

Covenant of Understanding and Agreement
Between the Board of Elders of
_____ Church and Pastor _____

Date

On _____, 2003, the congregation of _____ voted to extend a Call to _____ for the position of Senior Pastor and Pastor _____ accepted that Call. This Covenant is a compilation of understanding and agreements made between the Church and Pastor _____, and has been adopted by the Board of Elders of the Church. The Covenant shall serve as a foundational present and future guide for understanding, open communication and reference.

Board/Pastor Relationship

Interpersonal Relationships

The Board and the Pastor pledge to uphold one another in mutual trust, respect, and care. Each shall support without reservation the position, authority, and ministry of the other, and shall seek to be God's instrument in the spiritual and personal development of the other. Correction and redirection shall be done gently and with care. The primary motivation of each shall be to encourage and support the other.

Authority of the Board

The authority of the Board of Elders as identified in the Constitution and Bylaws shall never be questioned nor subverted by the Pastor.

Board authority shall be understood as vested only in the decisions of the Board, and not in individual members of the Board. Hence, individual Elders shall not seek to exercise organizational authority over the Senior Pastor, members of the staff, or persons in the Church congregation.

Although final authority rests with the Board, the Board shall seek to create an environment of support for the leadership of the Pastor vis-à-vis his ministry, his handling of staff, the direction and character of the ministry of the Church, and the like.

Confidentiality

The Board and the Pastor pledge themselves unreservedly to the sacred confidentiality of all Board confidential discussions and confidential decisions. The role of individuals in the making of Board decisions shall never be divulged. Violation of this principle shall be grounds for loving confrontation and, if necessary, discipline.

Board/Staff Communication

The Board of Elders pledges to engage with members of the staff in such a way as to protect the leadership of the Pastor. Hence, Elders shall not allow inappropriate discussion or decision-making with members of the staff. Staff should never be allowed to approach the Pastor with the leverage of previously secured Elder support. (Possible exception: "Moral failure")

Board/Congregation Communication

The Board of Elders pledges to engage with members of the congregation in such a way as to protect the leadership of the Pastor. Hence, Elders shall not allow or encourage inappropriate discussion or decision-making with members of the congregation. Members of the congregation should never be in a position to approach the Pastor with the leverage of previously secured Elder support. (Possible exception: "Moral failure")

Board Approval for Outside Ministry

Authority for approval for outside ministry by the Pastor shall be vested in the Board of Elders. The Board shall support and encourage the Pastor vis-à-vis outside ministry as this will both stimulate and refresh the Pastor for his ministry at _____. However, the Pastor shall take every care and precaution to ensure the priority of ministry at the Church, never allowing outside ministry to adversely affect the Church ministry.

Pastor _____'s outside ministry will include each year, but not be limited to, two weeks of foreign mission's ministry and occasional Walk Thru the Bible Seminars.

Board Care of the Pastor

The Board shall exercise loving care of the Pastor and shall assist him in maintaining the proper priorities of God, family, and Church ministry. The Elders shall seek to protect the Pastor's time from those expectations and demands of the congregation which would harm the ministry priorities of leadership, preaching, and executive administration.

If the Board or individual Board members have concerns about Pastor _____'s ministry or personal life, those concerns will be lovingly brought to his attention in an appropriate, discreet manner. Pastor _____ should never be surprised by Board confrontation regarding an issue of which he has no prior knowledge.

Pastoral Ministry Review

Pastor _____ agrees that he will be held accountable by the Board for the stated ministry objectives as agreed upon with the Board of Elders. His ministry shall be reviewed as determined by the Board (such a process is yet to be defined, but all agree it needs to be better than it has been in the past). Any formal or written review shall only include information that has previously been discussed personally with Pastor _____. There should be no surprises there.

Conflict Resolution

If a time comes when the Board of Elders feels Pastor _____ is not meeting his ministry objectives, and they are considering his possible termination, before any decisions are made, a Mediation Board will be formed to seek to resolve the matter in a fair and godly fashion. This Mediation Board will consist of three representatives from the Board of Elders and three representatives of Pastor _____'s choosing. This Mediation Board will meet with Pastor _____ as the relevant issues are discussed. This process shall be kept confidential and should not be divulged to the staff or congregation, either by the Board or the Senior Pastor.

The conclusions and recommendations of the Mediation Board shall be binding if this is agreed to in writing by Pastor _____ and the Board of Elders subsequent to the

selection of the Mediation Board but prior to its deliberations. If there is no such agreement, both parties agree to give the Mediation Board's conclusions and recommendations great weight in any final decisions made by Pastor _____ and/or the Board of Elders.

Pastoral Responsibilities

Preaching

It is agreed that the Pastor shall be responsible for the pulpit ministry of the Church.

Leadership

Under the authority of the Board of Elders, the Pastor shall be the Shepherd/Leader of _____ Church. His leadership shall be directed toward the established purposes of the Church: worshiping the Father, reaching the lost, teaching the believer, and serving the Savior.

Executive Administration

It is understood and agreed that the Pastor shall be the "administrator of the Church organization and executive officer of the staff" as per Church Bylaws. All staff shall be directly accountable to the Pastor through the administrative order as delegated by Pastor _____. Pastoral staff hiring and retention decisions shall be made by the Board of Elders upon the recommendation of the Senior Pastor.

General Matters

Contemporary Worship Service

The Board of Elders and the Pastor both affirm that there is a pressing need to add a Contemporary Worship Service at _____ on Sunday mornings, and that this matter will be addressed immediately.

It is agreed that appropriate steps will be taken, and funding provided, to prepare for the start of the Contemporary Worship Service including: refurbishing the present Chapel, and hiring/freeing up the necessary staff to coordinate and lead this service.

Blended Worship Service

The Board of Elders and the Pastor agree that the present Blended/Traditional Worship Service will continue in the present Worship Center. This service may be modified where appropriate in order to accomplish the Church's threefold purpose: to evangelize, to edify, and to exalt.

Seekers

The Board of Elders and the Pastor both affirm that _____ Church exists to help accomplish the Great Commission. Therefore, _____ will be a place where anyone can come to find out who God is and what it means to follow Him. Though the truth of God's Word will never be compromised, every effort will be made to help seekers feel comfortable attending services and events at the Church.

It is agreed that any current or future Worship Services will keep Seekers in mind. Though the Contemporary Worship Service will be more Seeker focused, the Blended/Traditional Worship Service will also make every effort to be sensitive to Seekers who are present.

Innovative Ministry

The Board of Elders and the Pastor affirm that the ministry of the Church shall be characterized by a purposeful and innovative approach to evangelism and the nurturing of the congregation. Hence, we shall be willing to “do church” in new ways in order to bring people to Christ and help people become fully devoted followers of Christ. We will also be willing to risk failure, and no doubt will on occasion fail in our efforts, if such efforts have substantial spiritual potential.

Ministry Consultation

In light of the current need for significant changes in the present ministries of _____, the Board of Elders and Pastor _____ agree that funds will be made available when necessary to provide for an outside Consultant/Coach. The purpose of this Consultant/Coach would be to ensure that the best possible steps are being taken to bring _____ through this time of change.

Additional Staff

The Board of Elders and the Pastor agree that _____ Church will seek to call in (year) a new full-time Lead Pastor to oversee the Youth & Children's Ministry Directors. He will also work directly with the College/Singles Ministry.

Vacation, Study Leave, Sabbaticals

It is agreed that Pastor _____ will receive four weeks of vacation per year. He will also receive two weeks of study leave (this will not include days spent at ministry-related conferences). A maximum of six weeks vacation/study leave/conferences may be taken consecutively during the summer. The remaining time may be divided throughout the rest of the year.

After each five years of ministry at _____, Pastor _____ will be entitled to a two month sabbatical. The timing and objectives of the sabbatical will be agreed upon jointly by Pastor _____ and the Board of Elders.

Termination Compensation

The Board of Elders and the Pastor agree that in the event that the terms of this Covenant are not upheld, and/or Pastor _____ chooses to resign from his ministry at _____ Church, he will receive three months severance pay (13 weeks), plus an additional week's pay for every year served at _____ Church, up to a maximum payment of six months severance pay (26 weeks). These provisions do not apply if there is a case of moral failure.

If the Board chooses to terminate Pastor _____'s ministry at _____ Church, the same compensation shall be given.

Bylaw Changes

This covenant is entered into with the understanding that before Pastor _____ is called, the following Bylaws will be changed, or be in the process of being changed, and meet with Pastor _____'s approval:

- 1) Calling of a Senior Pastor
- 2) Termination of a Senior Pastor
- 3) Future Bylaw changes

Board of Elders and Deacon Board

This agreement is entered into with the understanding that the current Board consists of both Elders and Deacons. In that the Board of Elders and the Deacon Board will soon separate, this Covenant will continue as written with the Board of Elders.

This agreement is also entered into with the understanding that these two Boards will separate before July 1, 2003.

Annual Review

Pastor _____ and the Board of Elders agree to annually review these Covenant Commitments in a spirit of support and progress toward the stated goals and objectives as expressed in this document.

Signed and dated by:

_____ Dated: _____
 Pastor _____

2003 Board of Elders and Deacons Dated: _____