



## Policy for Implementation of Biblical Discipline in Church Plant Projects

Midwest Church Extension  
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Incorporated Projects		
With Adequate <sup>1</sup> Constitutional Provision		Without Adequate <sup>1</sup> Constitutional Provisions
With Leadership	Without Leadership	
<b>POLICY:</b> MCE will monitor and advise, as necessary, in the implementation of the existing constitutional provisions.	<b>POLICY:</b> MCE will oversee the implementation of the existing constitutional provisions.	<b>POLICY:</b> MCE will provide a temporary disciplinary policy <sup>2</sup> to be implemented until such time as the church develops its own constitution containing its own provisions which meet the established MCE criteria <sup>1</sup> for such.
<p><sup>1</sup><b>Definition of “adequate”</b> -- Adequate provisions shall be understood to mean that any provisions for discipline contained in the church’s constitution have met the following standards of measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Such provisions must contain within them a clear identification of “who” is the subject of discipline [members/non-members].</li> <li>2. An (extra-constitutional) explanation of the ramifications of extreme discipline (i.e.; membership, communion, fellowship, attendance at church services etc.).</li> <li>3. A satisfactory (extra-constitutional) explanation of the church’s rationale for the selection of the biblical passages used to support the position which the church has taken in regard to the matter of church discipline.</li> </ol>		
Other MCE Projects		
<b>POLICY:</b> MCE will administrate any necessary matters of biblical discipline that arise within a plant project.		
<p><b><sup>2</sup>MCE Temporary Guidelines for Church Discipline</b></p> <p>In its essence, the process of biblical church discipline is the practical outworking of one, or both, of two biblical principles. On the one hand, there is the principle of mutual accountability that exists between individual believers. A proper functioning of this principle serves to assist individual believers toward consistency in godly living. The other principle is that of protecting the local church from such things as would endanger its doctrinal purity, its internal unity and its testimony in the local community and before the world.</p> <p><b>Matters Not Necessitating Formal Church Action</b></p> <p><b>Personal Offenses Between Individuals</b></p> <p>In matters involving personal offenses occurring between individual believers associated with this church, the offended parties shall be expected to follow the process outlined in Matthew 18.15-17.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step One: Go to the offending brother and tell him his fault with the purpose of exhorting to repentance and achieving reconciliation</li> <li>• Step Two: If repentance and reconciliation are not achieved through step one, take one or two witnesses and go to the offending brother a second time with the purpose of</li> </ul>		

exhorting to repentance and achieving reconciliation.

- Step Three: If repentance and reconciliation are still not achieved, tell the matter to the church, providing opportunity for the assembly of believers to exhort the offender to repentance and to seek reconciliation
- Step Four: If the offending party does not respond to the church, the offended party is to regard the offender as an unbeliever.

### **Observable Momentary Personal Sins**

In circumstances involving an individual believer who is suddenly overtaken by sin, it is the responsibility of “those who are spiritual” to “restore such a one” (Galatians 6.1). This action is to be done privately, in a spirit of gentleness with care given to oneself in the process less he too be tempted to pride, harshness or otherwise inappropriate attitude or spirit.

### **Matters Involving Formal Church Action**

The Scriptures prescribe formal church disciplinary action in response to, 1) those who threaten the doctrinal purity of the church through the promotion of doctrinal heresy, 2) those who threaten the unity of the church by being divisive and, 3) those involved in sinful behavior deemed by the Midwest Church Extension staff as being that which brings public reproach to the name of Christ and the testimony of the church.

### **Process**

#### **1. Maintaining Doctrinal Purity**

Galatians 1.7-9; 5.10-12; Titus 1.10-13 address the biblical response to those who are present in the assembly who are guilty of teaching false doctrine and perverting the Gospel. When this is discovered, it is the responsibility of the church leadership (Acts 20) to protect the church by strong rebuke and refusal to allow them to participate in the life of the church.

#### **2. Maintaining Unity in the Body**

Titus 3.9-11 and 1 Timothy 6.3-5 provide instruction regarding the required response to the divisive man. The divisive man is the one who, out of self will, sets himself in opposition to the teaching or practice of the church and who seeks draw others after him, thus threatening the unity of the church.

Such a person is to be warned and told to stop. If he persists, he is to be warned and told to stop a second time. If he still persists he is to be rejected. His behavior at that point has become an issue of fellowship and believers ought to have nothing to do with him until that behavior changes.

#### **3. Maintaining the Honor of Christ and the Testimony of the Church**

1 Corinthians 5.1-13 addresses situations in which unrepentant believers are engaged in sinful behavior that brings public reproach to the name of Christ and to the testimony of the church. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the church to separate themselves from the offenders by putting them out of the fellowship and denying them the benefits of fellowship with the local assembly.

### **Record Keeping**

In every instance where formal discipline is exercised, it is the responsibility of those exercising

such discipline to file a report of that action, along with any relevant documentation, in a secure place, together with other official church documents.

## **Ramifications**

The practical result of formal church discipline shall include the following:

### **Minimally**

In every instance of formal church discipline, exclusion from participation in the Lord's Table and immediate removal from any position of ministry/service in the church shall be enacted. Generally, continued attendance in the services of the church shall be encouraged in order that the ministry of the Word might be used of God to bring the offender to repentance. It shall be within the prerogative of the church leadership, however, to deny that privilege to those under discipline if they deem such denial to be in the best interest of the church.

### **Potentially**

In cases where formal discipline has been exercised to preserve the doctrinal purity of the church, or the honor of Christ and the testimony of the church, expulsion from the fellowship and denial of the privilege of attendance shall be enacted.

## **Restoration**

The act of restoration is illustrated in 2 Corinthians 2.6-8: *"This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, let perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him."*

While we are to always have a spirit of forgiveness, such a spirit is maintained in hopes of that time when repentance is evidenced by the sinning person and the spirit of forgiveness is enabled to be exercised in the act of forgiveness. Forgiveness, and by extension restoration, is only possible when there is true repentance. Repentance is a change of mind which results in a change of life; attitude and/or behavior.

Joseph is an Old Testament example of this. He put his brothers through several tests (Genesis 42,43) to determine the genuineness of their repentance. Their confession (42.21-22) was the evidence that Joseph sought of their change of heart and attitude. It was the trigger which released Joseph's free and open forgiveness.

Repentance and confession are singled out as conditions to forgiveness in the New Testament as well (Luke 17.3,4; 1 John 1.9). When confession is made and repentance is seen, forgiveness and restoration to fellowship should be dispensed freely.

Restoration to leadership and positions of service in the fellowship are another matter, however, and may require a time of proving. Such matters shall be handled on an individual basis at the discretion of the leadership of the church.