

The Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God. In them we find the final authority for all Christian faith and practice. (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

Deity of Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who shares in the deity of God. He is also truly man who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for sin and arose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is now at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest and Advocate. (Matthew 1:23)

Original Sin and Fall of Man

Man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost (Genesis 1-3). Only through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and by His resurrection can man have grounds for justification and salvation. This salvation and spiritual life are obtained by regeneration through the work of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 3:23-26)

Salvation by Faith

Man's salvation and redemption (a free gift of grace from God) can only be obtained by exercising faith, not by works, and by the finished redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The New Man in Christ

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation) in the inward man. We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus. We are partakers of His divine nature. (2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10, and 2 Peter 1:4)

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The ministry and baptism of the Holy Spirit are to glorify Jesus Christ and to indwell, guide, and empower believers for life and service. This baptism brings the gifts or enablement of the Holy Spirit and their uses to the forefront of the ministry of the body of Christ. This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth and is evidenced by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives utterance. (Acts 2:1-4)

Divine Healing

The anointing work of Jesus Christ provides not only salvation but healing and prosperity for all believers. (Matthew 8:16-17)

Church - The Body of Christ

The true Church is the composition of all those who have been born again. Through the new birth, believers are united together as the Body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

Water Baptism

All who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior and have been born again are commanded to be immersed in water as a declaration that they identify with the death of Christ and have been raised with Him in newness of life. (Mark 16:16)

Lord's Supper

A symbolic expression of our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ as well as a memorial of His suffering, death, and prophecy of His Second Coming. (1 Corinthians 11:23-31)

The Blessed Hope

The blessed hope of the Church is the resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation (catching away to heaven) together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, Romans 11:27, Titus 2:13)

The Final Judgment

There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever's name is not found written in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. (Matthew 25:46, Mark 9:43-48, Revelation 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8)

Appendix B

COVENANT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, and having been immersed upon my confession of faith, and being in agreement with The Potter's Wheel Christian Fellowship's Statement of Faith, constitution and by-laws, and philosophy of ministry, I now choose to unite with this body of believers. In so doing, I commit myself to God and to the other covenant partners of this fellowship to do the following:

1. I will protect the unity of my church

- By acting in love toward the other members (Romans 14:19)
- By refusing to gossip (Ephesians 4:29)
- By abiding by the terms of the Statement of Faith, constitution and by-laws, and philosophy of ministry
- By cooperating with my pastor and the leadership of this church (Hebrews 13:17)

2. I will share the responsibility of my church

- By praying for its spiritual and numerical growth (I Thessalonians 1:2)
- By inviting the unchurched and others to attend it's worship (Luke 14:23)
- By warmly welcoming those who visit our services (Romans 15:7)

3. I will serve in the ministry of my church

- By discovering my spiritual gifts and talents (I Peter 4:10)
- By accepting training and equipping for ministry from my pastor (Ephesians 4:11-12)
- By developing a servant's heart and a teachable spirit (Philippians 2: 2, 4 & 7)

4. I will support the testimony of my church

- By attending its services faithfully (Hebrews 10:25)
- By living a Godly life (Philippians 1:27)
- By contributing financially on a regular basis (I Corinthians 16:2)

Signature

Name (please print)

Date

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved."
Acts 2:47

Appendix C

DEACON CODE OF CONDUCT

Make Decisions in Scriptural Proportions

The relative attention given to any issue will be in direct proportion to its prominence in Scripture.

Promote Prayer

We encourage church members to spend an hour's time each month in prayer for the pastor and board members.

Listen to All Options

Each board member understands that having their say is more important than having their way. Every opinion matters. We listen and then watch for God's wisdom and God's timing.

Don't Become Lofty

We will stay in the nitty-gritty of church life while serving on leadership boards. Our decisions need to lean toward the practical rather than the speculative.

Majority Rule, Minority Respect

A majority vote is a strong indication of God's will for us at this time. Hold very high respect for opponents who freely express their view, then fully give themselves to carrying out the measure that eventually is approved. Always ask yourself: Do they have more facts than I do? Do they have more experience? Could it be that I'm right, but the timing's wrong? Is there a scriptural reason why I can't fully support this suggestion?

Express Yourself

Never keep silent in a meeting on an issue that won't be kept silent at home. Problems develop when opinions expressed clearly outside the meeting never get voiced within.

Don't Be Hasty

Attempt never to make notable judgments on an idea the first time it's introduced. That way, the members can jot down their ideas and collect feedback as it comes over the next month.

The Value of Dissent

Every dissenting vote symbolizes a possible word of caution from the Lord. The objective should be well-reasoned, enthusiastic unanimity.

Help Shy People Speak

Solicit comments from those who haven't vocalized any. When a whole board welcomes alternate views as a strength rather than an irritating intrusion, hostilities are minimized.