



## Constitution and Bylaws

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2897 Belcher Road  
Dunedin, Florida 34698

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## ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this church will be Clearwater Community Church.

## ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to glorify God through worship, to develop growth and fellowship in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to communicate the Gospel to the world.

## ARTICLE III. DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

**Section 1. The Bible.** We believe the Scripture, both Old and New Testament, is verbally inspired of God and is inerrant in the original writings and is the Christian's final authority in faith and conduct. [*2 Peter 1:16-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*]

**Section 2. God.** We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons ~ Father, Son and Holy Spirit. [*Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:18-20*]

**Section 3. The Person and Work of Christ.** We believe that, by the miracle of the Virgin Birth, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, in order to reveal God and to redeem man; that He died for our sins (the sins of all men) as a substitutionary sacrifice and arose bodily from the dead for our justification; and that He is now exalted at the right hand of God, Head of the Church and Lord of the individual believer, fulfilling His ministry as our Great High Priest and Advocate. [*John 1:1-3, 14, 18; Hebrews 1:1-3; Colossians 1:13-20*]

**Section 4. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit.** We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ; that He convicts the world of sin, regenerates the believing sinner, and baptizes him into the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

We believe that He indwells, guides, instructs, and empowers the believer for godly living and service, and that He seals and keeps him until the Lord comes. We believe that He bestows spiritual gifts upon each person and fills those who are yielded to Him.

We believe that each believer has received one or more spiritual gifts so that he might exercise them for the strengthening and outreach of the Body of Christ. We believe that some of the gifts mentioned in Scripture were for the founding of the church and, therefore, were temporary in nature. While we recognize that God may give any gift to the church at any time, we believe that apostleship, prophecy and tongues are foundational gifts and are not being given today. [*Acts 5:3-4; John 15:26-27; 16:14; 1 Corinthians 12:7-13; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30*]

**Section 5. Salvation.** We believe that salvation is the free gift of God (neither merited or secured, in part or in whole, by any virtue or work of man) to be received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom all true believers have, as a present possession, the gift of eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God, deliverance and security from all condemnation, every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness, and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish. [*Ephesians 2:8-9; Jude 24-25*]

**Section 6. Man.** We believe that man was created in the image of God, but that he sinned, incurring not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God and which is inherited by every member of Adam's race. We believe that man is subject to the power of the devil and has within himself no possible means of recovery or salvation. [*Romans 1:18-32; Ephesians 2:1-2*]

**Section 7. The Church.** We believe that the true Church is composed of all who, through saving faith in Jesus Christ, have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit; that those who are thus members of the true Church will be eligible for membership in the local church; and that baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are to be observed by the church during the present age.

The decision to participate in baptism and the Lord's Supper will be on an individual basis, but this participation is not to be regarded, in any sense, as a means of salvation. [*1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27; Matthew 28:18-20*]

**Section 8. The Blessed Hope.** We believe in the personal, imminent and premillennial coming of our Lord, first to receive His own to Himself and, later, to set up His earthly kingdom and to reign over the redeemed of Israel and all the nations of the world. We believe that this blessed hope has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer. [*Titus 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58*]

**Section 9. The Christian's Walk.** We believe that we are called with a holy calling to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, and so to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit of God that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

We believe that the flesh, with its fallen, adamic nature, which in this life is never eradicated, must be kept by the Spirit (through our walk of faith) constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence in our lives, to the dishonor of our Lord. [*Colossians 1:28; 1 Peter 1:14-16*]

**Section 10. The Eternal State of Man.** We believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do, at death, immediately pass into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming for the Church, when soul and body, reunited, will be associated with him forever in glory. We believe that unbelievers will be punished with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. [*Revelation 20:22; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10*]

**Section 11. Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality.** We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Clearwater Community Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to our members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Clearwater Community Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Clearwater Community Church.

## ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1. Qualification for Membership.** Membership is a wholehearted commitment to a local expression of the body of Christ. It is a biblical responsibility of each Christian to join with other Christians in all of the divinely ordained purposes of the Church. Here at Clearwater Community Church, members are expected to partner with one another in the mutual worship of Christ, receiving instruction in His Word, prayer, fellowship, and in the proclamation of His gospel. This is all in keeping with a life of discipleship. Christians, then, are to formally join with other Christians in serving one another, using their spiritual gifts and resources for ministry purposes, holding one another accountable to a life of faith, while submitting themselves to the care and leadership of the Elders and Pastors of the congregation. In order to become a member of Clearwater Community Church, one must agree to attend the new member's class, support this constitution and share his or her salvation testimony with the Elders (former or current), and be voted into membership by the Board of Elders .

**Section 2. Receiving Members.** Any persons having met the requirements of Section 1 of this Article will be received publicly into the fellowship of the church at such time as may be determined by the Board of Elders.

**Section 3. Associate Members.** Any friends who worship with Clearwater Community Church regularly, but who wish to retain membership in their home church, may become associate members and enjoy all the privileges of membership, except that they will not be able to vote or hold an elective church office.

Qualifications for associate membership will be the same as for regular membership.

**Section 4. Inactive Members.** Any member who is unable to participate in the church activities for a period of six (6) months, upon recommendation of the Board of Elders, will be placed on the inactive membership roll. Inactive members will not vote or hold an elective church office.

**Section 5. Discipline of Members.**

As Christians who have formally joined together to live for the glory of God, it is our desire to pursue a life of obedient discipleship whereby we are growing in our faith and striving to be progressively conformed towards the character of Christ, all through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We seek to train and discipline ourselves in formative ways through instruction in God's Word, prayer, fellowship, worship, and in participation of the ongoing ministries of the church (service).

However, situations may arise in which corrective training and discipline may be necessary within the church body. Any continued behavior which opposes the clear teachings of Scripture and so dishonors the name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be subject to the admonition of the Elders and the discipline of the church in accordance with the principles taught by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5, and other relevant Scriptures. This formal discipline is not to be taken lightly, and has its goal the restoration, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the erring member who through repentance may receive the promised forgiveness and cleansing from sin that is offered and given to us by God (1 John 1:9).

In addition to enacting discipline for the sake of seeking to restore a fallen brother or sister, we believe the church is further required to take action according to the teachings of Scripture,

- a) so that the corporate witness of the church is protected before non-believers (1 Peter 2:12);
- b) for the sake of the purity of the church as a whole (2 Corinthians 7:1);
- c) so that the church can instruct one another in the truths of the faith and reaffirm their commitment to it (Colossians 3:16);

d) so that God would be glorified in all things pertaining to the church (Ephesians 3:21).

Only when all possible means for reconciliation have been exhausted by the loving reach of the membership (Matthew 18:17) will the elders formally remove the offender from the membership role of the church. In doing so the Elders are recognizing the erring member's decision to remove themselves from the fellowship of the church through their ongoing, unrepentant behavior. The Board of Elders will be responsible for seeing that all the appropriate steps have been carried out according to the teachings of Scripture before their vote of removal takes place. Each situation will be handled on a case by case basis and will be subject to the collective wisdom of the Board.

In cases where public removal from membership results in the repentance and restoration of the erring member, it will be the responsibility of the Board of Elders to publicly reinstate the brother or sister in a spirit of celebration at an appropriate time in keeping with the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:22-23.

#### ARTICLE V. GOVERNMENT

The government of this church, under leadership of the Holy Spirit, is vested in the body of believers who compose it, and administered through its elected representatives, the Board of Elders. This Board will thus compose the official Board of the church and will act as the governing body of the church.

The Pastor-Teacher will be a member of the Board of Elders.

#### ARTICLE VI. BOARD OF ELDERS

**Section 1. Qualifications and Discipline.** An Elder must meet the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. It will be the responsibility of the Board of Elders to discipline or consider for removal any Board member who no longer fulfills the qualifications of an Elder, or who fails to fulfill his responsibilities, or who violates the intent of this constitution. Discipline or removal will be by unanimous vote of his fellow Elders. (See Article IX, Section 3 - Pastor-Teacher.)

**Section 2. Duties.**

**A.** It will be the duty of the Elders to care for the spiritual condition of the church as set forth in I Timothy 5:17, Titus 1:9, and I Peter 5:1-2. It will be the duty of the Elders to counsel the needy, comfort the afflicted, visit the sick, and supply the pulpit of the church in the absence of the Pastor-Teacher.

The Elder Board will establish yearly, the chairman of all committees required by the church's program.

**B.** The Board of Elders will be the Executive Board of the membership in its dealings with the church staff, members, and organizations of the church. The Board, serving as trustees, will have supervision over all church operations and transactions with power to act, except that it will not encumber the church with loan, transfer, sale or purchase of real estate, or any single expenditure amounting to more than Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00), except by authorization conveyed through a majority vote of the church membership present, expressed by written ballot at a constitutionally called business meeting.

The Board will handle and consider suggestions, recommendations and grievances from or upon the part of any member or organization affiliated with the church. The Board will have authority to approve the appointment of all salaried personnel except as otherwise provided in this constitution.

C. The Board of Elders, serving as trustees, may authorize any office or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name and on behalf of the church, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances; and, unless so authorized by the Board of Elders, no officer, agent, or other person will have any power or authority to bind the church by any contract or engagement, or to pledge its credit, or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

D. The Board of Elders will appoint an auditing committee from among the members of the congregation, consisting of three members. It will be the duty of this committee to examine the books and records of all church accounts annually, in accordance with accepted auditing procedures, and to make an appropriate report at the annual congregational meeting.

**Section 3. Term of Office.** Every effort will be made to maintain a minimum of six (6) non-staff Elders. All non-staff Board members shall serve for a three (3) year term and may succeed themselves if the nominating process does not provide the required number of nominees, and if duly elected under the terms of this constitution. Terms will be on a rotating basis.

The Board will determine if additional Elders are needed for the ensuing year, prior to the annual meeting. Should vacancies occur, the Board shall appoint Elders to fill them until the next regular Elder election. At that time members shall elect Elders to fill the remainder of any unexpired terms. Following an election in which unexpired terms have been filled, the new Elder Board shall determine which newly elected Elders will serve the unexpired terms and which will fill the full three (3) year terms.

The term of office of an Elder shall begin eight (8) weeks following election. During that time newly elected Elders shall attend Board meetings and become oriented to their new responsibilities. Retiring Elders' term of office shall expire eight (8) weeks after the election of replacements. The chairman of the Board will be elected by the Board members and will serve for one (1) year.

**Section 4. Quorum.** Two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board of Elders will constitute a quorum, and official action will require a unanimous vote of the members present.

**Section 5. Meetings.** Regular Board meetings will be held once each month, at a time to be decided by the Board. Special meetings may be called by the chairman of the Board, a ministerial staff member, or two members of the Board.

**Section 6. Nomination.** The nominating committee will be composed of the retiring Elders and an equal number of members of the congregation selected by the Board of Elders. One of the retiring Elders will serve as Chairman. This committee will nominate qualified candidates who are required to fill the vacated positions on the Board of Elders. Names of potential future elders may be submitted by members of the congregation for consideration by the committee.

**Section 7. Officers.** Officers of the Board of Elders will be a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary. These officers will be elected by the Board to serve for one (1) year.

## ARTICLE VII. BOARD OF DEACONS

**Section 1. Qualifications and Discipline.** A Deacon must meet the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-10, 12-14, and Acts 6:3. In addition, if a Deacon is married, his wife must also meet the qualifications outlined in I Timothy 3:11.

**Section 2. Duties.**

**A.** It will be the responsibility of the Deacons to assist the Elders and Ministry Staff in the spiritual care and well-being of the entire church body. In keeping with the early example of the church in Acts 6, the Deacons will assist the Elders and Staff in the family care ministry and any additional administrative tasks that might be necessary so that the Elders and Pastoral staff of the church are more available to focus on the ministry of the Word, prayer, and overall governance of the congregation. Unlike Elders, Deacons are not required to be able to teach, though they must meet all the other spiritual qualifications as outlined in Scripture.

**B.** The Board of Deacons will serve under the direction of the Elder Board with an Elder appointed to serve as liaison between the Boards. A member of the Ministry Staff will serve as the Advisor and provide pastoral oversight to the deacon ministry.

**Section 3. Term of Office.** There will be a minimum of three (3) Deacons serving for a minimum of two (2) years. Upon completion of a Deacon's two year term, he may continue to serve in his role as Deacon if it is mutually agreed upon by the Deacon, the Ministry Staff Advisor, and the Board of Elders. Should vacancies occur, the Board of Elders shall appoint a Deacon(s) to fill them until the next regular Deacon election.

The Board of Elders and the Ministry Staff Advisor will determine if additional Deacons are required.

**Section 4. Quorum.** Two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board of Deacons will constitute a quorum. Official action will require a unanimous vote of those present.

**Section 5. Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Board of Deacons will be held once each month. Additional meetings may be called by the Elder Chairman, the Senior Pastor, or by the Ministry Staff Advisor.

**Section 6. Nominations.** Nominations for the Deacon Ministry will be solicited from the congregation when there are vacancies on the Board. Nominees will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Elders and the Ministry Staff Advisor before being presented to the congregation for vote.

**Section 7. Discipline.** It will be the responsibility of the Board of Elders to discipline or consider the removal of any Deacon who no longer fulfills the qualifications of a deacon, or who fails to fulfill his responsibilities, or who violates the intent of this constitution. Discipline or removal will be by a unanimous vote of the Board of Elders.

## ARTICLE VIII. COMMITTEES

The committees of the Church will be established by the Board of Elders. Each committee will have a chairman who is appointed by the Board.

The responsibilities of the committees will be determined by the Board of Elders and will be described in the Administrative Manual produced by the Board of Elders, and re-evaluated by them each year.

## ARTICLE IX. STAFF

**Section 1. Responsibility to Board of Elders.** All ministerial staff members of this church are directly responsible to the Board of Elders. Their specific responsibilities are outlined in the Administrative Manual.

**Section 2. Ministerial Committee.** The Board of Elders will act as the ministerial committee. Only one candidate will be considered at any one time. The Board of Elders will recommend only such as receive their own unanimous approval. The candidate will assent to the constitution and bylaws. The Church will vote upon the candidate at a constitutionally called meeting.

**Section 3. Term of Office.** The term of office will be indefinite, or until the staff member resigns, retires, or is removed by the Board of Elders by a vote of at least three-quarters (3/4) of the members of the Board and a majority vote of the congregation.

Recommendations for removal of a staff member should be considered if that staff member no longer fulfills the qualifications of an Elder, fails to fulfill his responsibilities, or violates the intent of this constitution. The Board of Elders will review and evaluate the ministerial staff annually.

**Section 4. Pastor-Teacher.**

**A.** The qualifications for the Pastor-Teacher are identical to those of an Elder. He must also display the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher.

**B.** The Pastor-Teacher is guaranteed the full freedom of the pulpit, whereby he is required to preach and teach all of the Word of God. The major portion of his time will be spent in study and preparation for this ministry. Additional responsibilities will be outlined in the Administrative Manual.

**Section 5. Additional Staff Members.** Additional staff members will be called as the need arises, and their responsibilities will be outlined in the Administrative Manual.

## ARTICLE X. LICENSURE AND ORDINATION

**Section 1. Licensure.** A member of the Church who is in full-time vocational Christian work but who has not been Ordained may request Licensing by the Church. As a means of acknowledging service to the Church and to provide the benefits associated with this License, the Board of Elders, in cooperation with the Senior Pastor, shall determine the eligibility for Licensing and shall act upon each application. Licensing shall be for a period of one year and must be renewed annually if it is to be maintained.

**Section 2. Ordination** A member of the church who has completed seminary training, or five years of full time ministry, and who fulfills the qualifications for Christian leaders set forth in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9) may be considered for Ordination. The Elder Board or a duly constituted ordaining council, comprised of one's ministry peers, shall examine the candidate regarding his call and commitment to ministry along with his preparation, giftedness, and personal fitness for vocational Christian service. If approved, the candidate shall be ordained in the presence of the congregation at a specially called meeting or worship service.



## ARTICLE XI. MEETINGS

**Section 1. Quorum.** No business meetings of the general church membership will be conducted without a quorum of thirty per cent (30%) of the resident voting membership of the Church. A majority vote of the members present will be required to transact all business, except as stated elsewhere in the constitution.

**Section 2. Rules.** The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, will govern all Elders meetings and all congregational meetings of the Church, except in instance of conflict between the said Rules and the Articles of this constitution.

**Section 3. Meetings.** The time and occurrence of meetings of the Church will be decided by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders must meet once a month to make decisions regarding the work and ministry of the Church.

The annual congregational meeting will be held on a Sunday during the month of October.

**Section 4. Election and Balloting.** All congregational meetings will be conducted in the following manner:

A. Notice of the meeting is to be placed in the bulletin and announced from the pulpit two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.

B. Names of candidates and major items of congregational business to be considered at the meeting will be listed in the announcement.

C. All elections by the Church membership will be determined by secret ballot polled by voting members at least sixteen (16) years of age.

D. Two-thirds (2/3) majority vote will be required for the confirmation of Board members and hiring of ministerial staff.

E. The chairman of the Board of Elders will conduct all congregational meetings.

## ARTICLE XII. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church will be from October 1st through September 30th.

## ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS

The constitution may be changed or altered at a duly announced meeting of the congregation, providing the proposed alteration, in written form, has been conspicuously posted or sent to members, and announced from the pulpit on two (2) consecutive Sundays preceding said meeting. A majority of the voting members of the Church is necessary for a constitutional amendment. However, any change or alteration of the Doctrinal Statement as set forth in Article III will require a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the voting members of the Church.

## ARTICLE XIV. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

**Section 1. Biblical Concept.** We believe that the church is the Body of Christ. All Christians are called to participate in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal ministry in the world. We believe that God has given gifts (spiritual talents) to men, and gifted men to His Church. Some of these men are set apart for a special function within the local assembly. It is their responsibility to minister to the members of the congregation so that the congregation can do the work of ministering both in the church and in the world.

We recognize, therefore, that the church is not a building nor an organization, but believers who share the common life of Christ together and who minister in the name of Christ to the society in which they live.

**Section 2. Principles.** In recognition of this biblical concept, we believe that the Clearwater Community Church should operate on the following principles:

- A. Jesus Christ is Lord of His Church. When Christians seek His direction, He will raise up in the church men and women with gifts needed for ministry.
- B. It is the primary task of the ministerial staff of the church to teach and train the membership, both in the Scriptures and in methods for carrying out an effective ministry in the world. The leadership of the church, therefore, does not rest on the staff alone, but upon many spiritually able men within the congregation whose gifts prepare them to administer the affairs of the church.
- C. Since the meetings of the church should cause us to respond to God and, in the light of this response, to minister to our fellow men, we believe that all of the services and activities of the church should constantly be evaluated in the light of this goal. Success, therefore, should be measured by how effectively our activities carry out the purpose for which they were designed.
- D. Since the church is not brick or mortar, but men and women growing in Christ, a capable staff and ministry in the world will take priority over plant development.
- E. Church meetings are not to be an end in themselves. There will be an emphasis, therefore, on personal involvement of the church membership, both in the church and outside the church, in religious and civic activities that can best represent Christ in our community.
- F. Because the church is in the world, many of the meetings of the members will be held within the community in homes, restaurants, secular auditoriums, etc. To encourage the sharing of burdens and prayer requests, the prayer ministry of the church will consist of, but not be limited to, cottage-type meetings in homes.
- G. Since every believer is a witness because of his relationship to Christ, individuals should be encouraged and prepared to share Christ on a person-to-person basis. In addition, since the church as a body has a responsibility for an evangelistic witness in the community, the membership working together must seek fresh and varied ways to make Christ known.
- H. Because we believe that the Christian lives by faith and not by social taboos, we seek a ministry in which Jesus Christ as the believer's strength and life is positively set forth.
- I. While recognizing that our church has a responsibility to nurture all in its membership, we feel a special need to give priority, at this time, to relating the gospel to the youth of this area.

**J.** We believe that the family was instituted by God before the fall of man and has, as one of its major purposes, the teaching and training of children for God. In the light of this, we believe that the church should not merely co-exist with the family, nor should the church through expanded programs, however good, set up conflicts with the family. Instead, the church must assist parents in every possible way to bring their children to love, honor, and serve our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

**K.** Above all else, we feel that the principles and practices of our church must be submitted to the Scriptures. In saying this, we insist that a clear distinction must be made between traditions, however effective they may have been in the past, and the clear teachings of the Word of God. We recognize the creative power of the Spirit of God to be such that there must be a constant re-evaluation of the activities of our congregation so that we are willing to discard old programs in order to test new, fresh approaches into which God may be leading us.

#### **ARTICLE XV DISSOLUTION**

In case of the dissolution of the Church, the property will be sold and all proceeds above liabilities will be disbursed between missions currently supported and Dallas Theological Seminary. Assets will be divided as follows:

- A.** Missions will receive 25% of monies proportionate to their support as stated in the current budget.
- B.** Dallas Theological Seminary will become recipient of the remaining funds.

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