





**RULES**  
**AND REGULATIONS**  
OF THE  
CONGREGATION  
OF THE  
**UNITED BRETHREN**  
**AT SALEM,**  
NORTH CAROLINA.

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## RULES AND REGULATIONS.

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### *I. Principles of faith and practice in the United Brethren's Church.*

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the sole standard of our doctrine, and the rule of our life. We therefore declare, that we do not acknowledge or hold as a tenet of our church any opinion, which is at variance with the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

In our congregation both preaching and practice shall accord with the precepts and example of our Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles. We can neither recognize the appointment of ministers, who depart from this standard; nor admit the introduction of hymns for the use of the congregation, or of books for the instruction of youth, that are not in accordance with the form of sound doctrine as taught by Jesus Christ.

2. We recognize as a true member of Christ's body every one, who, through the Holy Ghost, has experienced the new birth. This experience not being confined to any one religious denomination exclusively, we admit of no separation as existing between ourselves and members of other christian societies, who have been called by the Holy Ghost through the gospel, enlightened with his gifts, and sanctified in the true faith.

3. All children of God, of what christian denomination soever, we regard as our Brethren in Christ, loving them sincerely and heartily, and disclaiming, as altogether opposed to the mind of Christ, all sectarian animosity arising from

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diversity of views on points of doctrine, discipline, or church government.

4. We will not take part in religious controversies, but adhere to those fundamental truths, plainly and clearly set forth in holy writ, and will faithfully and fearlessly maintain them.

5. Uniformity in the liturgy and usages of the church is not requisite to constitute unity of faith. In a congregation of Christ nothing is indispensable and unalterable, but that which involves its very essence and existence, to wit: Faith in the Lord Jesus, the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, the hope of eternal life, and the union of members as one body, whereof Christ is the Head. With these requisites are inseparably connected a strict adherence to the doctrine of Jesus and his Apostles, uniform obedience to all his commandments, and consistency in following his footsteps. Whatever belongs to the externals of divine worship, and to other matters of propriety and order in the congregation, is not essentially necessary to salvation, or unalterable. Such rules and regulations are to be retained, as long as they prove instrumental in promoting a godly life and conversation. We will not be tenacious of any existing arrangement, if convinced that a change would be expedient, and advantageous; neither will we abandon any regulation that still proves conducive to the promotion of godliness.

6. While earnestly striving to realize more and more the character of a genuine congregation of Christ, we will steadily bear in mind, and reduce to practice, the sacred obligation, which devolves upon us in common with all true followers of Jesus, to spread his gospel throughout the world, and especially among the heathen. Nor will we be less diligent in executing the farewell injunction of our Lord, to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, not only among ourselves, but with all in every place, and of every denomination, who call upon the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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## II. *Groundwork and frame of our Constitution.*

1. To follow simply in the footsteps of our Lord, is essentially characteristic of a congregation of Christ. Keeping this principle in view in all our regulations and undertakings, nay, in our whole manner of life, we will endeavor to adjust every thing, whether great or small, to that high and holy standard.

2. The rules of our congregation are intended to aid us in seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, to promote obedience to the commandments of Christ, and to obviate and remove, as far as possible, all occasions for the commission of sin.

3. Such rules are a voluntary agreement, adopted by all the members of a congregation, nor can any one be compelled to subscribe to them against his will. Neither can any one be a member of the congregation, unless he assent to, and observe these rules. Being once adopted by the congregation, the rules must be conscientiously observed by all the members without respect of persons, or any distinction whatever.

4. It is incumbent on all conferences or boards, and officers of the congregation, in their respective sphere of action, carefully to attend to the welfare of the congregation, and faithfully to maintain its fundamental principles; hence they ought to be duly respected and supported in the execution of these duties. Each board having its own duties constitutionally prescribed, they are, while acting in harmony one with another, not to interfere with the peculiar sphere of action assigned to each.

5. To the *Elders' Conference* are committed the direction and supervision of the spiritual and temporal concerns of the congregation at large. This board is at the same time to consult the best interests of every individual member.

6. The *Board of Overseers, (or Town Committee,)* to which only communicant brethren, who have attained to the age of 25 years, and who have been members of the church for three

years, are eligible, is to be chosen every two or three years by the Congregation Council. This board, jointly with the Elders' Conference, is to superintend the temporalities of the congregation ; acting also as guardians over the maintenance of correct morals, integrity, and general good deportment of the members ; and as peacemakers, to reconcile any differences arising between members of the congregation. The same board is associated with the Warden of the congregation, as a committee of advice, with whom he acts in concert in the administration of the receipts and disbursements of the Diacony, whereof an account is to be rendered to this board. The concerns of the Diacony, as part of the financial system of the Unity, are also placed under the supervision of the Elders' Conference.

7. Matters pertaining to the community at large, such as church and town expenses, and other matters of a general nature, the providing for which would be required for the maintenance of the social regulations of any community, are incumbent upon the *Congregation Council*. This board consists of all adult brethren, who have signed their names to the rules and regulations of the congregation. In no cases of the above description can the before-mentioned boards act exclusively without the consent of this board. Such are all cases, when new rules are to be proposed for the guidance of the congregation, or the police of the place ; or when existing regulations are to be revised or amended ; whenever considerable expenditures are to be incurred in behalf of the community, or new buildings to be erected for account of the same ; and contracts or other responsibilities to be assumed in the name and at the risk of the community.

8. Appointments to office in the congregation shall in every instance take place agreeably to the rules laid down by the Synods of our church.

9. To promote the spiritual growth of the individual members, to facilitate the care of souls, and to preserve external



order and decorum, the congregation is divided into different *classes* or *choirs*. The design of these regulations is, that every member of the church may, according to age, sex, and condition in life, attain unto sanctification of soul and body, through the merits of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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### *III. Relation sustained by the Congregation to the Government of our country and its Officers.*

1. As citizens of the United States, we will yield all due submission to the constitution and laws of our country, and pay due respect to all persons duly elected as officers of government or appointed as magistrates; for whom we are to offer up prayer and intercession.

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### *IV. Reciprocal duties of the Congregation and its Ministering Servants.*

1. The congregation and its ministering servants constituting one body, have a common interest. Whatever tends to destroy the mutual confidence, which ought to prevail between the congregation and its ministering servants, should be studiously avoided.

2. Those called or appointed to such office, must ask of the Lord, to endue them with the needful gifts and graces, requisite for their office; that they may not act in their own wisdom and strength, but be guided by the Holy Spirit, so as to walk according to the mind of Christ. They are not to seek their own, but the things that are the Lord's, and not to assume undue authority over their fellow members.

3. On the other hand, it is the duty of the congregation to pray diligently for its ministers. I Thes. v, 12, 13; Heb. xiii, 17.

4. Ministering servants of the congregations ought willingly

and cheerfully to receive admonitions, modestly offered by members of the congregation, and should pay due regard to them.

5. We consider ourselves bound, faithfully to provide for the support of our ministers and their families, so that none of them may suffer for lack of any thing needful.

6. Should any of them have lost the needful gifts and graces for the discharge of their functions; and thus be disqualified from serving any longer with acceptance, they must submit to a removal from office, according to the decision of the Elders' Conference of the Unity, or the Provincial Helpers' Conference.

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*V. Relation sustained by individual members to the Congregation at large.*

1. When an individual applies for admission to church-membership, the Board of Overseers, (Committee,) shall institute a thorough inquiry into his or her circumstances, and the motives and object of the application, and report the same, together with the opinion of the board, to the Elders' Conference, in order to ascertain as far as possible, whether such application have arisen from a sincere resolution, voluntarily and deliberately formed, and whether the applicant be at liberty to form such resolution, being free from any connexion that might prove an obstacle to his uniting himself with our congregation.\*

2. Permission to become a member of the congregation or to reside in this place, can be granted only by the Elders' Conference, with the concurrence of the board of Overseers.

3. Every member of the congregation is bound to abstain

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\* Such applicants will at first be requested to have patience, till they become better acquainted with us and we with them; and after an interval of at least three months, their application for admission will again be brought under consideration, according to § § 45 and 46 of the Synodal Results of 1848.

from undertaking or introducing any thing, which might prove injurious to the spiritual or temporal welfare of another.

4. Should any one persist in transgressing the rules and regulations of the congregation, or even prove guilty of seducing others, such an one is to be excluded from the congregation; and in the latter case, if possible, to be removed from this place.

5. If a member of the congregation should perceive any thing of an immoral or pernicious tendency, he ought not to regard it with indifference, nor pass it over in silence; for, by so doing, he would become a partaker of other men's sins. On the contrary, he ought, in the first place, to warn the offending brother, agreeably to the Apostle's precept: "If a man be overtaken in a fault, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." Should this however prove ineffectual, or should the case be of such a nature, as to require a different course, it then becomes a duty to give notice thereof without delay, to the end, that, as far as possible, all evil consequences may be obviated. When it is requisite to prove the truth of a charge, and especially when the individual accused expressly desires it, the name of the informant, and an opportunity for both parties to meet in the presence of the laborer, ought not to be withheld.

6. All unbecoming intercourse between persons of both sexes shall be carefully and conscientiously avoided, and cannot be permitted under any pretext whatever; and all parents, heads of families, masters, and others having in charge youth, are in duty bound, faithfully to counteract every thing of the kind, that is at variance with the precepts of holy writ and the principles of sound morality, or whatever might lead to the commission of sin on the part of their children and others entrusted to their care.

No marriage among us shall be concluded without the consent of the Elders' Conference.



7. Regarding the bringing up of our children, we desire to follow the Apostle's precept, "to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. vi, 4.) Hence all parents, fathers and mothers of families, are expected to exercise on this point all possible faithfulness, endeavoring most carefully to guard their children against every thing that might prove an offence and an injury to their souls ;—to set before them a consistent christian example, thereby prompting them also to be followers of Christ ;—to see to it, that their children punctually attend school, religious instruction, and the meetings for worship, that they be suitably employed at home, and that as they increase in years, they accustom themselves to habits of order and decorum, and to a well regulated and moral conduct.

8. As no one may reside in this congregation without the permission of the Elders' Conference, with the consent of the board of Overseers, it follows, that no one may acquire or possess a house in our place, unless he be a member of the congregation, and the privilege be expressly granted to him by the above board of Overseers, with the consent of the Elders' Conference. Hence a resident may not sell his house to any other individual, unless the latter have obtained the aforesaid permission ; neither may he bequeath the same to his children, relatives, or other heirs, except these be in like manner acknowledged as members of the congregation, and expressly permitted to become owners of the property. Nor may the heirs at law, in case the owners of the house should have died intestate, come into possession of the same otherwise than on the above conditions. On the other hand, every one is at liberty to dispose of the value of his house, as well as of the rest of his estate. To this rule we will faithfully and inviolably adhere, voluntarily renouncing all claims to the contrary ; and it is our express will, that our heirs and legatees be held and firmly bound to act accordingly.

9. Should an inhabitant of this place prove guilty of any

ill conduct, on account of which he may no longer remain a resident member of the congregation, he shall be bound to sell his house to a purchaser approved as above; but in case no such purchaser be found, the house shall be bought by the board of Overseers for account of the congregation, and the former possessor be bound to leave the place. In case the owner should not agree with an approved purchaser, or with the board of Overseers about the value of the house, it shall be appraised by three or five impartial men, of which number each party shall choose one or two, and these a third or fifth, and the price so determined shall be paid to the owner by the purchaser or through the board of Overseers. In cases in which legatees or heirs at law cannot agree about the value of a house with a purchaser approved as above, or with the board of Overseers, the same procedure shall be adopted.

10. In case the owner of a house should of his own accord resolve to leave our society, which every one is at perfect liberty to do, or should think proper to remove from this congregation to another, such an one shall likewise be bound to sell his house to no other purchaser but one approved as above. If an approved purchaser be not immediately found, the property shall in the mean time be placed in the hands of one or more of the residents, empowered by the owner, to whom the income arising therefrom, shall be duly remitted; but the congregation shall never be compelled to become the unwilling purchaser. No house, or part of a house, should be let to strangers, intending to sojourn here for some time, without a knowledge of their character; moreover, the consent thereto of the Elders' Conference and of the board of Overseers, is required.

11. The congregation recognizes the duty of relieving the necessities of all such members, as may through age, sickness, or other afflictions, without any delinquency of their own, have become destitute, and unable to maintain themselves. We likewise assume the obligation of so providing for the



education of destitute orphans in the congregation, that they may become useful members of society, and capable of procuring for themselves an honest livelihood.

12. Every member of the congregation should, agreeably to the Apostle's rule, "labor and eat his own bread;" nor should there be found among us any habitual idler.

13. Whenever an inhabitant of Salem, who holds a lease from the original proprietor, F. W. Marshall, or his heirs or assigns, makes or executes a mortgage, deed of trust, contract to rent, or any other instrument or agreement, whereby he conveys or intends to convey the property, thus held by lease, or any part thereof, or any interest or estate therein, such mortgage, deed of trust, contract to rent, or any other instrument or agreement, be the same in writing or by parole, shall be null and void, unless the proprietor shall have given his assent to the same in writing.

14. All residents, capable and desirous of conducting some business or trade, shall, as circumstances may require or admit, be counseled and aided by the board of Overseers. No one, however, may set up business in the place, either alone or in partnership with others, without having previously obtained, on application, the permission for it of the board of Overseers, with the concurrence of the Elders' Conference. Neither shall any one sell by retail any spiritous liquors in this place, without express permission by the board of Overseers, with the concurrence of the Elders' Conference.

15. All residents are, and acknowledge themselves, bound to assist in any measure and undertaking requisite for the well being of the community of this place, and to bear a due proportion of the necessary expenses. Besides the support of the ministering servants of the congregation, above mentioned, there is particular reference here to all those things, which pertain to the maintenance of good order, and the police of the place; for instance, the keeping in repair of roads and



alleys, the needful supply of water, the regulation of the fire department, the neatness and cleanliness of the streets, and the safety of the town by day and night. Nor will we overlook those principles of brotherly love, which require us to take a willing and active part in relieving the necessities of other congregations of the Brethren's Unity.

16. Regarding the erecting and altering of all buildings, whether public or private, it is incumbent on the board of Overseers, to see that it be done in every respect agreeably to our established order of building, and the rules of the fire department.

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*VI. Duties of the members of the Congregation individually and towards each other.*

1. It shall be our sincere endeavor, to exercise mutual love, meekness and humility ; to treat one another with becoming respect ; to serve and aid each other cheerfully, and to assist every one in keeping and improving his own ; nay, we would extend the same deportment to all our fellowmen, agreeably to the comprehensive precept of our Lord : " Whatsoever ye would, that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

2. Those members of the congregation, who are in the employ of others, should perform with faithfulness, obedience, and respect, the various services required of them. On the same principle, such as employ others in their service, are expected to treat them with love and kindness.

3. Whoever engages strangers in his service, becomes answerable for them. Should any irregularity or just complaint arise on their account, he is bound to dismiss them without delay.

4. In our mode of living, our clothing, and our dwellings, we will aim at frugality, propriety, and economy ; removing far from us all extravagance, vanity, and abuse of temporal goods.

5. We will abstain from the reading of such books and pamphlets whereby our minds might be corrupted from the simplicity, that is in Christ Jesus. Such publications in particular, as tend to beget contempt of pious sentiments, or even ridicule the holy scriptures—in short, all injurious and immoral writings, songs, pictures, and exhibitions shall on no account be tolerated in our congregation. The introduction or circulation of such publications we look upon as a most culpable seduction.

6. We will truly and faithfully perform our engagements to all men. Should one among us, having borrowed money, or the value thereof, or having entered into any other engagement, intentionally withhold the promised restitution, or carelessly neglect to fulfil his word, he shall be liable to legal prosecution.

7. All talebearing, and spreading of personal or other reports, by word of mouth or in writing, whereby suspicion is excited, the law of charity violated, and mischief occasioned in any wise, we will utterly discountenance among us. Falsehood and malicious calumnies, injuring the character of others, we regard as culpable misconduct, subject to the discipline of the church.

8. Should any one in the congregation unhappily commit crimes punishable by law, as fornication, adultery, theft, fighting, habitual intemperance, habitual cursing and swearing, fraudulent dealings in trade or business, and such other intentional gross misdeeds, all of which are necessarily left to legal investigation and correction, such offender can no longer be regarded as a member of our church. A thorough change of heart and life, being distinctly perceptible in him, can alone render it possible to restore him to spiritual fellowship.

9. In case misunderstandings or differences arise among any of the inhabitants, they should first, according to the command of Christ, endeavor to come to an amicable agree-

ment and equitable settlement among themselves. Should they fail in so doing, the persons at variance should select some other members of the congregation, to act as mediators ; and if the difficulty cannot thus be arranged to mutual satisfaction, the case shall be referred to the board of Overseers for brotherly investigation and decision. Should either of the parties even then refuse to be reconciled and pacified, such party could no longer be considered a member of the congregation.

In case, however, the point of dispute should render a resort to the courts of justice indispensable, every thing at variance with our character as Brethren is to be avoided.

10. Should a member, through Providential visitation, be deprived of reason, we will show due compassion toward one so afflicted, and on the part of the congregation, faithfully provide for proper supervision and attendance ; nor will we resort to any arrangement beyond our own society, while there is a possibility of procuring equal or even superior attendance within the limits of the congregation, or the circle of members in our society.

11. Should fire break out in our place, we will faithfully aid in extinguishing it ; and in similar cases extend the like assistance to any of our neighbors.

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## CONCLUSION.

1. No one, whoever he be, shall obtain permission to live, marry or settle in this place as a member of the congregation, or be entitled to receive or to give a vote for any office in the congregation, unless he have before assented to this brotherly agreement, pledging himself faithfully either by word of mouth, or (on the part of the Brethren) by signing these articles with his own hand, to observe them inviolably.



To enable all those concerned, and particularly our own youth, when they have passed their minority, carefully to examine the subject themselves, there shall be a fair opportunity and sufficient time afforded them, to reflect maturely upon this agreement, in order that each and every one may act with entire consciousness, and having obtained a distinct knowledge of those principles, which the congregation has united and covenanted to observe, may form a deliberate decision.

2. Whenever the interest of the congregation shall at any future time render it expedient to erase, amend, or add to any of these rules and regulations, such amendments and additions, if adopted by twothirds of the members of the congregation council present, shall be of equal weight and obligation, as though they had been literally embodied in this present Brotherly Agreement and Covenant; and they shall likewise be printed and annexed to the same, for the information of all whom it may concern.

The above Articles being the basis and substance of our Rules and Regulations, having been acknowledged and voluntarily adopted by the congregation, to their full extent, after maturely weighing them, and being fully convinced both of their necessity and utility: we mutually promise and covenant together for Christ's sake, and through his grace, faithfully to abide by these principles, and conscientiously to observe them; and also, to the best of our ability, to promote the observance of them on the part of our fellow members.

We at the same time empower the ministering servants of the congregation, jointly with us to enforce, without respect of persons, the inviolable observance of the above articles by each and every member of the congregation; and in case any one should act contrary to these rules or designedly oppose them, to proceed against such member agreeably to the directions herein contained.





