



**Terms of Reference for Affiliation with the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (CBWC)**

This policy is authorized by the By-laws of the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (CBWC) as the governing document for member affiliation with the CBWC as stated in By-law Part II.A.1.b which reads,

*...Regulations concerning requirements for Membership, procedures for admission to Membership and procedures for removal from Membership may be prepared by the Board of Directors and adopted at any meeting of the Members of the CBWC. The policy for membership is contained in the policy manual entitled: **Terms of Reference for Affiliation with the CBWC.***

As a By-law authorized policy, this policy “may only be amended by a resolution passed by a majority of not less than two thirds of the votes cast on that resolution at a members meeting” (By-law Part VIII.A).

This policy was created in consultation with members of the Executive Staff, Regional Advisory Teams and the Board of the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada. It emerged as a response to the need for a standard process for 1. admission into Membership of churches who desire to affiliate with the CBWC and 2. removal from Membership of congregations currently affiliated with the CBWC.

This policy was approved by two thirds majority at the CBWC members meeting held June 2, 2023. All previous versions of this policy are considered rescinded and replaced with this policy as of this date of approval.

## **Responsibilities of Members**

Recognizing that each local church has autonomy to establish its own by-laws, practices and teachings, and recognizing that no other church or association of churches has authority to force a local church to change its by-laws, practices or teachings, *nonetheless*, all churches admitted to or currently affiliated with the CBWC as Members are required to uphold the practices and teachings of the CBWC in order to remain Members of the association of churches known as the CBWC. The practices and teachings that CBWC Members (i.e. churches affiliated with the CBWC) are responsible for upholding are found in the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada’s Identity Statement and its supporting resolutions included in footnotes i to vii.

The Identity Statement and its supporting resolutions are found in **Appendix A** of this policy.

## **I. Admission into Membership**

### **A Foundational Concept**

The Canadian Baptists of Western Canada is a voluntary association of churches. Historically, these churches voted to associate together to form the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada as a denomination. Once formed, the CBWC made some administrative decisions that affect its organizational structure. One of the most significant decisions was that the CBWC would subdivide into three geographic regions for administrative purposes. This decision means that the three regions – British Columbia/Yukon, Mountain Standard, and the Heartland (Saskatchewan, Manitoba) are part of the larger CBWC rather than the CBWC being a product of the regions. In practical terms, when churches vote to join the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada, they join the CBWC denomination and are then assigned to their particular geographic region. Even though early contact between the church and Canadian Baptist staff might be at a regional level, the churches are understood to join the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada, not the Region where they are located.

### **Two Major Avenues for Affiliation**

Churches seeking to affiliate with the CBWC will normally be of two kinds:

1. churches already in existence that are independent or affiliated with some other religious body
2. New churches coming into existence within the framework of Canadian Baptist guidance and support.

The general procedures suggested below have been designed to fit these two categories. They outline the major steps to be taken at a congregational level. More detail is also provided in the Affiliation Checklist near the end of this document.

### **I. Churches Already in Existence:**

#### **A. Prerequisites:**

To be eligible for admittance to The Canadian Baptists of Western Canada, a church shall have:

1. An organized life, as a congregation or as a church, of not less than one year.
2. A stated membership (e.g. membership roll) of not less than 20 active adult members (over age 18 years).
3. A formal organization such as council, executive, or board(s), with stated officers (by name).
4. A constitution, statement of faith, or church covenant clearly setting forth the church's understanding of its own nature that are consistent with the responsibilities of members (see above), vision and mission of the CBWC.
5. Churches that already have an affiliation with a denomination other than Canadian Baptists of Western Canada are required to secure a letter of clearance and permission

from the prior denomination indicating there is goodwill and appropriate attention to protocol in the transfer process.

6. Churches seeking affiliation who hold title to property or have the title to their property held in trust by another denomination, are encouraged to arrange in their dissolution clause that any and all of the remaining assets be transferred to the CBWC or other local Baptist church in the event of the church's dissolution.
7. Churches seeking affiliation should be prepared to bear some of the costs incurred to explore affiliation (e.g. Travel, accommodation, meals, and Board and Congregational meetings).

## **B. Procedure:**

A church will be admitted to the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada through a process of reciprocal action between the church and the CBWC. The Director of Church Planting, Regional Minister with the Regional Advisory Team of the particular Region will serve as the liaison body between the church and the Canadian Baptists. The following process will be used:

1. The church will hold a meeting attended by not less than three quarters of its active adult membership, and shall pass a motion with a majority of not less than two-thirds of those present, indicating its desire to enter into membership with the CBWC.
2. The church will write a letter to the Director of Church Planting and Regional Minister, reporting the vote of the congregation to affiliate. The letter requesting affiliation should include:
  - a copy of the congregational minutes
  - a brief history of the church
  - a description of the church's organizational and worship life
  - a list of the officers currently holding office a
  - statement of the church's current financial position and financial history over the past year
3. Official representatives of the respective Region will meet personally with the elected officers of the church and as many additional members as possible and shall seek to interpret to them the organization, policy, and priorities of the denomination to ensure the church fully understands the ramifications of a decision to affiliate. They will also seek to gain as clear an understanding as possible of the church which is seeking to affiliate.
4. The representatives of the Region shall present a full report to the Regional Advisory Team, together with the written request of the church.
5. The Regional Advisory Team will satisfy itself that the affiliation is a desirable match and then forward a recommendation to the CBWC Board that the church be received into full CBWC membership.
6. Upon accepting the recommendation of the Regional Advisory Team, the CBWC Board will recommend to the CBWC Assembly that the church be granted affiliation. It will also notify the Regional Advisory Team and the church congregation of its intent.

7. Once notified of the CBWC Board's affiliation recommendation, the church will be entitled to send its pastor and representatives to the CBWC Assembly to receive the church's official welcome into the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada.
8. Once notified of the CBWC Board's affiliation recommendation, the church will be entitled and expected to send delegates to subsequent Assemblies of the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada. If the timing of the CBWC Board decision happens after an Assembly but before a Regional Assembly, the affiliating church will be entitled and expected to send delegates to the Regional Assembly.

## **II. New Churches Coming into Existence:**

A new church that is coming into existence within the Canadian Baptist context will follow the following organizational and liaison procedures within the Region where the church is located. Each church will have a unique character and early stages of congregational life, but their journey as a congregation will be carefully supervised by the Director of Church Planting, Regional Minister and a Regionally appointed Steering Committee.

### **A. Prerequisites:**

To be eligible for admittance to The Canadian Baptists of Western Canada, a church will have:

1. An organized life, as a congregation or as a church, of not less than one year.
2. A stated membership (e.g., membership roll) of not less than 20 active adult members (over eighteen years of age).
3. A formal organization such as council, executive, or board(s), with stated officers (by name).
4. A constitution or by-laws incorporating a statement of faith or church covenant that clearly sets forth the church's understanding of its own nature that are consistent with the responsibilities of members (see above), vision and mission of the CBWC.

### **B. Organization:**

1. Ongoing discussions will take place between a group of Christians who wish to unite as a church and the Director of Church Planting, the Regional Advisory Team, the Regional Minister and other Canadian Baptist representatives. As part of this process, they will agree on a general organizational structure for the church.
2. Those persons who wish to unite as a church affiliated with the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada will set a time and place for an organizational meeting. This group shall number not less than 20 adult believers (over age 18 years).
3. With the assistance of the Director of Church Planting and Regional Steering Committee, the group will elect an interim moderator and secretary. A person (e.g. visiting Pastor, the Regional Minister, or other CBWC official) may be asked to attend the organizational

meeting and to serve as moderator, or this position may be filled by a member of the group.

4. A member of the group shall move that "those persons here assembled, and whose names are herewith recorded, shall constitute themselves a Baptist church to be known as "[insert name of church]." Those in favor of the motion, and whose names are recorded by the secretary, are constituted a local church with a charter membership of those who favoured the motion.
5. The charter membership may be kept open for a stated period (e.g., four months) by agreement of the church, so that persons unable to be at the organizational meeting may have the opportunity to become charter members.
6. A motion to seek affiliation with the CBWC may be incorporated into the motion to organize as a church, or be presented as a separate motion at the same organizational meeting and passed by a two-thirds majority.
7. It is appropriate for the newly organized church to pass a further motion that extends a call to the church planter to become the first official pastor of the church.
8. The church will elect its officers, based on discussions noted in point #1, at the organizational meeting. This election can be the simple election of an interim Moderator and interim Secretary- in anticipation of a later process for the nomination and election of a full slate of officers. If the Steering Committee has prearranged for a nominating process to precede the organizational meeting, it is possible that the full election of officers could take place at the organizational meeting.
9. The Regional Advisory Team will forward a recommendation to the CBWC Board that the church be received into full CBWC membership.
10. Upon accepting the recommendation of the Regional Advisory Team, the CBWC Board will recommend to the CBWC Assembly that the church be granted affiliation. It will also notify the Regional Advisory Team and the church congregation of its intent.
11. Once notified of the CBWC Board's affiliation recommendation, the church will be entitled to send its pastor and representatives to the CBWC Assembly to receive the church's official welcome into the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada.
12. Once notified of the CBWC Board's affiliation recommendation, the church will be entitled and expected to send delegates to subsequent Assemblies of the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada. If the timing of the CBWC Board decision happens after an Assembly but before a Regional Assembly, the affiliating church will be entitled and expected to send delegates to the Regional Assembly.

**Upon affiliation, the church should make its affiliation with the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada known in its public identity. For example, the church could use an affiliation statement such as "Affiliated with the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada.**

## II. Termination of Membership

In accordance with section 156 of the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*, membership in the CBWC is terminated when

1. The CBWC dissolves.
2. The Member (i.e. local church) dissolves.
3. The Member voluntarily resigns.
4. The Member is removed in accordance with this by-law authorized policy.

The processes for each of these possible terminations of membership are below:

### **A. Process should the CBWC Dissolve**

In the event that the CBWC dissolves as a Not-for-Profit Corporation in Canada, the membership of all Members is terminated on the date of dissolution.

### **B. Process should a Member Dissolve**

In the event that a Member of the CBWC dissolves as a society, that church's Membership is terminated on the date of dissolution.

### **C. Process for Voluntary Resignation**

To voluntarily withdraw from Membership in the CBWC, a church will:

1. Duly call a church business meeting and pass a motion to resign from membership in the CBWC by a two-thirds majority.
2. Send, in writing, a letter communicating the choice to resign from the CBWC to the Executive Minister and President of the Board of the CBWC along with a copy of the meeting minutes where the motion to resign membership in the CBWC was passed.

Having completed these steps, the Membership of the resigning church will be terminated 60-days from the date the motion to resign was passed. At termination of Membership (i.e. the end of this 60-day period) the following will occur:

1. The CBWC credentials of all pastors still serving at the resigning church will be revoked.
2. Participation in the comprehensive Canadian Baptist Benefit Plan (health & insurance benefits and pension plan) facilitated by the CBWC will be terminated effective the last day of the month in which affiliation ends. Any outstanding premium and/or final pension contributions must be submitted to the appropriate plan administrator in advance of this date.
3. Any title held in trust by the CBWC will be returned to the resigning church. Any fees related to returning title will be paid by the resigning church.

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4. Sabbatical fund contributions for pastors will be returned to source contributors as per sabbatical leave policy.
5. A CBWC staff member will offer to attend a public church worship service at the resigning church to express thanks for our shared history and to pray for God's blessing upon the church moving forward.
6. News of the church's resignation will be communicated in writing to the Members of the CBWC in a simple, non-accusatory style.

The news of the church's resignation will also be communicated verbally at the next CBWC Assembly and recorded in the minutes of that Assembly.

#### **D. Process for Removal from Membership**

In light of the seriousness of removal from membership, it is the intent of the CBWC to provide a fair process that shows respect for all parties, including the Lord. For this reason, we, first of all, acknowledge:

1. God alone as judge (Rev. 20:11-15; 1 Cor. 4:3-5). The boundaries of the CBWC are not the boundaries of the kingdom of God nor His Church. Therefore, at no time will any Member be spoken of as unchristian for a failure to uphold the teachings or practices of the CBWC before, during or after this process.
2. The desired goal of all disciplinary action in Scripture is reconciliation (Rev. 3:19-20; James 5:19-20; 2 Cor. 2:6-7). Recognizing that all disciplinary action in the New Testament involves individuals not whole churches, we, nonetheless, consider the wisdom of Jesus expressed in Matthew 18:15-17 to set a pattern of three attempts to "win over" any Member of the CBWC subject to this process before they are removed, in addition to the opportunity for that church to potentially re-apply for membership at a later date even if removed from membership by this process. We consider this essential to maintaining reconciliation as the desired goal.

The process for removal of a church from membership in the CBWC shall be as follows:

1. No complaint against a Member of the CBWC will be considered unless:
  - a. It is sent in writing to the President and Executive Minister of the CBWC.
  - b. It is made by at least two Members of the CBWC (2 Cor. 13:1).
  - c. Each Member making the complaint gives evidence that the complaint has been passed by motion of the board and lead pastor of the Member.
  - d. The motion passed, and/or its referenced rationale, clearly identifies the specific responsibilities (see "Responsibilities of Members" above) believed to have not been upheld, including reference to the specific section of the *Identity Statement*

*of the CBWC*, and clearly identifies the manner in which it is believed to have not been upheld.

2. Upon receipt of a valid complaint, the President and Executive Minister of the CBWC shall:
  - a. Inform the CBWC Board that a complaint has been received within 14 days of receiving the complaint.
  - b. Call together an Investigative Review Committee (IRC) to investigate the complaint within 30 days of receiving the complaint.
3. The Investigative Review Committee (IRC) shall consist of:
  - a. The President of the CBWC.
  - b. Three Regional Representatives from the CBWC Board; one from each region.
  - c. The Executive Minister of the CBWC.
  - d. As far as possible, effort will be made to ensure diversity in age, gender and ethnicity on the IRC.
  - e. In the absence of the President, the VP of Planning will fulfill the role of the President.
  - f. In the absence of the Executive Minister, the Regional Minister of the Member against whom the complaint has been made will fulfill the role of the Executive Minister.
4. Initial Investigation
  - a. The IRC will examine church meeting minutes, material published publicly by the Member under review, or any other appropriate evidence to ascertain if there has been a failure to uphold the member responsibilities laid out above under “Responsibilities of Members.”
  - b. The IRC shall not take longer than 30 days to complete its investigation.
  - c. Before the end of 30 days the IRC shall inform the Board in writing and with evidence of one of two decisions:
    - i. No evidence of failure to uphold responsibilities; OR
    - ii. Evidence of failure to uphold responsibilities.
  - d. In a decision of “No evidence”, the Members who made the complaint will be informed in addition to the Board. If unsatisfied with the decision of the IRC, the Members who made the complaint may appeal to the board and provide what they consider to be evidence. The Board may overrule the decision of the IRC and change it to the decision “Evidence of failure” at which point the process will continue as described below. If the Board upholds the decision of the IRC, the complaint shall be formally dismissed in writing to the Members who made the complaint.



- e. In a decision of “Evidence of failure”, in addition to the CBWC Board, the IRC shall inform the Lead Pastor and church council/board of the Member under investigation in writing of the complaint and the evidence supporting it.
  - f. All communication, in writing or verbal, shall be written in such a way as to encourage the Member to return to a position of upholding the responsibilities with kindness and respect. This is the first attempt to win over the Member.
  - g. The Member shall have 90 days to return to a position of upholding the responsibilities, or to reply with a decision not to uphold them. No response after 90 days will be considered a decision not to uphold the responsibilities.
  - h. If the Member returns to a position of upholding the responsibilities, the complaint will be considered resolved.
  - i. If the Member continues to fail to uphold the responsibilities, the complaint will be directed by the IRC to the Board of the CBWC for further action.
5. Board Review of Complaint
- a. Upon receiving a report from the IRC that after 90 days of being informed in writing the Member investigated remains in a position of failure to uphold responsibilities, the Board shall review the report at a duly held meeting, no later than 60 days from receiving the IRC’s report.
  - b. Two leaders from the Member under investigation will be invited to the meeting to express their dissent, should they desire to do so.
  - c. Having read the report of the IRC and having heard the dissent of the Member under investigation, the Board shall then vote whether or not to bring a motion to a business meeting of the CBWC at an in-person Assembly that the Member be removed from membership for failure to uphold the responsibilities of a Member as set out above. A Board vote in favour of bringing forward a motion to a CBWC business meeting held at an in-person Assembly to remove from membership must pass by a two-thirds majority of the Board.
  - d. If the vote fails, the Members who made the complaint will be informed. If they are not satisfied, they may appeal to the Membership (CBWC) by submitting a motion to remove the Member to Assembly. This motion will be listed as an appeal to overturn the decision of the Board. Note: a motion to remove a Member of the CBWC cannot be put forward at a business meeting of the CBWC under any circumstances except those provided in this policy.
  - e. If the vote passes, the Member under investigation will be informed in writing using respectful and kind language, and given a further 90 days to return to a position of upholding the responsibilities. This is the second attempt to win over the Member.

- f. If the Member changes to upholding the responsibilities within the 90 days, the complaint will be considered resolved.
  - g. If the Member continues to fail to uphold the responsibilities after 90 days, the matter will be brought to the Members of the CBWC for decision.
6. Assembly Decision
- a. Upon completion of the Board's review of complaint and the Member's continued failure to uphold the responsibilities, the Board will communicate in writing to all the Members of the CBWC that the Member under investigation is considered to be in failure of upholding the responsibilities of membership in the CBWC and that a motion that the Member be removed from membership in the CBWC will be presented at the next Assembly. This notice will include a description of the action of the Member on which the motion is based and why the action constitutes a failure to uphold the responsibilities of Members.
  - b. The Board shall put forward the motion to remove the Member from membership according to the By-laws of the CBWC.
  - c. Delegates from the Member under investigation will be given the opportunity to speak to and vote on the motion. The deliberation of the Members at Assembly is the third and final attempt to win over the Member failing to uphold the responsibilities.
  - d. The motion must pass by a two-thirds majority.
  - e. Members of the CBWC will be reminded at the time of notice for the Assembly and again at the Assembly, that the decision being made is on whether or not the Member has upheld the responsibilities of the CBWC *as they currently stand*. A decision to change the responsibilities in order to bring the Member back into compliance must be done by putting forward a separate motion, to be considered in advance of the motion to remove from membership, that changes or rescinds the section of the Identity Statement of the CBWC that the Member has failed to uphold.
  - f. If the motion to remove from membership fails, the Member under investigation will be considered by the CBWC to be in a position of upholding its responsibilities.
  - g. If the motion to remove from membership passes, the following will occur:
    - i. The membership of the Member under investigation will be terminated immediately. The status of all delegates and pastors from the now terminated Member will be reduced to the status of guest and they will lose all voting privileges.
    - ii. The CBWC credentials of all pastors still serving at the resigning church will be revoked immediately.

- iii. Participation in the comprehensive Canadian Baptist Benefit Plan (health & insurance benefits and pension plan) facilitated by the CBWC will be terminated effective the last day of the month in which affiliation ends. Any outstanding premium and/or final pension contributions must be submitted to the appropriate plan administrator in advance of this date.
- iv. Any title held in trust by the CBWC will be returned to the resigning church. Any fees related to returning title will be paid by the resigning church.
- v. Sabbatical fund contributions for pastors will be returned to source contributors as per sabbatical leave policy within 60 days.
- vi. News of the church's removal from membership will be communicated in writing to the Members of the CBWC within the 60-days.

### **E. Re-Applying for Membership**

At any time after having either resigned from membership or having been removed from membership in the CBWC a church may re-apply for membership under the process described above for "Churches Already in Existence."

Churches whose membership was removed, not resigned, must demonstrate that they now uphold the responsibility(ies) for which they were removed from membership for failing to uphold before their re-application will be considered.

## **Appendix A**

### **Identity Statement of the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada**

The Canadian Baptists of Western Canada (CBWC) is a voluntary association of independent Baptist churches gathered under the Lordship of Jesus Christ as revealed through Scripture. As a Spirit-led, multicultural community, we assemble to seek the Father's will together in unity of faith and to celebrate God's past, present and future work among us and through us. Churches choose to associate for the purpose of enhancing our local and global participation in this work of the triune God, as disciples of Christ in word and deed, thus engaging in God's mission in the world.

Standing within the historic orthodox understanding of church and Scripture, as Baptists in name and heritage, we affirm the following statements of faith and practice. They are the core of our identity and are expressed in our policies, practices, and Assembly Resolutions (esp. 1959, 1987, 1988, 2003, 2011, 2015, 2017). Scripture passages referenced are illustrative, not comprehensive.

#### **Statement of Faith**

The Canadian Baptists of Western Canada accept wholeheartedly the revelation of God given in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and confess the faith therein set forth. We here explicitly assert the doctrines which we regard as crucial to the understanding and proclamation of the Gospel and to practical Christian living:

1. The sovereignty, love, and grace of God, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit in creation, providence, revelation, redemption and final judgment.  
*Gen 1-2; Exod 34:6-7; Deut 6:4-5; Ps 8; 93-99; 104-105; Isa 40-55; Mark 1:9-11; 1 Cor 8:4-6; Eph 1:3-23; Rev 21:1-22:5*
2. The divine inspiration of Holy Scripture and its entire trustworthiness and supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.  
*Exod 34:27-35; Deut 8:1-10; Ps 1; 19; 119; Prov 30:5-6; Isa 40:6-8; 55:10-11; Matt 5:17-19; Luke 24:25-27; Rom 15:1-6; 2 Tim 3:14-17; Heb 4:12-13; 2 Pet 1:16-21*
3. The value of each human being as created by God. The universal sinfulness of humankind since the fall, which alienates all from God and subjects all to condemnation.  
*Gen 1-11; Pss 14; 51; Jer 17:9; Acts 17:22-31; Rom 1:18-3:20; 5:12-21; Eph 2; 1 Tim 1:12-17; 1 Pet 4:12-19; Rev 4:11*
4. The full deity and humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, whose substitutionary sacrifice is the sole ground of redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin.  
*Ps 2; 110; Isa 9:1-7; 11:1-9; 52:13-53:12; Matt 1:1-2:23; 26:26-30; Mark 10:41-45; Luke 1-2; John 1:1-34, 5:1-30; 8:30-36; Phil 2:5-13; Col 1:15-23; Heb 1:1-14; 2:14-2:18; 9:1-28; Rev 5:6-14*
5. The justification of the sinner by the grace of God through faith alone in Christ crucified and risen from the dead.  
*Gen 12:1-3; 15:1-6; Lev 16; Num 21:4-9; Ps 32, 51; Zech 12:10-13:9; John 3:14-21; Rom 3:21-26; Gal 2:11-3:14; Eph 2:1-10; Phil 3:5-16; Jas 2:14-26; 1 Pet 3:13-22*
6. The illuminating, regenerating, indwelling and sanctifying work of God, the Holy Spirit, in the believer.  
*Ezek 36:16-32; Joel 2:28-32; John 3:1-8; 7:37-39; 15:18-16:15; Acts 2:1-47; 10:44-48; 1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:18-20; 2 Cor 3; Gal 5:13-6:10; 1 Pet 1:10-12; 1 John 3:23-24*

7. The church as set forth in the New Testament and understood historically by the Baptist community.  
*Exod 19:1–6; Jer 31:31–37; Matt 18:15–20; 22:36–40; 28:18–20; Acts 2:43–47; 4:13–31 Rom 6:1–14; 12:1–15:33; 1 Cor 11:17–14:40; 2 Cor 8:1–15; Gal 3:23–29; Eph 3:1–6:20; 1 Tim 3; 5:17–22; 2 Tim 4:1–5; Titus 1:5–9; Heb 11–13; 1 Pet 5:1–5*
8. The expectation of the personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ, our participation in the resurrection, and the hope of eternal life.  
*Ezek 37:1–14; Dan 7:13–14; 12:1–13; Matt 24:29–31; John 11:1–44; 14:1–11; Acts 1:9–11; 1 Cor 15:12–58; 2 Cor 5:16–20; 1 Thess 4:13–18; Phil 3:17–21; Col 3:1–4; Rev 22:12–17*

### **Priesthood of All Believers**

Loved by God and created in God's own image, each one of us is able to meet with God through the atoning work of Christ. As male and female, equally called, the churches of the CBWC honor each person's responsibility to exercise their giftedness in Christ's body, the church, and to minister to each other as a 'priesthood of all believers.' With Christ as our Lord, each person is to regard others with the same humility that Christ exemplified in the cross. We live in voluntary submission to one another out of reverence for Christ.

*Acts 6:1–7; 15:22–35; 17:10–12; Rom 12; 1 Cor 12:1–31; Eph 4; Phil 2:1–18; Heb 4:14–16; 10:19–25; 1 Pet 2:1–10; Rev 1:4–8*

### **Ordinances**

We believe there are two ordinances (sometimes referred to as sacraments): Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We practice these ordinances in faith and obedience until the Lord returns. They are not a means of salvation.

- **Believer's Baptism** – We each come to faith in God through a free, personal decision as convicted by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, whenever possible, we practice the baptism of believers by full immersion in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Since baptism is reserved for those mature enough to make a fully conscious and committed decision as an act of obedience to Jesus' teaching and example, we do not practice infant baptism. *Matt 28:18–20; Acts 2:37–41; 8:12–13, 34–40; 10:44–48; 16:29–34; Rom 6:1–14; Gal 3:23–29; Titus 3:4–7*
- **The Lord's Supper** – On a regular basis (weekly to monthly) we communally remember and identify with the saving death and resurrection of Jesus by sharing in Christ's body and blood through receiving the bread and cup. *Matt 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–20; 1 Cor 11:23–34*

### **Congregational Governance**

We follow a form of governance in which congregants submit to the Lordship of Christ and the authority of Holy Scripture. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they discern and participate in the Father's ministry of reconciliation. Local churches grant membership to those who publicly confess Jesus Christ as Saviour, are baptized, and who demonstrate a desire to follow Christ as Lord in a life of obedience and service. Members are given an equal voice, vote, and opportunity to serve according to their spiritual gifts in an environment of mutual participation and accountability. In accordance with the priesthood of all believers, congregations affirm spiritual giftings and appoint Spirit-led leaders. In partnership with the CBWC, local congregations set apart ministers of the gospel, both men and women, to teach, preach, shepherd, and make disciples of Christ.

*Matt 18:15–20; John 14:12–31; Acts 2:37–47; 10:44–48; 13:1–3; Rom 12; 2 Cor 5:16–6:2; Eph 2:11–22; 4:7–16; 1 Tim 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Pet 5:1–5*

### **Church Association as Interdependence**

Just as membership in a local church is voluntary and for the sake of interdependence in the life of the church, so participation of Baptist congregations in the CBWC is voluntary and for the sake of interdependence. Under the Lordship of Christ, associated churches reflect the life and teachings of Jesus and the practices of the New Testament church, working together to accomplish the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. The identity of associated churches is tied to the values of the larger CBWC body.<sup>i</sup>

We desire to be grace-filled, compassionate and ever open to God's leading, so that all may come to know and experience God's love through the proclamation of the gospel. Thus, associated churches share resources to fulfill our mandate. We recognize the value of cooperating in mission through such means as training in theology, discipleship and leadership, the ordination of women and men,<sup>ii</sup> pastoral support, camping outreach, community development, and local and global evangelism.

*Mark 12:28–34; Acts 1:1–14; 1 Cor 16:1–20; 2 Cor 8:1–9:15; Col 3:1–17*

### **Separation of Church and State**

We affirm the practice of religious liberty and freedom of conscience to be essential to the security and wellbeing of both Church and State and recognize the unique and separate functions of each. The Church is called to be salt and light in the world, pointing to the Kingdom of God and contributing to the greater good of all.

*Ps 72:1–14; Dan 3:1–30; Matt 5:13–16; 22:15–22; Acts 4:1–21; 5:17–42; Rom 13:1–7; 1 Pet 2:11–17; Rev 19:11–21*

### **Marriage**

We define marriage as a publicly recognized lifelong covenant between a woman and a man whose relationship is characterized by loving faithfulness. The purpose of marriage is interdependence, mutual responsibility, and potential for procreation. Marriage symbolizes the relationship of God to his people and of Christ to his church.<sup>iiiivv</sup>

*Gen 1:26–31, 2:18–25; Mal 2:10–16; Matt 19:1–12; Eph 5:18–32*

### **Engaging in Mission**

We believe that the gospel has transforming power, rooted in the grace and righteousness of God. We are compelled to proclaim this good news of Christ's atoning sacrifice, to stand firm against injustice, and to practice mercy. In our broken world, God invites us to participate in His work of reconciliation, which involves us in the work of restoring relationships to wholeness—the relationship each person has with God, creation, other human beings, and the self. Because we believe in the God-breathed sanctity of human life from conception to death,<sup>vi</sup> we make every effort to demonstrate Christian love to all people.<sup>vii</sup>

*Gen 1-2; 12:1–3; Exod 19:1–6; Ps 24:1–2; 86:8–13; Isa 58; 65–66; Mic 6:1–8; Matt 5–7; 10:1–11:1; 22:36–40; 28:16–20; Acts 1:1–11; 10:1–48; 17:16–34; Rom 12:9–21; 2 Cor 5:11–21; Jas 1:19–27; 1 Pet 3:8–16; 1 John 4:7–12*

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<sup>i</sup> Resolution passed 1951 – **“Denominational Unity:**

WHEREAS it has been the cherished practise of the Baptist communion throughout the centuries to hold steadfastly to the doctrine of the Independent and self-governing nature of the local church; and

WHEREAS an extreme emphasis upon, and the accompanying peril in practise of, this doctrine is fraught with danger to our united witness as part of the body of Christ in the world:

BE IT RESOLVED that we affirm that each church is not only independent but that all are interdependent, and are committed to the development of the solidarity of our churches in the life of our Conventions and Associations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge upon our boards and committees to so order and apply our programs for the extension of Christ's kingdom that our churches may be bound together in more effective unity of thought and action; and

BE IT RESOLVED that we call upon our churches to increase as far as possible their spiritual and material contributions to the common life of our Union to the end that we may become a more closely knit fellowship of Christians and churches than we now are; and that we request the Board of the Baptist Union of Western Canada to survey this field and make recommendations calculated to increase the spiritual oneness of our churches in the interests of a more united witness.”

<sup>ii</sup> Resolution passed 1959 - “THAT if a woman in the pastorate meets the same education standards as required of men for the ministry, she be accorded the right to appear before the Ordination Examining Council when her ordination is requested by her church and approved by the Association concerned.”

<sup>iii</sup> Statement passed 2003 – **“Marriage: A Statement Affirming a Christian View**

We would define marriage as a (1) publicly recognized covenanting together for life, (2) between a woman and a man who live together in a relationship, (3) characterized by troth and (4) fidelity, and for the purpose of (5) lifelong companionship, mutual interdependence and responsibility for each other, and potential procreation. (6) It is symbolic of God’s relationship to his people and Jesus Christ’s relationship to his church.

**Publicly recognized**

The public recognition of marriage gives it an important social status. Marriage takes on a public purpose as the cornerstone of the family unity, which in turn is foundational to society. Public recognition implies not only social status, but also social responsibility.

**Between a man and a woman**

In marriage a man and a woman are united together and become one flesh. Male and female, together being made in the image of God, while different are yet complementary. It is the only union which has the possibility of procreation, the continuance of the species.

**Characterized by Troth**

Troth is a commitment to love and nurture an intimate and mutually supportive relationship characterized by mutual submissiveness and other-centred love.

**Exclusive**

The partners in a marriage relationship commit themselves to maintain the marriage for life. The marriage relationship is between a man and a woman which is exclusive in the emotional and physical intimacy it fosters. It should be characterized by fidelity.

**Lifelong**

Marriage is a type of covenant, that is, a publicly recognized pledge between a woman and a man to fulfill a lifelong commitment for the purposes of companionship and potentially, partnership in procreation.

**Symbolic of Christ’s Relationship to the Church**

Marriage is a uniting of dissimilar entities, is symbolic of spiritual unity, and forms an example of co-humanity. The Apostle Paul refers to it as a great mystery (Eph. 5.32) which symbolizes the relationship between Christ and the body of Christ, the Church.

It is also the prime relationship within which children are begotten and nurtured. It is the cornerstone of the family.”

<sup>iv</sup> Resolution passed 2011 – “The statement of the CBWC with regard to any sexual behaviour outside of monogamous heterosexual marriage is that it is not affirmed.”

<sup>v</sup> Resolution passed 2015 – “To be consistent with the denominational policy on marriage, be it clarified that we call upon all CBWC ministers and their churches to make every effort to demonstrate Christian love to individuals who are same gender attracted; and that in a marriage ceremony no credentialed clergy (CBWC pastors/ chaplains /counselors) or licensed officiates shall solemnize, officiate, co-officiate, or publicly affirm any marriage other than between one man and one woman.”

<sup>vi</sup> Resolution passed 1988 – “In view of the Supreme Court’s decision that has declared Canada’s abortion law as unconstitutional because it is alleged to violate a woman’s right to “life, liberty and the security of the person” the Baptist Union of Western Canada does hereby urge the Parliament of Canada to enact new legislation that protects the “life, liberty and security” of the unborn as a person. There are strong precedents in law, in common practice, and in the common mind, to view the unborn as a person whose rights must also be protected. To fail to do so would be to continue to apply the Charter of Rights in such a way as to deny to the unborn the very rights of personhood which the Charter is meant to protect. Accordingly we implore you to enshrine the rights of the unborn in the Charter and to enact legislation protecting the rights of the unborn as persons.

Motion: (Rev. Doug Moffat / Rev. Tim Colborne) that we adopt the resolution as stated above as acceptable and representing the views of the Baptist Union of Western Canada.”

<sup>vii</sup> Resolution passed 2017 – “That we agree to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation.