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The
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
of
THE CHURCH OF THE OPEN DOOR
of Fort Washington PA.
(Formally of Philadelphia)

THE CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We, the members of The Church of the Open Door, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

ARTICLE I

THE NAME

The Name of the organization shall be THE CHURCH OF THE OPEN DOOR, of Fort Washington, Pennsylvania. (formerly of Philadelphia)

ARTICLE II

THE OBJECT

The object of this Church is to glorify God in the salvation of souls, the edification of Christians, through the teaching of God's Word, the worldwide proclamation of God's saving grace expressed in the shed blood and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, the promotion of Godly worship, the defense of "The Faith Once Delivered," and cooperation with Christian activity functioning in harmony with God's Holy Word - the Bible - until He come.

SECTION 1. This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, day-care centers, camps, and nursing homes.

SECTION 2. The church shall also ordain and license men to the gospel ministry; evangelize the unsaved by the proclaiming of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education; and maintain missionary activities in the United States and **any foreign** country.

ARTICLE III

THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANT

SECTION 1. Articles of Faith. Each and every person, in order to become or remain a member of this Church, shall subscribe to the following Articles of Faith:

A. I believe in one God, Creator of heaven and earth; Spirit, Light, Love, and Truth; eternal, almighty, infallible, and unchangeable, infinitely wise, just, and holy, and that God eternally exists and manifests Himself to us in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

B. I believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the eternal Word manifested in flesh. I believe that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, and that He is true God and true man. I believe in His vicarious, substitutionary and redeeming death, Christ receiving in Himself the penalty of man's sin. I believe in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension and in His personal, imminent and premillennial return for his redeemed ones, followed by His coming in glory to judge the rebellious and to establish His millennial reign.

C. I believe in the Holy Spirit, in His personality, that He is God; and I believe that His work is to convict men of sin; to regenerate, indwell and set the believer apart to a holy life; to keep and empower the believer day by day. I believe that He is the teacher of God's Word and the Guide for the daily life.

D. I believe that the whole Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original writings, and is the supreme and final authority in faith and life.

E. I believe that man, having been created pure and in the image of God, is by his own sin fallen from grace, and I believe that in consequence, all have sinned, are guilty and lost, and absolutely incapable of saving themselves by their own works, being dead in their trespasses and sins.

F. I believe that we are saved solely by grace, through faith in the blood sacrifice, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

G. I believe in the eternal security and everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the eternal judgment and punishment of all who reject our Lord Jesus Christ: "This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the Lake of Fire." (Rev. 20:14, 15)

H. I believe that Satan is a person, the author of the fall, and that he shall be eternally punished.

I. I believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the lost to judgment and everlasting punishment.

J. I believe that Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper to commemorate His death till He come. I believe that Water Baptism is a symbol of the believer's union with Christ in His death and in His resurrection.

K. I believe that the Church of Jesus Christ is composed solely of those who have been redeemed and washed in His Blood, and regenerated and sealed by the Holy Spirit, and that they are saved to serve; and that it is the responsibility and privilege of all who are saved to seek to win others to Christ, to the "uttermost part of the earth"; that they must seek to live a holy life, to separate themselves from and forsake all that might dishonor God or cast discredit on His cause, or weaken their testimony.

SECTION 2. In subscribing to these Articles of Faith, we by no means set aside, or undervalue, any of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, all of which we believe to be God's own written Word, given to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but the knowledge and belief of the truth as stated in our Articles of Faith we deem necessary to sound doctrine, and therefore requisite for Christian fellowship.

SECTION 3. Covenant. The following Covenant shall be used for the purpose of publicly welcoming new members into the Congregation:

We, then, the members of this Church do affectionately welcome you to this fellowship with us in the blessing of the Gospel, and covenant together, God helping us, that as strangers and pilgrims we will abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (1); that we will put away from us all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us (2); that as we have opportunity, we will do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith (3); that we will remember them which have the rule over us, who speak unto us the Word of God (4); and that we will give as God has prospered us (5); not grudgingly or of necessity for God loves a cheerful giver (6).

(1) I Peter 2:11 (2) Ephesians 4:31, 32 (3) Gal. 6:10 (4) Heb. 13:7 (5) I Cor. 16:2 (6) II Cor. 9:7
(Then shall be given the right hand of fellowship to the new members by the Pastor and Elders.)

"Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Heb. 13:20, 21)

SECTION 4. The provisions of this entire Article are to be considered as fundamental, the basis upon which this Church is founded, and none of the provisions of this Article shall ever be amended.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. Any person desiring to unite with this Church shall make written application for such purpose on an application blank which shall be supplied by the Church. The By-Laws shall provide for the form and wording of such application, which must contain an agreement by the applicant to be bound by the Constitution and By-Laws of this Church and the applicant's personal acceptance, in writing, of the Articles of Faith and Church Covenant as set forth in Article III.

SECTION 2. By Profession or Reaffirmation. Any person desiring to unite with the Church upon Profession of Faith or by Reaffirmation shall present a written application for membership to the official Board as provided for in Section 1 hereof. The Board shall then fix a time and place for a meeting with said applicant, who shall attend and be examined by the Board as to his or her Christian experience, assurance of salvation and doctrinal belief.

SECTION 3. By Letter. Any person desiring to unite with the Church upon letter of Recommendation from other Churches of Christ, shall present such letter in person to the Official Board together with a signed application for membership as provided for by Section 1 hereof, and shall, if the Board requires, be examined concerning his or her Christian experience, assurance of salvation, and doctrinal belief.

SECTION 4. Evangelists and Christian Workers. In case of application for membership by Evangelists and Christian Workers whose circumstances make it impossible for them to appear before the Official Board and to be received publicly into the fellowship of this Church, the applicant shall fill out a form certifying his or her acceptance of the Articles of Faith and agreement to the Covenant, Constitution and By-Laws of the Church, and shall also satisfy the Official Board as to his or her Christian experience. When they have subscribed to the Constitution and By-Laws, Articles of Faith and Covenant of the Church, such applicants by unanimous vote of the Board, may be received into membership without appearing in person.

SECTION 5. Invalids. It is proper that invalids who are unable to attend the public services should be granted membership in this Church. Such applicants for membership shall be interviewed by two or more of the Official Board. Such persons shall sign the application form provided for in Section 1 hereof and, when received by the Board, their names shall be included with the other applicants for membership who are being received publicly into the Church. The right hand of fellowship shall be extended to these by the Official Board or the Sr. Pastor.

SECTION 6. All immorality condemned in Scripture shall be considered grounds for refusing membership and/or leadership positions until repentance is assured. For this assurance, it is upon the affirmation of the Sr. Pastor and the Board of Elders to extend the invitation for membership and/or leadership.

SECTION 7. Affiliated Membership

A. As there are many persons in the Philadelphia area for limited periods of time who desire a Church home and who do not wish to sever relations with their home Churches, such

persons may become affiliated members without severing their home Church relations by presenting a Letter from their Church or Sr. Pastor showing that they are members in good and regular standing and recommending them for Affiliated Membership; provided that such persons execute an application for this purpose (the form of such application to be fixed by the By-Laws but to have the requirements as set forth in Article IV, Section 1 of the Constitution), and appear in person before the Official Board.

B. Affiliated members of the Church shall be subject to all the duties, rules and regulations which govern members of the Church; and shall have all the privileges, including the right to vote at a Congregational Meeting. Upon removal from the area, the names of such persons shall be automatically dropped from the role of Affiliated Membership.

SECTION 8. Procedure in Accepting New Members.

A. When the Official Board is satisfied that an applicant is a true Christian and has met the requirements for membership as provided for in Article IV, Sections 1-7 of this Constitution, the Board may then accept such person as a member of this Church; provided that such action by the Board shall be by unanimous vote of those present at the particular Board meeting.

B. The new members shall be publicly welcomed at a regular Lord's Day Service by the members of the Church, and given the right hand of fellowship by the Sr. Pastor and Elders, as provided for in Article III of this Constitution, after they have publicly confessed their faith in Christ, their acceptance of our Articles of Faith and their willingness to be bound by our Constitution and By-Laws.

SECTION 9. Charter Members. All persons who united with this Church on or before the thirty-first day of December, A.D. 1936, shall be considered Charter Members of the Church.

SECTION 10. Water Baptism is a requisite for membership in this Church. We accept the mode of baptism of a person who is spiritually satisfied with his previous Water Baptism. Any persons of Godly walk and conversation desiring to be baptized shall make personal application to the Sr. Pastor. The Church of the Open Door practices Believer's Baptism by immersion.

SECTION 11. Dedication of Children. Our children should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Parents are encouraged to present their children in dedication to the Lord, that they may be made the subjects of Prayer.

SECTION 12. Termination of Membership. Membership in this Church may terminate:

A. By Dismissal. Letters of Dismissal shall be granted to members who apply for them, provided they are in good standing and not subject to or under discipline at the time of the application. When such letters have been granted, their relationship to this Church shall be considered terminated. Letters of Dismissal shall be granted only to evangelical Churches.

B. By Exclusion. If a member is habitually absent from the Communion and other gatherings for worship and fails to communicate with the Church for a period of one year and fails

to reply to communications, they may be suspended or dropped from the Membership Roll by a majority vote of the Board.

C. Excommunication. (See Article VI - Section 3 of this Constitution). It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures to exclude from this fellowship any person who holds false and heretical doctrine or who lives inconsistently with a Christian profession (1); or in violation of the law of public morals or walks disorderly (2); or any person who disturbs the unity and peace of the Church.

(1) Galatians 1:8, 9 (2) II Thessalonians 3:6, 11; I Corinthians 5:11-13

ARTICLE V

CONDUCT

SECTION 1. All public and private **means of grace**, such as regular attendance in the services of God's House (including the ordinance of the Lord's Supper), the daily, systematic reading of the Bible, private and family prayer, personal and public testimony, and the winning of others to Christ, shall be urged upon our members. It shall be the duty of members to attend regularly the stated and business meetings of the Church, to love one another as Christ gave command, to be tenderly solicitous for each other's welfare and the good name of the Church.

SECTION 2.

We also assert our conviction that **proportionate giving** is a distinct and positive command in the Scriptures (Mal. 3:8-11), and pledge ourselves to a systematic contribution for the support of the Church of such portion of our income as we believe God requires of us, according to the principle laid down in I Corinthians 16:2.

SECTION 3. We shall require of ourselves and each other in our **daily** walk and conversation, loyal obedience to all those moral precepts laid down in the Word of God so plainly as not to need definition.

Warning Against Worldliness

We believe it our privilege to accept those who truly believe in Jesus Christ into our fellowship and promise them all possible loving nurture. In these days of worldliness among professing Christians, it is necessary that we call the attention of believers to the plain teaching of God's Word concerning worldly amusements and entangling alliances with unbelievers.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?"

"And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

"And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1)

We believe the above "Written Word of God" clearly instructs the Christian to walk in a path of separation from carnal worldly pleasures and questionable practices which are harmful in their influence and a stumbling block to others. We believe further that Christians should not marry unbelievers nor enter into any compromising alliance with them. Suggestive Scriptures to guide the believer in these matters are: Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:17-5:4; Romans 12:1-15:13; I Peter 2:1-4:19.

We expect the candidate for membership in this Church to accept the "Written Word of God" as the authoritative guide in all matters of faith and practice among us and to this end acknowledge the right and responsibility of the Sr. Pastor and/or Elders to discipline wayward members in the light and spirit of said Scriptures.

We believe the "Written Word of God" allows divorce only upon the grounds of adultery or unfaithfulness--Matthew 5:32.

We strongly urge, to all believers and members of the Church of the Open Door, the Statement of Christian Conduct found in Article IX, Section 9. We would also add that the members of this Church should soberly accept their privilege and responsibility to apply Scriptural principles to all conduct in their own lives and reach decisions that have the approval of their Spirit-enlightened conscience and thus avoid becoming a stumbling-block to others, (Romans 14:1-15:13). This includes the sins of the old nature such as envy, malice, jealousy, gossip, grievances against the Spirit. (Galatians 5:19, 20; Ephesians 4:30, 31). We also believe that the individual must be motivated in these matters by the law of love.

May we always altogether seek to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-16.

ARTICLE VI

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The discipline of the Church shall be formative and corrective and shall be entirely entrusted to the Sr. Pastor, and the Official Board, and shall be exercised according to the following principles:

SECTION 1. Formative Discipline. The sanctifying influence of formative discipline as taught in I Cor. 12:12-27 shall be well understood. Every member will then be satisfied with his place and we shall all grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph. 2:21, 22; 4:12, 13; II Peter 1:5-8). By such observance can the Church build up its members, and use the talents of both old and young. All who have been redeemed should live for Him and the Church, and not for themselves.

SECTION 2. Corrective Discipline. Corrective discipline implies imperfection and a tendency to sin and so cause offense. The censure, in the judgment of the Official Board, may be suspension for a period from the Lord's Table, Erasure from the Roll, or Excommunication. Every effort shall first be made to clear up difficulties and remove offenses before Church action is taken. No offense should be brought before the Church until the instructions of Christ have first been followed (Matt. 5:23, 24; 18:15). If the offenders will not have the case adjusted, the person or persons concerned shall be proceeded against in conformity with the condition that such person or persons signed in coming into membership, as follows:

"If at any time I find myself out of harmony with the Articles of Faith, Covenant, Constitution or By-Laws of this Church, or if my conduct or belief is called in question, I agree to submit the differences or charges to the Official Board, and if it be found that I am unwilling to settle the differences on Scriptural grounds (Matt. 18:15-17), I hereby authorize the Board to drop my name from the Roll of the Church Membership."

Corrective discipline has for its aim the glory of God, the welfare and purity of our Church, and the spiritual growth of the offender.

SECTION 3. Excommunication. In all cases of disorderly conduct or heretical doctrine so opposed to the Church's life and faith as to destroy the possibility of fellowship, procedure shall be in the following manner: the suspected person shall first be interviewed as directed in Matt. 18:15-18. If this does not lead to restoration of fellowship, charges shall be filed with the Board and placed by them in the hands of the suspected person who shall be summoned to meet the Board at a date not sooner than one week nor later than two weeks from the time the charges are served. The accused, on being notified, may immediately select any member of the Board (or any member of the Congregation in good standing) to assist or represent him in the examination, while the Chairman shall appoint one of its members for prosecution. After a fair and impartial hearing of all the witnesses accessible and all the facts ascertainable, if the majority of the Board believes the accused person guilty, the name of the said party shall be stricken from the Roll of the Church and read as excommunicated at either a Mid-week Service or a Lord's Day Service succeeding the trial, unless notice of appeal is given in writing to the Secretary of the Official Board within five days.

If appealed, a special meeting of the Congregation shall be convened for the purpose of electing a Council of Appeal, as provided for in Article VII, of this Constitution, but unless a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Congregational Meeting is secured, the decision of the official Board shall stand. If the case is reviewed by the Council of Appeal, its decision shall be final.

SECTION 4. Restoration of Excluded Members. The right to exclude persons or the withdrawal of fellowship (II Thess. 3:6) is in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament (Matt. 18:16, 17). The early Apostolic Church had also the right to restore excluded members who gave satisfactory evidence of being penitent (II Cor. 2:6-8). The object of the exclusion or suspension having been accomplished, the Official Board shall have the right to restore the penitent member to full membership by a unanimous vote.

SECTION 5. Communication. Should a member fail to communicate with the Church for a period of one year, and make no reply to Church communications addressed to them, the Board is authorized to drop his name from the Membership Roll.

ARTICLE VII

COUNCIL OF APPEAL

SECTION 1. Any matter may be taken to the Council of Appeal for decision if it involves any controversy within the Church; within the Official Board; between the Church Congregation and the Board; or between the Church Congregation or the Board and the Sr. Pastor; which controversy threatens to cause dissension resulting in probable injury to the welfare of the Church and which has not been decided by the Official Board in such a manner as to allay dissension.

SECTION 2. The membership of this Council shall consist of six Elders and six Laypersons in good standing, and the Sr. Pastor who shall act as Chairman thereof. All of the members shall be chosen by the Congregation at a regularly called meeting. This Council shall be elected only at the request of the Official Board, or by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a regularly called Congregational Meeting.

SECTION 3. The Quorum of the Council of Appeal shall be four Elders, four Laypersons and the Chairman. If a member of the Council is unable to attend a particular meeting after judicial process has begun, they may hereafter sit and hear the case but will be disqualified to vote on the final issue of the case. In administrative cases, they may vote on the final issue of the question being considered. A judicial case is one in which formal charges have been filed against a person.

SECTION 4. Should it ever occur that the Sr. Pastor is the defendant in a judicial case, or so involved as to make it unwise for him to preside over the Council, the Congregation shall choose a Chairman who shall preside over the meetings of the Council of Appeal. The Council shall convene at the call of the Chair or at the request of any six members of the Council of Appeal.

SECTION 5. The decision of the case before the Council of Appeal must be reached by a two-thirds (2/3) vote; and then the final decision of the Council of Appeal, with the reasons therefore, is announced to the Congregation, that decision is final and the case ended.

ARTICLE VIII

GOVERNMENT

SECTION 1. This Church acknowledges only the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head; the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide in matters of faith, discipline and order; the Holy Spirit as its Teacher; and is not and never shall be amenable to or under the jurisdiction or supervision of any other ecclesiastical body of any kind or nature whatsoever.

SECTION 2. The government of the Church, the conduct of its business, the management and control of all its property, real and personal, the supervision of its general work, its organizations, such as Sunday School, Youth Organizations, Missionary Societies, etc., and branch works shall, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, be vested in the Official Board, which shall consist of the Elders, who shall be elected as provided for in the By-Laws of the Church, and the Sr. Pastor. The Pastor shall not only be a member of the Official Board but shall, by virtue of his office as Pastor, be President thereof. The purpose of the Official Board is to integrate and coordinate the operations of all Boards, Committees, and affiliated organizations, and all other elected or volunteer persons. It is vested with total interim authority between congregational meetings except for those items specifically reserved for the congregation in the By-Laws.

SECTION 3. With the exception of the Board of Deacons and the Nominating Committee, the Official Board has the authority to alter both the duties of and the number of persons serving on standing committees and to create or abolish standing committees.

SECTION 4. The Official Board, within four weeks after the annual election, shall meet and elect a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, who shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected and qualify. The Board may also elect a Treasurer of the Benevolent Fund, who shall serve for one year. The Treasurer, and Treasurer of the Benevolent Fund may or may not be members of the Official Board.

SECTION 5. The necessary Quorum and manner in which the Official Board shall be convened shall be provided for in the By-Laws; but no meeting of the Official Board shall ever be called during the absence of the President without his knowledge and written consent; except that in cases of emergency in the President's absence the Official Board may act, but only by unanimous decision of the full membership of the Official Board, (minus the President).

SECTION 6. The Official Board shall have the power to delegate to either individuals or committees the right to transact any of its business or exercise any of its powers, the transaction of such business or the exercise of such powers, however, shall be at all times subject to the supervision and control of the Official Board.

SECTION 7. The Official Board shall not encumber with loan, or transfer, or sell or purchase any real estate for the Church except by the express authorization conveyed through a majority vote of the membership present at a Constitutionally-called Congregational meeting.

Except in extreme emergencies which affect the physical plant no obligation shall be incurred to spend over \$15,000 in one item without special vote of the Congregation, unless said item already appears in the adopted budget. (See Article XIII.)

SECTION 8. Without in any manner limiting the authority of the Official Board, but solely for the purpose of enumerating some of its powers, the Official Board shall have power to:

A. Call Congregational Meetings for any purpose which it deems to be necessary or proper, provided that notice of such a meeting shall be given as may be provided in the By-Laws.

B. Receive, consider and dispose of any grievances, suggestions or recommendations by any member or organization of the Church.

C. Accept persons into Church Membership, discipline them and terminate their Church Membership in the manner herein provided for.

D. Appoint the Superintendent of the Sunday School and approve all Superintendents of departments of the Sunday School. The Superintendent may be, but need not be, a member of the Official Board.

E. Exercise all other powers and duties which properly belong to the sole governing body of an independent Church, Congregation and Corporation, but shall at all times be subject to the majority vote of the Congregation, unless otherwise specified.

SECTION 9. The Official Board shall call Congregational Meetings whenever a demand is made upon them in accordance with any provisions of this Constitution or of the By-Laws.

SECTION 10. Should it ever occur that a serious difference of opinion arises in which the Sr. Pastor is convinced that the policy of the majority of the Board will jeopardize and hinder the work of the Church, the Sr. Pastor, despite his right to appeal to the Council of Appeal, may, with approval of three other members of the Official Board require that the matter be held in abeyance until decided by a majority vote of the Congregation at a Constitutionally called Congregational Meeting.

SECTION 11. When the Church is without a Sr. Pastor, it shall be the duty of the Official Board, to supply the pulpit with men whose Christian character and teaching are in accord with the Articles of Faith and Covenant of this Church. Such pulpit supply must be approved by the Official Board.

ARTICLE IX

POSITIONS OF SERVICE

(See Article VIII Sec. 2)

SECTION 1. Elders shall be elected by the Church for a period of three years; their terms of office shall be so arranged that approximately one-third (1/3) of the Elders' terms of office shall expire each year. After the completion of a full term of office an Elder may serve a consecutive 3 year term if elected. No Elder shall be eligible for re-election until a full year has elapsed following his terms in office.

SECTION 2. Elders shall be men in full communion of the Church, of mature judgment and unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the spiritual welfare of the Church. (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9) After they have been elected, but before they may assume office, they shall be ordained and installed as Ruling Elders in the following manner. They shall receive instruction from the Sr. Pastor, and then appear before the Congregation and respond affirmatively to the following questions:

A. Do you believe the Scriptures as written in the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and accept them as the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

B. Have you adopted the Articles of Faith, Covenant, Practice and Rule of this Church?

C. Will you be cheerfully governed by the Constitution and By-Laws of this Church, and promise to study its purity, unity and peace?

D. Do you accept the office of Ruling Elder and promise to perform faithfully all the duties of the office according to the New Testament?

E. Will you be cheerfully governed by the decisions of the majority of the Official Board and the Congregation?

Then the question shall be put to the Congregation as follows:

Do you, the members of this Church, acknowledge and receive these brethren as Ruling Elders, and do you promise to pray for them that they may be Spirit-filled and Spirit-guided men, and will you yield to them that honour and obedience in the Lord to which they are entitled according to the Word of God, and the Constitution of this Church?

(The members will answer in the affirmative by raising their right hands, and the Sr. Pastor shall proceed to consecrate the Candidates to their office, by prayer, as the Elders-elect devoutly kneel.)

Prayer

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Lord Jesus Christ, I hereby declare you to be regularly elected and duly installed Ruling Elders in the Church of the Open Door of Fort Washington, Pennsylvania.

SECTION 3. The number of Elders to be elected by the Church shall be determined on the following basis: There shall be not fewer than six Elders for the first 200 members, and there may be chosen, if desired, two elders for each succeeding 100 members, i.e., when there are 300 members in the Church, the Membership is entitled to elect 8 Elders, 10 for 400, 12 for 500, etc.

SECTION 4. Any vacancy in the office of Elder shall be filled at the Annual Meeting. In the event of an early term vacancy of any Elder, the current standing Nominating Committee shall be responsible for recommending a replacement to complete the term upon unanimous approval of the current Official Board, and a majority vote of the Congregation, at a Congregational Meeting specially called, as provided by the By-Laws, for that purpose.

SECTION 5. It shall be the duty of the Elders to be diligent and faithful in attendance at the Official Board meetings and at the regular services of the Church; they shall assist the Sr. Pastor at the Lord's Table and in the ministry of visitation among the members of the Congregation; they shall pray for and encourage the Sr. Pastor, and assist him in the spiritual oversight of the Church.

SECTION 6. A **Board of Deacons** is to be elected by the Congregation upon recommendation by the Official Board. Due to the unique nature of their ministry, their number shall not exceed twice the number of seated elders, based upon the number of members in the congregation (see Article IX Section 3). Their particular responsibility shall be to look after the needy members of our Church, as provided for in Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-13; and they shall hold themselves in readiness for Church visitation, ushering, and other duties when requested to do so by the Sr. Pastor or the Official Board.

SECTION 7. Deacons shall be elected and installed in the same manner as Elders, as provided for in Sections 1-6 of Article IX of the Constitution and in the By-Laws, but the Deacons shall not be members of the Official Board.

SECTION 8. A **Building and Grounds Committee** may be appointed by the Official Board. Their particular responsibility shall be to look after the physical plant of the church. They shall have the power to spend from the approved budget the funds necessary to maintain all necessary plant operations of the church facilities.

SECTION 9. Though separation is essentially a matter of individual conscience, it should be a concern of the spiritual leaders of the Church. We believe it our right and duty to raise the issue of the application of Scriptural principles to areas of doubtful conduct. Some of these areas which give us concern are: the practice of dancing; gambling; the use of narcotic drugs and/or alcoholic beverages (except by proper medical prescriptions); the use of tobacco; membership in oath-bound secret societies; the viewing of those motion pictures and the reading of that literature for personal

pleasure which definitely contradict Christian concepts of life; unethical business practices; the carelessness in Sunday activities which tend to crowd our regular and faithful attendance at Church services and participation in the worship, praise, and service of God; and matters of this kind.

SECTION 10. Officers' Covenant. Each Elder and Deacon shall indicate his agreement to the principles outlined below in Section 11 and those contained in the following Covenant by signing same. *(Copy attached)*

SECTION 11. Statement of Christian Conduct. No one shall be nominated or elected as an Elder or a Deacon or be elected or appointed to any other office in the Church or any of its organizations, or teach in the Sunday School, sing in the Choir, or be employed in the capacity of Church Secretary, Choir Director, Organist, and other positions of service who shall not answer in the affirmative and subscribe in writing, (if required), to the following questions:

A. Are you in hearty agreement with the Articles of Faith, and notwithstanding this agreement do you agree to abide by the Articles of Faith, Covenant, Constitution and By-Laws of this Church?

B. Are you living a surrendered, prayerful Christian life, especially pertaining to loyal obedience to the moral precepts taught in the Word of God for believers, repudiating those sins of the old nature such as envy, malice, jealousy, gossip, grievances against the Spirit? (Galatians 5:19, 20; Ephesians 4:30, 31).

ARTICLE X

PASTORS

SECTION 1. The Sr. Pastor of the Church shall be chosen by the Congregation for an indefinite period, by ballot, upon the recommendation of the Official Board after prayerful investigation and consideration. Only such men shall be recommended who can and will conscientiously sign, without reservation, the Articles of Faith, Covenant, Constitution and By-Laws of the Church. The selection of the Sr. Pastor shall be voted upon at a Meeting of the Congregation specially called for that purpose. Notice of such meeting shall be given at both services of the Church on the two consecutive Lord's Days preceding the meeting called for such election. A majority of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the voters present shall be necessary to elect. After his election, the Sr. Pastor-elect shall be installed by the Elders and a committee of ministers chosen by the Elders and the Pastor-elect.

SECTION 2. The Sr. Pastor shall discharge all the functions of the ministry, and shall, with the prayerful support and approval of the Board, have control of all the religious meetings and spiritual affairs of the Church.

SECTION 3. The Sr. Pastor and the Official Board shall consider and decide upon all pulpit supplies and special pulpit features.

SECTION 4. If an Assistant Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Youth Pastor is needed, he shall be chosen by the Sr. Pastor, subject to the approval of the Official Board.

SECTION 5. All employees of the Church, including Church Secretaries, Musicians, Custodians, etc., shall be selected by the Sr. Pastor, subject to the approval of the Official Board.

SECTION 6. If at any time the Sr. Pastor shall make application to be released from the pastorate, or if the relations between Sr. Pastor and Congregation become such as to be detrimental to the welfare of the Church, the relationship may be terminated by the Congregation in ninety (90) days from the date of the notice of intention, or in a shorter period of time, by determination of the Official Board. The Official Board shall have authority to consider this matter and make recommendations to the Congregation, but it shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present at a Constitutionally called Congregational Meeting to dismiss the Sr. Pastor.

SECTION 7. If at any time the Sr. Pastor's personal belief, preaching or teaching shall not be in full accord with the doctrinal standards of this Church, his services as Sr. Pastor shall be terminated immediately following a Congregational Meeting at which his dismissal has been requested by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

ARTICLE XI

DOCTRINAL SUBSCRIPTION

All Choir Members, Musicians, Officers of the Church, Officers of organizations, Officers and Teachers in the Sunday School, etc., if required by the Official Board, shall annually subscribe to the Articles of Faith and Covenant contained in the Constitution. These signatures shall be secured by the Secretary of the Official Board and kept in the records of the Church.

ARTICLE XII

ORDINATION

SECTION 1. Since it is our hope that Spirit-filled men will be called out from among us to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God, **such men may be given a commission to preach and administer the Ordinances** by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Congregation, provided that the Board is unanimous in its conviction that the Candidate has the Scriptural qualifications, suitable gifts, necessary training and has had the blessing of God upon his public ministry.

SECTION 2. When the Church decides that one of its candidates possesses the Scriptural qualifications for ordination, as provided for in Section 1, the Official Board shall call a Council of ministers and brethren to examine the qualifications of the Candidate, to which Council the propriety of, and arrangements for, ordination shall be referred.

SECTION 3. The Official Board shall have power to discipline, even to the revocation of the ordination credentials of any minister, ordained under this Constitution, who after a fair and impartial trial, is found guilty of heresy or sinful practices clearly forbidden by this Constitution and the Word of God. (See Article III; and Article IX, Sections 2, and 9 & 11, of the Constitution).

ARTICLE XIII

FINANCES

SECTION 1. The work of the Church is entirely dependent upon the prayers, personal services and voluntary gifts (Mal. 3:10) of the Lord's people. Before the Annual Congregational Meeting, the Official Board shall obtain an estimate of the needs of the several divisions of our work and prepare a detailed budget of the proposed expenditures for the coming year. When this budget is approved by a vote of the Congregation, it shall be considered the basis for the current liabilities. No Committee or Board is authorized to make changes in its provisions, or to make unauthorized disbursements without the consent of the Congregation, except as provided for in Article VIII, Section 7.

SECTION 2. Emergency funding provision. In the event of an emergency situation, such as a catastrophic failure of systems or equipment that may compromise the building or plant's integrity, normal operations, or to assure safety for its staff, members, or occupants, the Board may, upon majority vote, take whatever actions are needed and appropriate to restore normal operation to the facility. Such action may include funding beyond the limits provided for in Article VIII Section 6 herein. In any case, the Board will provide a detailed description of the problem and resolution in writing to the Congregation by the next Lord's Day following said action.

ARTICLE XIV

DISSOLUTION

The Church of the Open Door, (COD), a Pennsylvania corporation, may be dissolved only with the authorization of its Board of Elders given at a special meeting called for that purpose and with the subsequent approval by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Active Members of the Congregation. Upon dissolution, or other termination of COD, all remaining assets of COD, after payment in full of all its debts, obligations and necessary final expenses, or after the making of adequate provision thereof, shall be distributed to such tax-exempt organization(s), with like faith and practice, recognized under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as shall be chosen by the Active members of the congregation upon recommendation by the existing Board of Elders.

ARTICLE XV

AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. Amendments to this Constitution may be made upon application to a competent court of law or by such other procedure as may be provided by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the amendment of charters. No part of Article III shall ever be amended or changed in any respect.

SECTION 2. Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Congregation at any regular Congregational Meeting or special meeting called for the purpose, provided in either case, that such amendment shall be distributed in written form to the Membership at least two weeks prior to such Congregational Meeting.

BY-LAWS

of

THE CHURCH OF THE OPEN DOOR

of Fort Washington, PA

(Formerly of Philadelphia)

ARTICLE I

MEETINGS

SECTION 1. The Fiscal Year of the Church shall begin July 1 and end June 30.

SECTION 2. The Annual Meeting of the Congregation must be announced on two successive Sundays prior to the meeting and shall be held between the 10th and 25th of June of each year in the Church Building, for the purpose of electing Officers, for the reception of reports, and for the transaction of such other business as may properly be brought before the Meeting. The Sr. Pastor shall act as presiding officer at all Congregational Meetings.

SECTION 3. Special meetings of the Congregation may be called by the Official Board at any time, provided that notice of the time, place and purpose thereof, shall be given at both services on two consecutive Lord's Days, immediately preceding such meeting.

SECTION 4. Special meetings shall be called by the Official Board, or if they fail to act, then by the Sr. Pastor, when such a meeting is required under the provisions of the Constitution or the By-Laws, or when a written request to call such a meeting shall be signed by fifty members of the Church in good and regular standing and be presented to the Secretary of the Official Board. Notice of such a special meeting shall be given as provided for in Section 3 hereof.

SECTION 5. The Official Board shall arrange the details of all Congregational Meetings and see that all possible preparations for their successful conduct are made.

SECTION 6. The voting members present at any Congregational Meeting, called in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution and By-Laws, shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business.

SECTION 7. Any member of the Church in good and regular standing shall have the right to vote on any questions properly brought before any Congregational Meeting, except however, that on questions involving the disbursement of money, or any financial transactions, only members of eighteen years of age, or more, shall have the right to vote.

SECTION 8. Any person whose name appears on the Roll of the Church, who is not under discipline, shall be presumed to be a member in good and regular standing, and the burden of proving the contrary shall rest upon him who asserts that such member is not in good and regular standing.

SECTION 9. All Congregational Meetings, unless otherwise specified by our Constitution and By-Laws, shall be conducted according to Roberts' Revised Rules of Order.

ARTICLE II

OFFICIAL BOARD

SECTION 1. The Official Board shall hold regular monthly meetings.

SECTION 2. The Quorum of the Official Board shall be the Sr. Pastor and one-half (*1/2*) of the total number of ruling Elders on the Board. When the Church is without a Sr. Pastor, the quorum shall be one-half (*1/2*) of the total number of Elders, the Vice-President presiding over the meeting, of which all members have been notified. The Official Board shall meet at the call of the Vice-President, or at the request of any five members of the Board.

SECTION 3. At the first regular or special meeting of the Official Board held after the election of Elders, the Official Board shall elect its Officers as provided for by the Constitution.

SECTION 4. The duties of the Sr. Pastor as President of the Official Board shall be to perform such duties as usually pertain to that office. The President shall oversee the preparation of the Annual Reports for submission to the congregation at the annual meeting. The President shall be a member ex-officio, with power to vote, of all Boards and standing and special committees, except the Nominating Committee, established under these By-Laws.

SECTION 5. The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President (in his absence), but no meeting of the Official Board shall be called during his absence without the knowledge and consent of the President, except as provided for in the Constitution, Article VIII, Section 9. The Vice-President shall be a member ex-officio, with power to vote, of all Boards and standing and special committees, except the Nominating Committee, established under these By-Laws.

SECTION 6. The Secretary shall keep a record of all business transacted at the Congregational and Official Board Meetings, keep an accurate record of the Membership, carry on all necessary correspondence for the Official Board and the Congregation and he shall secure annually, the signatures of all persons required to sign any documents by the Constitution or By-Laws.

SECTION 7. The Treasurer or appointed and approved persons shall deposit all Church funds in a bank account, or accounts, as instructed by the Official Board which shall be opened and maintained in the name of the Church, and shall disburse the same at the direction of the Official Board.

The Treasurer shall make a monthly report to the Official Board and annual reports to the Congregation. The Treasurer shall submit his/her books for an annual audit prior to the Congregational Meeting and at such other time or times as may be directed by the Official Board. If required, the Treasurer shall furnish a bond, the amount of which shall be determined by the Official Board, the cost of which shall be paid by the Church.

SECTION 8. The Assistant Treasurer, if appointed, shall assist the Treasurer and perform the duties of the Treasurer in his/her absence. The Assistant Treasurer, Treasurer or approved persons shall be responsible for the count and keep a record of all regular offerings in the presence of, and having the signatures as witnesses of, at least two other members of the Church.

Note: The Treasurer shall normally function as the Disbursing Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer, if appointed, shall normally function as the Receiving Treasurer. In emergency either may serve in both capacities.

SECTION 9. The Official Board may also elect a Treasurer of the Benevolent Fund and such other officers, as it may deem necessary or proper. The Assistant Treasurer, Treasurer of the Benevolent Fund, and all other persons who handle funds of the Church or for its organizations, shall, if so required by the Official Board, furnish a bond in the amount required by the Official Board, the cost of which shall be paid by the Church.

ARTICLE III

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SECTION 1. A Nominating Committee consisting of seven persons who are members of the Church in good and regular standing, shall be appointed by the Sr. Pastor, and the Official Board any time prior to March 1st of each year, for a term of one (1) year, subject to the approval of the Congregation when announced at any regular Lord's Day Service.

SECTION 2. The members of the Nominating Committee shall consist of three members of the Official Board and four other members of the church who are not Elders. One of these four shall be chosen from the Church Membership engaged in the work of the Sunday School; one from the Church Membership engaged in working with Youth Organizations; and the remaining two, from the general Church Membership.

SECTION 3. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to present as nominees to the Congregational Meeting the names of such men as it believes meet the qualifications for the office of Elder and Deacon, and whom it believes should be considered by the Congregation for election to that office, as outlined in Article IX, Section 11 of the Constitution. The report of the Nominating Committee must be posted or be distributed to the members at a regular Lord's Day Service on each of at least two Sundays prior to the Congregational Meeting.

SECTION 4. At the Congregational Meeting, the Nominating Committee shall place in nomination the candidates for election to fill vacancies in the elective offices of the Church. It shall be within the province of the Congregation to accept or reject in part or whole the Committee's report by a majority vote. In the event that the report is rejected in part or whole, this Committee shall continue to function, unless otherwise ordered by the Congregation until a slate submitted is fully accepted by the Congregation.

SECTION 5. All officers of the Church shall be elected by ballot and a majority of the ballots cast shall be necessary to elect any person to office. The nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected to the vacant offices.

SECTION 6. Elders and Deacons shall be elected for a term of three years and their term shall be arranged so that the offices of approximately one third (1/3) of the total number of Elders and Deacons shall become vacant each year.

SECTION 7. At the first election for Elders, held after the incorporation of the Church, there shall be first elected those Elders who are to serve for a period of four years; then the meeting shall proceed to elect those Elders who are to serve for a period of three years; then the meeting shall proceed to elect those Elders who are to serve for a period of two years; and the meeting shall then proceed to elect those Elders who are to serve for a period of one year.

ARTICLE IV

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. The Application for Membership, as required by the Constitution, Article IV, Section 1 and Article VI, Section 2 shall consist of:

- A.** The Articles of Faith, Article III, Section 1, of the Constitution, printed in full: and
- B.** The following agreement and form, which shall be filled out and signed by the applicant:

APPLICATION AGREEMENT

It is my desire to be received into the Membership of The Church of the Open Door of Fort Washington, Pennsylvania. I cheerfully accept and subscribe to the Articles of Faith, Constitution and By-Laws of this Church.

In assuming this membership, I agree to be loyal to the interests of this Church, to seek its purity and prosperity, to be actively involved in Christian work, to be subject to the discipline of the Church and to contribute to its support as the Lord shall prosper me.

If at any time I find myself out of harmony with the Articles of Faith, Covenant, Constitution or By-Laws of this Church, or if my conduct or belief is called in question, I agree to submit the differences or charges to the Official Board, and if it be found that I am unwilling to settle the differences on Scriptural grounds (Matt. 18:15-17), I hereby authorize the Official Board to drop my name from the Roll of the Church Membership.

In case I fail to communicate with the Church for a period of one year, and make no reply to their communications addressed to me, I authorize the Official Board to drop my name from the Membership Roll.

Signed _____ Date _____
(This is only a specimen, not to be used.)

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
The Church of the Open Door
of
Fort Washington, PA

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone (____) _____ Work (____) _____
Date of Birth _____ Date of Marriage _____
Joining on confession of faith? _____
Joining by letter from another church? _____
Name of Church _____
City _____
When Converted? _____
Do you accept the Scriptures as the rule for your faith and conduct? _____
Have you been baptized? _____ Do you desire baptism? _____
Have you read our Constitution and By-Laws? _____
Do you agree with them? _____
Will you support the Church in its work? _____
What areas of the ministry do you plan to work? AWANA ____ Choir ____ Committees ____
Orchestra ____ Sunday School ____ Usher ____ Visitation ____ Youth Ministries ____
On what Scripture do you base the assurance of your salvation? _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Please secure Application Form at Church Office

SECTION 2. The application for Affiliated Membership, as required by the Constitution, shall be in the same form as the application set forth in Section 1 thereof, except that it shall be designated that the application is for Affiliated Membership.

ARTICLE V

AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Congregation at any regular Congregational Meeting or special meeting called for the purpose, provided that such amendment shall be distributed in written form to the Church Membership at least two weeks prior to such Congregational Meeting.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Article VIII, Section 7	Approved by Congregational Vote 7/14/09
Article IX, Section 6	Approved by Congregational Vote 7/14/09
Article XIII, addition of Section 2	Approved by Congregational Vote 7/14/09
Article IX Section 11	Approved by Congregational Vote 06/22/08
Article XIV	Approved by Congregational Vote 12/8/02 Approved by Congregational Vote 2/7/99
Article I	
Article II, addition Section 1 and Section 2	
Article IV, addition of Section 6	
Article IV, Section 10	
Article V, Section 1	
Article V, Section 3	
Article VI, Section 4	
Article VI, addition of Section 5	
Article VIII, Section 2	
Article VIII, addition of Section 3	
Article VIII, Section 4	
Article, Section 5	
Article VIII, Section 11	
Article VIII, remove Section 12	
Article IX, Title	
Article IX, Section 1	
Article IX, Section 2, addition E.	
Article IX, Section 4	
Article IX, Section 6	
Article IX, renumber Section 7	
Article IX, addition Section 8	
Article IX, addition Section 9	
Article IX, addition Section 10	
Article IX, Section 11, A., B.	
Article X, Section 2	
Article X, Section 4	
Article X, Section 5	
Article X, Section 6	

Article XII, Section 3
Article XIII, Section 1
Article XIV addition

AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS

Article I, Section 1
Article I, Section 2
Article I, Section 7
Article II, Section 2
Article II, remove original section 3
Article II, Section 4
Article II, Section 5
Article II, Section 7
Article II, Section 8
Article II, Section 9
Article III, Section 1
Article III, Section 2
Article III, Section 3
Article III, Section 6
Article IV, Section 1, B