

INSTRUCTIONS

For

APPLICANTS

For Membership

in the

Dunkard Brethren Church

INSTRUCTIONS

The following collation of text material was taken from the Polity Booklet, revision of 1993. The "Church Covenant" was especially formulated for the purpose here intended. (pg. 14)

The text material under the heading "Private Instruction" is intended for use in bringing applicants for membership to a well rounded knowledge of the doctrines and principles of the Dunkard Brethren Church. The material appearing under the heading "Public Instruction" is to be used during the public meeting which almost without exception precedes baptism for attestation by the applicant, for the shortening of that service. It is supposed that the one who will conduct the private instruction will satisfy himself that the applicant is thoroughly familiar with the doctrines and principles before presenting himself or herself before the public meeting.

PRIVATE INSTRUCTIONS

Church Membership

The Church is composed of persons who covenant to be loyal to the principles of the Gospel, as understood by the church.

By conviction of sin, conversion and confession of our sins, by faith in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as revealed to us by the Holy Scriptures, and baptism by trine immersion, we enter into covenant relation with one another, as one body in Christ Jesus. Thus, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, we mutually agree to walk together in Christian love, to strive together for the advancement of the church in knowledge, holiness and prosperity; to promote spirituality; humility and peace, to sustain its worship, ordinances and doctrines, and cheerfully to contribute of the means that God gives us, for the building of churches, for supporting the ministry, when needed for missionary work, for supporting the poor, and every other good work that tends to the enlargement of Christ's kingdom on earth, and the good of its subjects.

We also engage to live truthful and exemplary lives before the world; to have private devotions in our family; to religiously instruct and educate our children; we therefore approve, recommend, and encourage all congregations, where feasible, to establish schools in the local congregations; to labor for the physical and spiritual good of our neighbors and those with whom we associate; to be honest and upright in all of our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to watch over each other in brotherly love, pray for each other and aid each other in sickness and distress, ever remembering that best of all rules "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

ARTICLE IV - The Law of Pardon

Sec. 1. Faith, abstractly, is the assent of the mind to the supernatural origin of the Bible, and to all the truth, as therein revealed; concretely, it is taking God at his word, and, manifested by humble obedience thereto, prompted by the Spirit of love. (Heb. 11:1,6; Jude 1:3; Gal. 5:6; Jas. 2:20,22.)

Sec. 2. Repentance is a cessation from sin, with consciousness and sorrow that it is displeasing to God, and a turning from the love and practice of sin to the love of truth and practical righteousness. (Isaiah 1:16,17; Isaiah 55:7; II Cor. 7:10; Acts 14:15, 17:30.)

Sec. 3. Confession is a voluntary renunciation of sin, and the avowal of truth and right, with faith in Christ, vitalized by works of loving obedience. (Matt. 3:6; Matt. 10:32; Phil. 2:11; James 5:16; Rom. 10:10.)

Sec. 4. Baptism in mode is immersion, in form it consists of trine immersion in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, (Matt. 28:19; Mark 1:5,8; Matt. 3:6; Acts 8:38-39.)

Sec. 5. Kneeling, or bowing is the scriptural posture in baptisms. (Jn. 19:30; Rom. 6:4-5.)

Sec. 6. Baptism in purpose, along with faith, and repentance, and confession, is for the remission of sins. (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:37,38; Tit. 3:5.)

ARTICLE V - Church Rites

Sec. 1. Feet-washing is a New Testament rite to be observed among God's people until the return of the Master who instituted it and gave his own example of it. (John 13:1-17; 1 Tim. 5,10; Matt. 28:20.)

Sec. 2. The Lord's Supper as instituted by Christ in the night of his betrayal is a full meal to be kept among his people along with Feet-washing and the Communion until his return. (John 13:30; Luke 22:20; John 13:2-4; I Cor. 11:23-25.)

Sec. 3. The Communion as instituted by Christ consists in partaking of the bread and the cup in a worthy manner, at the close of the day, in connection with, but following Feet-washing and the Lord's Supper. (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22-24; I Cor. 10:16; 11:21-26.)

Sec. 4. The holy kiss is a divine rite to be kept and perpetuated in the church and is observed when we meet for worship, at love feasts in connection with Feet-washing, between the Supper and the Communion, and on other occasions. (Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 16:20; II Cor. 13:12; I Thess. 5:26,27; I Peter 5:14.)

Sec. 5. Veiling or covering their heads by Christian women in times of prayer or prophesying is of Divine appointment. A plain white cap covering the head meets the scriptural requirement. (I Cor. 11:1-16). It is not consistent nor in harmony with the teachings of our forefathers for sisters to wear prayer covering without strings. The modern round cap is not considered as meeting the scripture requirement for a covering.

Sec. 6. We believe the anointing of the sick to be an appointment of the Lord, and that it was intended to be perpetuated in His church, and should be attended to, at the request of the sick, by the elders of the Church. "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." - James 5:14.

The Scriptural specifications is for the anointing to be performed by two Elders. In practice, the church has permitted a minister or even a deacon in extreme cases, to assist an elder when a second elder is not at all available. (Jas. 5:14; Matt. 10:8)

ARTICLES VI - The Christian Sabbath and Graces

Sec. 1. The First day of the week is the Christian Sabbath to be kept as a day of rest and worship. (Matt. 28:1; Acts 20:7; John 20:1; Mark 16:2).

Sec. 2. Sanctification, righteousness, holiness and perfection are cardinal doctrines and graces of the New Testament, and are attained and experienced by Christians to the extent and degree that they in loving obedience manifest the fruits thereof. (John 17:17; Heb. 10:10; I John 3:7, Acts 10:35; I Thess. 4:7; 5:21).

Sec. 3. We believe temperance to be a moderate use of the things that are essential and useful, and total abstinence from such things as are harmful or lead to evil. (I Thess. 5:22). The Brethren Church has ever been a standing monument against the manufacture, sale and use of intoxicating liquors of all kinds as a beverage, admitting their use only when necessary for medical and mechanical purposes.

Sec. 4. We believe that civil government is ordained of God for the care and protection of the good and for the punishment of those who do evil (Rom. 13:1-7) and that kings and rulers should be prayed for (I Tim. 2:2) honored and obeyed (Heb. 13:17) so far as their laws do not conflict with the will of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 5:29) who is Lord of lords and King of kings, and whose laws are to be obeyed by the inhabitants of both heaven and earth (Rev. 19:16).

Sec. 5. We believe the Bible is God's Holy Word by which we understand the will and grace of God. To aid in Scripture memorization among our members and children, to help avoid confusion, and to promote sound doctrine in our services, the Authorized King James version of the Bible shall be used in our Sunday school, Bible study, and Church services, except where a language

other than English is necessary.

ARTICLE VII - Nonconformity

Sec. 1. Affiliation with civil government in accepting of the duties of which any Gospel principle is violated, or one's Christian character is endangered, is incompatible with Christianity. (I Peter 3:9; I Thess. 5:22; Rom. 12:17-21). All members of the Dunkard Brethren Church are admonished to give heed to the example of humility and simplicity of life which Jesus left us in every feature of our lives every day. We advise all our members not to take part in politics or political matters. The Dunkard Brethren Church has not taken a stand against Social Security, but leaves the matter to the individual as to his participation in Social Security.

Sec. 2. We believe that the principle of non-resistance is clearly taught in the Scriptures, and therefore has been accepted as a doctrine of the church. In support of our position we give the following: Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6); his kingdom is not of the world and his servants do not fight (John 18:36); the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (II Cor. 10:4); but we are to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44), overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:2), and pray for them which despitefully use and persecute us (Matt. 5:44). Learning the art of war and participating in carnal warfare or service in any branch of military establishment, at any time, is forbidden by the Scripture; and the boy and girl scout movements and any other movement requiring a uniform, or having any military features, fall under the same condemnation. Members of the Dunkard Brethren Church who enter any branch of the military service or work in war plants shall not be held in fellowship, and if they are obstinate they cannot be held as members.

(Eph. 6:10-18; II Cor. 10:4-5; Gal. 5:19-22; Matt. 26:52).

Sec. 3. Participation in games, plays, performances, and unions that are manifestly evil or sinful, is contrary to the Gospel and to a pure heart. (I Thess. 5:22; John 3:19; 17:15; I Peter 4:3-5). Our members are not permitted to own or have television in their homes. In homes where one is a member and the other is not, the member will not be held responsible for having the television, provided he or she faithfully tell the church they have no part in it. While there may be acceptable uses of the Video and related equipment, members are asked to conscientiously guard their homes from the detrimental spiritual effects of commercial entertainment videos, in that they pose the same spiritual dangers as the motion pictures and the television.

Members do not buy or sell state lottery tickets or take part in any form of gambling. Attendance at theaters and dancing should not be participated in by members. Be it known to all men that the Dunkard Brethren Church is conscientiously opposed to coeducational physical education by Junior High and High School students. (I Peter 2:11).

Sec. 4. Affiliation with secret societies or lodges is in violation of the Scriptures. We, the Dunkard Brethren Church shall not take part in the Ecumenical Movement, the National Council of churches or any similar organization. (John 3:19-21; 18:20; II Cor. 6:14-18; Matt. 10:26; Mark 4:22).

Sec. 5. Conforming to the rules and hurtful fashions of the world, such as wearing of hats by Christian women and neckties, gold rings, bracelets and such like by either sex in the adornment of the body is contrary to the scriptures, and is a token of a proud heart. (Rom. 12:2; I Pet. 1:14; I Pet. 3:3-5; I John 2:15-17; Luke 16:15).

Sec. 6. The use of narcotics, including tobacco, (except as directed by a physician), or of spiritous liquors as a beverage, is opposed by the scriptures. (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:21; I Cor. 3:17; Jas. 1:21; II Cor. 7:1; I Pet. 2:11; I John 2:16), and using, raising, manufacturing, buying, or selling of them by Christians is very inconsistent, and members of the Dunkard Brethren Church who do so should be labored with in love and forbearance, but if and when those labored with manifest an unwilling or arbitrary spirit they subject themselves to the discipline of the church, even to expulsion in extreme cases. So we must earnestly plead that members who are guilty, accept the advice and counsel of the church and abstain from all these.

Since officials are to be examples of the believers (I Tim. 4:12), indulgence in any of these disqualifies for any official in church or S.S. work, or as delegate to District and General Conference.

Sec. 7. Instrumental music or accompaniment will not be used in the house of God. In keeping with our Anabaptist tradition and the apparent New Testament pattern of worship, we encourage the use and development of acapella singing in our congregational worship. (Eph. 5:19; I Cor. 14:15; Col. 3:16).

Sec. 8.1. Brother is forbidden to go to law with brother. (I Cor. 6:1-8).

2. Members should always consult the church about going to law and should get its approval before using the law.

3. Effort should be made to adjust matters (of collections of what is due) without going to law. If reasonable efforts made to compromise and adjust matters fail, the church is at liberty to grant permission to use the law, but causing distress to those who owe, especially if dependents (women and children) are involved, the

law should be avoided.

4. The creditor should not impose greater hardship on the debtor than he himself is under in the circumstances.

Sec. 9. For brethren to enter the legal profession and conduct a regular law business, is out of harmony with the scriptures, and contrary to what has been the mind of the church since its organization. (I Cor. 6:6-7; Luke 11:46,52).

Sec. 10. Taking or subscribing to the civil oath in any form is forbidden in the Scripture. (James 5:12; Matt. 5:34-37).

Dress & Adornment

I. We examined prayerfully the scriptural grounds of Christian attire, and found that Jesus and the apostles taught honesty and simplicity of life and modesty in dress and manners.

The scriptures bearing on the subject of dress and adornment are of several classes:

First: Jesus condemned anxious thought for raiment. (Matt. 6:25:33; Luke 12:22-31).

Second: The direct teachings, such as I Tim. 2-9,10; I Pet. 3:3-5.

Third: Teachings on nonconformity to the world in general, and that applies to dress on general principles, such as Rom. 12:1,2; I Cor. 10:31; I Pet. 1:14,15; I John 2:15-17.

II. Investigation shows that the early church fathers and our own church fathers taught strongly and uniformly against pride and superfluity in dress, and constantly in favor of gospel plainness.

III. The Minutes of Conference show that the Church has, throughout her entire history, stood firmly against the fashions of the age, and extravagance in all manner of living, and on the other

hand has taught faithfully the principles of simplicity of life and personal appearance. And, furthermore the Conference has, from time to time, adopted means and methods with the view of maintaining gospel simplicity in dress in the church body.

Now, since the Gospel teaches plain and modest dress and since this is taught in the form of an obligation, without rules and methods of application further than to exclude plaiting of hair, the wearing of gold, pearls and costly raiment, and believing that a form that agrees with the spirit of the teachings is helpful in maintaining the principles of plainness and simplicity in dress and adornment in the general church body, "it seemed good to us" to submit the following restatement:

1. That the brethren wear plain clothing. That the coat with the standing collar be worn.

2. That the brethren wear their hair and beard in a plain and sanitary manner. That the mustache alone is forbidden. Parting the hair in the middle or combing it straight back is recommended for both brethren and sisters.

3. That the sisters attire themselves in plainly-made garments, free from ornaments and unnecessary appendages. That plain bonnets and hoods be the headdress, and the hair be worn in a becoming Christian manner.

4. That the veil be worn in time of prayer and prophesying (I Cor. 11:1-16). The plain white cap is regarded as meeting the requirements of scriptural teaching on the subject.

5. That gold for ornament and jewelry of all kinds, shall not be worn.

6. That no brother be installed into office as minister or deacon who will not pledge himself to observe and teach the order of dress.

7. That no brother or sister serve as delegate to District Meeting nor be appointed on committees to enforce discipline, who does not observe the order of dress.

8. That it be the duty of the official body of the church to teach faithfully and intelligently the simple, Christian life in dress; and bishops, who are the shepherds of the churches, are required to teach and to see that the simple life in general is taught and observed in their respective charges.

9. That all are urged and implored, in the bond of brotherly love and Christian fellowship, to teach and exemplify the order of the church in dress as suitable expression of "the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

The above decision is interpreted to forbid bobbing the hair and wearing the modern short and sleeveless dresses. In order to provide adequate modesty, the length of the sisters' dresses is to be at least mid-calf or longer.

ARTICLE VIII - Powers and Functions

Sec. 1. The Church is of Divine origin; a theocratic democracy, and is necessary to the evangelizing and Christianizing, and saving of the world. (Acts 20:28; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:11-13; Acts 2:41,47).

Sec. 2. The supremacy of the church over the individual, in question of right or privilege and propriety is of Divine right. (Matt: 16:19; 18:17,18; Jn. 20:23; II Thess. 3:6).

Sec. 3. The duty of the church to properly support a ministry is recognized, but a salaried ministry is without warrant from the scriptures and contrary to the custom of the church for over 200 years. (I Cor. 9:7-14; John 10:12,13).

Sec. 4. Christian women may function and should be encouraged to be helpful in many ways, but a female official in the church or a female ministry in the sense of preaching, is without Scriptural authority. (Luke 8:3; Acts 21:9; I Cor. 14:31; Rom 16:1-3; I Tim. 2:11-12).

ARTICLE X - Marriage

Sec. 1. The marriage relation is of Divine appointment, being instituted by God and recognized by Christ and his apostles. The power and wisdom of our Heavenly Father was not more strikingly displayed in the framing of the material universe, than in his plan of placing the inhabitants of the earth in families. The constitution of the sexes, and their mutual dependence upon each other, were as our Saviour clearly showed, designed and appointed from the beginning, hence the sacredness of the marriage relation. Established in Eden, it has been perpetuated in successive dispensations, by which God has sought to promote the welfare of the human race. In all history, examples, both positive and negative, have been accumulating to prove that the highest interest of humanity center in the family. It is an institution of most sacred importance, and therefore should be entered into understandingly, having in view all the sacred obligations belonging to it.

We believe marriage is appointed by God to be a lifelong covenant of love between one man and one woman. Diligent effort must be made to build and maintain that marriage in a Christian manner. If problems arise, attempt for reconciliation and restoration of that marriage is always our obligation in that sacred relationship. (Matt. 19:4-6; I Cor. 7:10-11).

Sec. 2. Weddings shall be conducted in such a manner that the principles of simplicity, humility, and sobriety are not vio-

lated, keeping in mind that a wedding is a spiritual event, not merely social in nature.

Sec. 3. Divorce on the part of Christians, except for the cause of fornication, is forbidden in the scriptures. (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11; I Cor. 7:11).

If a man or woman be married a second time while the first companion lives, or he or she marry a divorced person they shall not be received, or held, in church fellowship, unless they will live separate and not in marriage relation.

Because of the sacredness of serving as an official in the church, (see I Tim. 3:1-16; Titus 1:6-7) no brother who has been divorced or who remarries a divorced woman shall be placed in official position as a deacon, minister or elder.

Sec. 4. Historically, the Brethren have opposed the practice of abortion, which is murder. (Matt:19:18; I Pet. 4:15; I John 3:15; Exodus 20:13). We believe that human life, from conception, is a sacred creation of God. (Jer. 1:5). Therefore, we believe that non-spontaneous abortion violates the sanctity of human life and the commandments of God. (Luke 1:15; Isa. 49:1).

Sec. 5. The Dunkard Brethren Church is opposed to any homosexual practices and in order for such a person to be a member of the Dunkard Brethren Church, they must be regenerated, forsaking these practices, in accord with the scriptures; (I Cor. 6:9,10; Rom. 1:22-28; Gen. 19:1-14).

Church Covenant

1. The position of the church on non-resistance, non-secrecy, nonlawing, nonswearing, nondivorcement, nonconformity to the world in dress, nonattendance at questionable places of amusement, is laid before all applicants for membership by the

elder in charge or by a minister authorized by him to do so, followed by, "Are you willing to conform to the teaching of the scripture as understood by the church?" Answer, "I am." Then Matt. 18:10-22 is read followed by, "Are you willing to be governed by this scripture in the adjustment of difficulties that may arise?" Answer, "I am."

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Church Membership

The Church is composed of persons who covenant to be loyal to the principles of the Gospel, as understood by the church.

By conviction of sin, conversion and confession of our sins, by faith in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as revealed to us by the Holy Scriptures, and baptism by trine immersion, we enter into covenant relation with one another, as one body in Christ Jesus. Thus, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, we mutually agree to walk together in Christian love, to strive together for the advancement of the church in knowledge, holiness and prosperity; to promote spirituality; humility and peace, to sustain its worship, ordinances and doctrines, and cheerfully to contribute of the means that God gives us, for the building of churches, for supporting the ministry when needed, for missionary work, for supporting the poor, and every other good work that tends to the enlargement of Christ's kingdom on earth and the good of its subjects.

We also engage to live truthful and exemplary lives before the world; to have private devotions in our family; to religiously instruct and educate our children; we therefore approve, recommend, and encourage all congregations, where feasible, to establish schools in the local congregations; to labor for the physical

and spiritual good of our neighbors and those with whom we associate; to be honest and upright in all of our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to watch over each other in brotherly love, pray for each other and aid each other in sickness and distress, ever remembering that best of all rules "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Baptism

Baptism is administered in water, and this, entered into sincerely, and in the answer of a good conscience toward God, is succeeded by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Being born of water and of the Spirit is the entrance into the Kingdom of God here on earth.

"CHURCH COVENANT"

Our members do not participate in the armed service of the kingdoms of this world. They are not permitted to join or belong to any secret order or society nor are they to go to law brother with brother. Members affirm instead of taking an oath in signing or acknowledging legalized documents. Profane swearing is forbidden by the New Testament Scriptures. Our members are not allowed to obtain a divorce on other than scriptural grounds; they may not remarry while the former companion is living, nor marry a divorced person. The position of the Church is that we abstain from the use of narcotics, including tobacco, and from beverages containing alcohol.

We do not conform to the fashions of the world in dress, nor in adorning the body with jewelry, paint and the like. The ornament of a Christian is a meek and quiet spirit. We likewise refrain

from attendance at places of amusement, theaters, and the like, nor are we permitted to have television sets.

"Are you willing to conform to the teaching of the scripture as understood by the church?" Answer, "I am."

Then Matt. 18:10-22 is read followed by,

"Are you willing to be governed by this scripture in the adjustment of difficulties that may arise?" Answer, "I am."

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the LORD that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

Study to shew thyself approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

II Timothy 2:14-15.