

CHAFFEE CROSSING BAPTIST CHURCH

# CONSTITUTION

AND BYLAWS

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**CONSTITUTION**  
*of the*  
**CHAFFEE CROSSING BAPTIST CHURCH**

**Preamble**

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call some of His servants to unite under the name Chaffee Crossing Baptist Church, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we, the members of Chaffee Crossing Baptist Church, adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of Jesus Christ and bring him glory, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in in the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this church.

**Article 1 – Name**

The name of this church shall be known as “Chaffee Crossing Baptist Church”.

**Article 2 – Purpose**

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

- A. Worshipping Him;
- B. Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;
- C. Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;
- D. Encouraging, supporting, and participating in gospel work; local, domestic, and international;
- E. Administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper;
- F. Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers;
- G. Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and
- H. Encouraging fellow churches to Biblical faithfulness and purity.

## **Article 3 – Membership**

### **Section 1 – Qualifications for Membership**

- A. To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be:
  - 1. A believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration;
  - 2. Has been baptized as a believer in obedience to Christ in connection with the preaching of the Biblical gospel by a gospel believing church. There may be some exceptions to this requirement, albeit rare, based on unique circumstances. See Acts 8:26-40; and
  - 3. Wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.
- B. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith, by believing and teaching in accordance with the Statement of Faith and not contrary to it, holding the doctrines of our church with a clear conscience before God and man.
- C. A person must also covenant in writing, to uphold the statement of faith and to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant, by the grace of God and the help of God's people in this local church.
- D. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

### **Section 2 – Admission of Members**

- A. An applicant shall be received as a member of the church upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of the majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.
- B. Upon admission into the membership of this church, a person shall relinquish their membership in other churches.
- C. No member of this church shall retain membership in any other church.

### **Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership**

- A. In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.
- B. Only members in good standing shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church. Persons who are non-members shall not lead or teach any ministry or hold any office of the church.
- C. Non-members may serve the church on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders, and they may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

- D. Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings, to vote on the election of officers, to approve an annual budget, to make decisions regarding membership status, to approve and amend the church's governing documents, and to address such other matters as may come before the church.

#### **Section 4 – Discipline of Members**

- A. Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of unrepentant conduct contrary to the principles of Scripture, by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church and/or rendering doubtful a profession of faith, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to God's Word. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.
- B. Church discipline may include: <sup>1</sup>
1. Admonition by the elders or congregation;
  2. Removal from office, and;
  3. Excommunication.
- C. The purpose of church discipline are as follows:
1. The repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined. <sup>2</sup>
  2. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them. <sup>3</sup>
  3. For the purity of the church as a whole. <sup>4</sup>
  4. For the good of the church's witness to non-Christians. <sup>5</sup>
  5. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 18:15–17; 2 Thess.3:14-15; 1 Tim. 5:19–20; 1 Cor. 5; Titus 3:9-11

<sup>2</sup> Prov. 15:5; 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; 29:15; I Cor. 4:14; Eph. 6:4; I Tim. 3:4–5; Heb. 12:1–11; Ps. 119:115; 141:5; Eccl. 7:5; Matt. 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; I Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:1–5; II Thess. 3:6, 14–15; I Tim. 1:20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1:22; Rev. 3:19

<sup>3</sup> Prov. 13:20; Rom. 15:14; I Cor. 5:11; 15:33; Col. 3:16; I Thess. 5:14; I Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:11; Heb.10:24–25

<sup>4</sup> I Cor. 5: 6–7; II Cor. 6:14 – 7:1; 13:10; Gal. 5:7-9; Eph. 5:27; II John 10; Jude 24; Rev. 21:2

<sup>5</sup> Prov. 28:7; Matt. 5:13–16; Jn 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Eph. 5:11; I Tim. 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3:10

<sup>6</sup> Deut. 5:11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chron. 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Neh. 9:2; Is. 52:11; Ezl 36:20; Matt. 5:16; Jn 15:8;18: 17, 25; Rom. 2:24; 15: 5–6; II Cor. 6: 14–7:1; Eph. 1:4; 5: 27; I Peter 2:12.

## **Section 5 – Termination of Membership**

- A. The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership upon any one of the following events:
  - 1. Following his or her death;
  - 2. Self-professed apostasy as confirmed by congregational vote;
  - 3. Voluntary resignation with the intent to join another gospel preaching church.
  - 4. An act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of a majority of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular, or special meeting of the members. Such action will ordinarily be at the recommendation of the Elders, but such recommendation is not required.
- B. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other reason the church deems necessary or prudent.
- C. To keep record of the decision to resign one's membership, a letter should be made expressing one's resignation contained with the name of the church one intends on joining.

## **Article 4 – Meetings**

### **Section 1 – Worship Meetings**

Worship meetings shall be held each Lord's Day and may be held throughout the week as the lead pastor and elders determine.

### **Section 2 – Decorum of Members' Meetings**

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Section 3 – Regular Members' Meetings**

- A. There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every other month, without displacing the regular morning gathering of the church on the Lord's Day. It is the responsibility of the elders to notify members of the upcoming year's regular members' meetings prior to January 1st of each year. It is also the responsibility of the elders to see that the regular members' meetings take place as scheduled and that required reports are submitted to the church by responsible members.
- B. An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church.

- C. A quorum shall be met by those members present, assuming all constitutional provisions for notification have been met.
- D. Motions shall be adopted by a majority vote of the members present, except when in such cases when a super-majority is required by the constitution or by-laws.
- E. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present. No vote may be cast by proxy.
- F. If the church is providentially hindered from gathering together for a period of four (4) months or more, the elders shall implement an alternate method for conducting church business that does not require the physical presence of members.

#### **Section 4 – Special Members’ Meetings**

- A. Special members’ meetings may be called as needed by a majority of the elders, or upon a written request signed and submitted to the elders, by thirty-three percent (33%) of the membership.
- B. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all worship services of the church for two weeks preceding the meeting.
- C. In the event a special meeting is called by written request of the members, the elders shall conduct the special meeting within one month of their receipt of the request, unless special circumstances hinder such meeting. In that case, the elders shall conduct such special meeting as soon as practical.

#### **Section 5 – Members’ Approval of the Annual Budget**

- A. The annual budget shall be approved by the membership at a regular members’ meeting not less than 30 days before the start of the fiscal year, January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- B. The elders or their designate shall make a copy of the proposed budget available to the members no later than two weeks prior to the annual budget meeting.
- C. Congregational approval shall proceed, without amendment, as a single vote on the budget in its entirety.
- D. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders’ discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year’s level.

#### **Section 6 – Meetings Governed by Roberts Rules of Order**

All regular and special members' meetings shall be governed by *Roberts Rules of Order*.

## **Article 5 – Positions of Leadership Within the Church**

### **Section 1 – Offices of the Church**

- A. The Biblical offices of the church are elders and deacons. The Biblical terms “elder,” “pastor,” and “overseer” are understood to refer to the same Biblical office.
- B. In addition, the church shall have the administrative offices of clerk and treasurer.
- C. All offices of the church must be filled by members of the church.

### **Section 2 - Election of Officers**

Officers may be elected at any regular, or special meeting called for that purpose, assuming all constitutional provisions for notification have been met.

### **Section 3 – Elders**

- A. The board of elders shall be composed of men who satisfy the Biblical qualifications for that office set forth in I Tim. 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. In accordance with 1Tim 2:12, women are not allowed to serve as elders.
- B. Subject to the will of the members, the elders shall oversee the following matters:
  - 1. Church ministries,
  - 2. Financial resources,
  - 3. Legal matters,
  - 4. Business affairs, and
  - 5. Maintenance and repair of facilities.
- C. The elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word, by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine, and shepherding God’s flock (see Acts 6:1-6, 20:28; Heb. 13:17; and I Peter 5:1-4). The responsibilities of elders shall be carried out in the following manner:
  - 1. By examining and instructing prospective members,
  - 2. By examining and recommending all prospective candidates for offices and positions,
  - 3. By overseeing the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees,
  - 4. By conducting worship services,
  - 5. By overseeing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper,
  - 6. By equipping the membership for ministries of the church,
  - 7. By encouraging the membership in sound doctrine and practice,
  - 8. By overseeing the process of church discipline,
  - 9. By coordinating and promoting the ministries of the church,
  - 10. By mobilizing the membership for gospel work globally, and



11. By ensuring that all who minister the Word to the congregation do not teach anything contrary to the Church's Statement of Faith. All outside speakers who teach and preach to the congregation, must be approved by the lead pastor.
- D. The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of lead pastor and associate pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall be the responsibility of the lead pastor. However, he may delegate that responsibility to any other person he deems appropriate.
- E. Each year the elders shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a regular or specially called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting in accordance with the process set forth in Article 4 Section 5. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.
- F. The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings. The tenure of each role (chairman, moderator) shall be determined by the willingness of the elder serving, his current term limit, and the approval of the elders.
- G. The term of office for elder shall be three (3) years. In order for an elder to serve a second three-year term, he must be re-nominated by the elders, and re-affirmed by the church at a regular or special meeting of the members.
- H. After the completion of a second term of office, an elder must take a mandatory one year sabbatical before he can be re-nominated to serve as elder. Neither the lead pastor, nor an associate pastor shall be subject to this restriction on service.
- I. Those elders not receiving compensation from the church may be referred to as "lay elders" although Biblically and functionally there is no difference between a lay elder and a paid staff elder. No elder shall simultaneously hold the office of deacon and elder during his tenure.
- J. The elders may choose to operate among themselves by consensus, and policies for simple majority and super-majority votes may be determined on a case by case basis as agreed upon by the elders.
- K. An elder's term of office may be terminated either voluntarily, or involuntarily.
  1. A voluntary termination shall become effective upon a tendered letter of resignation to, and acceptance by the elders. The church shall be notified of the elder's voluntary resignation at the next regular, or special meeting of the members.
  2. An involuntary termination may be commenced by any two (2) members, not of the same household, of the church who have good reason to believe an elder has failed to meet the Biblical qualifications of the office or has failed to fulfill the responsibilities of his office. The concerned members shall first communicate the basis for their concern to the elders. If a majority of the elders find the elder in question should not be subject to involuntary termination, the members may

appeal the decision of the elders to the church at a special member's meeting, and shall comply with the constitutional provisions in Article 4 Section 4 (A) for calling a special meeting of the members (see Matt.18:15–17 and I Tim. 5:17–21).

3. Any elder, including the lead pastor or an associate pastor, may be dismissed by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special members' meeting.

#### **Section 4 – Lead Pastor**

- A. The lead pastor shall be a paid staff elder of the church. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.
- B. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution.
- C. The lead pastor shall have primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of staff members; however, this responsibility may be delegated to another elder or elders.
- D. In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which may be delegated to someone Biblically qualified to perform them.

#### **Section 5 – Associate Pastors**

- A. The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the lead pastor is that of associate.
- B. An associate pastor shall be a paid staff elder of the church. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.
- C. An associate pastor shall assist the lead pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the lead pastor.
- D. In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor an associate pastor may assume the responsibility of the lead pastor's duties with the approval and oversight of the elders.

#### **Section 6 – Pastoral Assistants**

- A. The lead pastor may hire pastoral assistants to assist with pastoral ministry and administrative tasks. Although such persons may not be considered pastors, they may be elected to serve as elders.
- B. The lead pastor shall determine the duties and responsibilities of pastoral assistants and they shall serve at the will of the lead pastor.

## **Section 7 – Deacons**

- A. Each deacon elected to such office shall meet the qualifications for the office of deacon as described in I Tim. 3:8–13.
- B. In selecting men and women who might be qualified to serve as deacon, the church should consider:
  - 1. Those persons who regularly give of themselves in service to the church, and
  - 2. Those persons who possess particular gifts of service.
- C. Each diaconate position shall serve a particular need of the church and shall be created or dissolved upon the recommendation of a majority of the elders and the agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any regular or special member's meeting.
- D. The term of office for deacon shall be three (3) years. After the completion of a three (3) year term of office, a deacon must take a mandatory one year sabbatical before he or she can be re-nominated to serve as deacon.
- E. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, deacons shall not exercise any spiritual authority over the church, but shall serve the church in the following manner:
  - 1. Enabling the elders to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word,
  - 2. Working to maintain the unity of the church,
  - 3. Caring for the physical needs of the members,
  - 4. Attending to the accommodations for worship services, and
  - 5. Encouraging, supporting, and mobilizing members who desire to serve the church.
- F. Deacons, with the consent of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.
- G. The deacons shall not meet together regularly as a body.

## **Section 8 – Clerk**

- A. The clerk shall be a member in good standing with sufficient qualifications for the office.
- B. The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the members at a member's meeting to serve a term of three (3) years. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms a person may serve as clerk.
- C. The clerk of the church shall have the following duties:
  - 1. To record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church,
  - 2. To preserve an accurate roll of the membership,
  - 3. To render reports as requested by the elders or the church, and
  - 4. To make the most recent version of the church constitution and by-laws is available for all church members.
- D. If the clerk shall be unable to fulfill his or her term of office due to absence or incapacity, the elders shall appoint another member to perform the duties of the church clerk for the remainder of the term.

## **Section 9 – Treasurer**

- A. The treasurer shall be a member in good standing with sufficient qualifications for the office who is not a paid church staff member.
- B. The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the members at a member's meeting to serve a term of three (3) years. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms a person may serve as treasurer.
- C. The treasurer shall support the elders in providing oversight of the financial and accounting activities of the church.
- D. The treasurer shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as may be appropriate.
- E. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. This responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders.
- F. The treasurer shall also see that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to ensure that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church.
- G. The treasurer shall render to the elders, whenever they may require it, an account of all activities as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.
- H. If the treasurer shall be unable to fulfill his or her term of office due to absence or incapacity, the elders shall appoint another member to perform the duties of the church treasurer for the remainder of the term.

## **Article 6 – Elections**

### **Section 1 – Principles**

- A. The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:
  - 1. Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;
  - 2. Nominations should proceed with the support of a majority of the elders;
  - 3. All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;
  - 4. The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Section 2 – Election of Officers**

- A. The election of officers, consisting of elders, deacons, clerk and treasurer, shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, or treasurer shall be evaluated and approved by a majority of the elders and presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting, providing that the previous meeting occurred at least four (4) weeks prior to the election. The election of officers shall be as directed by an elder acting as moderator.
- B. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders at least one week in advance of the relevant church members' meeting.
- C. Any nominee for the office of elder receiving a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) majority of all votes cast shall be declared elected to that office.
- D. Any nominee for the offices of deacon, clerk, and treasurer receiving a simple majority of all votes cast shall be declared elected to that office.
- E. Persons elected to an office of the church shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.
- F. Once an elder or deacon is approved by the congregation, a time for corporate prayer, deacon or elder vows, and church affirmation shall be scheduled during a normal Sunday morning gathering, or such other time as designated by the lead pastor and the elders.

## **Section 3 – The Calling of Lead & Associate Pastors**

- A. In the calling of any man to the position of lead pastor and associate pastors, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. Additionally, the elder board shall serve as the Pastoral Search Committee. The Search Committee may appoint from their number a subcommittee to conduct any necessary research and examination of a pastoral candidate.
- B. In addition, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of a potential lead pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant.
- C. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as lead pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at four (4) consecutive weeks following the nomination, prior to the vote at a regular or special members' meeting.

## **Article 7 – Deviations of Practice**

If a church member believes the church to be out of accord with this constitution, he or she should inform an elder. If the elders determine that the church is out of accord with this constitution, they must provide an update at each consecutive members' meeting until the situation is remedied.

## **Article 8 – Amendments and Adoption of By-Laws**

### **Section 1 - Amendment of the Statement of Faith**

- A. The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant may only be amended by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services at least two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

### **Section 2 - Amendment of the Church Constitution**

- A. The constitution may be amended by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services at least two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised version of the constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church clerk.

### **Section 3 - Adoption of By-laws**

- A. The adoption or amendment of By-laws shall be by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the proposed by-law, or amendment thereto, shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services at least two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised version of the by-laws shall be made available to all church members by the church clerk.

## **Article 9 – Actions Requiring Congregational Approval**

The following actions require approval by a majority of the members present and voting at a regular or special members' meeting:

- A. Borrowing a sum of money in excess of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) or more for one purpose or project;

- B. Pledging church assets to secure a loan;
- C. An expenditure of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) or more for one purpose or project;  
and
- D. The sale or donation of an asset valued at a sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) or more.

### **Article 10 – Dissolution**

- A. In the event that the elders of the church determine that there is reasonable cause to dissolve the Chaffee Crossing Baptist Church as a corporate entity, the elders shall recommend dissolution to the membership.
- B. The elders shall call a special members' meeting for the express purpose of dissolving the church, and notice of the meeting shall be mailed, and sent electronically to all members of record.
- C. In addition, printed notices shall be posted prominently in the church meeting space, no less than thirty (30) days prior to the meeting date. The notice shall state that the purpose of the meeting is to consider dissolution of the church and how the assets of the corporation will be distributed after all creditors have been paid.
- D. At least two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the members present at the meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the dissolution of the church. Each ballot must be signed by the member casting such vote and shall be verified by both the moderator and the clerk. The verifications shall be notarized in accordance with Arkansas law.
- E. If dissolution has been approved by the membership, all of the church's debts shall be fully satisfied and all due regard given to the applicable laws of the state of Arkansas.
- F. None of the church's assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or any other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated, as approved by a simple majority of the members present at the dissolution meeting, to one or more not-for-profit religious organizations which are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith.