

BUKAS LOOB SA DIYOS
Covenant Community
COVENANT OF COMMUNION



NOVEMBER 2001

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PREAMBLE

COVENANT OF COMMUNION

We, the Covenant Disciples of BUKAS-LOOB SA DIYOS Community, residing in varying political territories and ecclesiastical dioceses and represented in trust and fidelity by our **SERVANT LEADERS** and **DISTRICT COUNCILS OF STEWARDS**, collectively affirm our communion and unanimity with each other in the essentials of our spiritual profession of faith, hope and love; and we also assent to common principles, programs and policies governing our communal life, albeit acknowledging our diversity and particularity in the missions, methods and means through which we express and embody our beliefs.

We collectively recognize that our Covenant Community was born by the direction of the Holy Spirit of God our Father, from the seed of the Word of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, within the faith and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Manila on June 19, 1985, emerging from a general discernment of God's Word conducted by Rev. Pascual H. Adorable, S.J., on March 2, 1985 at St. Anne's Academy in Manila. The establishment of the Covenant Community was the fruit of an assembly of couples led by Sonny and Bai de los Reyes who shared the Marriage Encounter experience since March of 1983, gathered together in regular worship since February of 1984, and instituted a foundation for religious purposes in December of 1984, named

BUKAS-LOOB SA DIYOS (BLD) FOUNDATION, INC.

We recollect that with the consent and commitment of an administering council of stewards and upon the prior acceptance of the particular Roman Catholic Diocesan Bishop, our Covenant Community conducted renewal programs, received members into the Prayer Community by their reception of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, established Districts and accepted new disciples upon their fulfillment of requirements for the Covenant.

We therefore solemnly profess and bind ourselves to the following terms of this COVENANT OF COMMUNION, mindful of its legal and spiritual import, and

cognizant of the consequences of possible disaffiliation of any District for reason of violating these terms:

1. We have a common identity, indicated in a Community Logo (the figure of a white Spirit-dove within a red-colored heart and in a Community Name (BUKAS-LOOB SA DIYOS Covenant Community). (Annex 1) We allow its expression in vernacular or substantively identical terms for purposes of cultural understanding, as approved by the Council of Servant Leaders. We realize the meaning our name proclaims: the human condition is capable by its own power only of opening our human hearts in faith and love and hope to the all-powerful and potent grace of God, the Only One who saves, redeems and empowers. We resolve to use our name and identity exclusively for purposes authorized or permitted by our **Council of Servant Leaders**.
2. We share a common **Vision**. We are a communion of families and a Community of persons called together as one people of God to reconciliation and union with Him, by His Spirit and in His Son, through love and service of one another by the gifts we freely receive and thus freely give. (Annex 2: General Policies: Paragraph 1.1)
3. We believe in the principle of **Solidarity of Worship**, from which we first draw our sense of communion as a Covenant Community. Therefore, we welcome our brothers and sisters to our regular Corporate Worship from wherever District they belong. We also welcome all who come in goodwill to witness our worship of the Triune God.
4. We bind ourselves together in common **Covenant** signed with our hands and hearts and sealed in the Eucharist by the Holy Spirit, by which we freely commit to devote ourselves to eight (8) pledges to the Lord to honor our Communion and exercise our Mission as a people of God. (Annex 2: Paragraph 3.2) We acknowledge that the observance and enforcement of these terms shall be the province of the respective governing body of each District, determined by consultation among the Covenant Disciples and discerned with the guidance of Scripture and by the leading of the Spirit.
5. We cherish, uphold, and shall faithfully live out our common **Foundation Values**, both personal and communitarian, super-ordinate among which are **Righteousness** and **Servanthood**. We regard our values as integral and essential to living our faith, as they define our spirituality and express our identity as

- disciples of Christ. We view them as consistent and complementary, aiding us in discerning our directions and policies, and guiding us in strengthening our Communion and advancing our Mission. We regard them collectively as the expression of our Christian worldview, a counter-culture which the Gospel of Christ demands of His disciples in the face of the forces of a secular humanistic world-culture. (Annex 2: Paragraph 4.0)
6. We profess submission to the **Magisterium** and adherence to the **Doctrine and Tradition** of the **Roman Catholic Church**, as contained in the Sacred Scripture, Canon Law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the pronouncements of Church Councils, the encyclicals and the letters of the Vicar of Christ, and the pastoral letters of our Catholic Bishops' Conferences. We likewise submit to the ecclesiastical authority of our respective Diocesan Bishops.
 7. We submit to the common **General Policies** of the Covenant Community, and warrant that these policies will be observed in our Districts, without prejudice to our seeking, by consensus of our District Council of Stewards, exemption or modification of the policies as specific conditions in our District suggest, and approved by the Council of Servant Leaders. (Annex 2:)
 8. We adopt common **Norms** of Community life, but acknowledge that these norms are exhortatory rather than restrictive, and that our means of observing these norms will be determined by policies discerned by the governing body of each District. (Annex 2: Paragraph 5.0)
 9. We acknowledge that our **Community Governance** is vested with the Council of Servant Leaders and the Spiritual Director. All Community Districts, therefore shall offer a tithe every quarter to the Council of Servant Leaders. Half of the tithe shall be equally shared by the District Diocesan Bishop and the Spiritual Adviser and the other half shall be presented to the Council of Servant Leaders. The tithe shall be based on all tithes and love offerings presented to the District at Worship Services and all Eucharistic Celebrations including those of Encounters and the Life in the Spirit Seminar.
 10. We accept a common **Formation** program and process, referred to as the Christian Discipleship Formation program, whose content, duration and process shall be formulated by the Council of Servant Leaders, with the approval of the Council of Servant Leaders, different directions and patterns of discipleship formation may be adopted by each District at the instance of our District Leaders' Conference and District Council of Stewards. (Annex 3: Commitment and Covenant)
 11. We adopt a common set of **Pastoral Care Principles** for all our Districts, as expressed in the Pastoral care Program approved by the Spiritual Director and the

- Council of Servant Leaders, administered by our District Councils of Stewards. (Annex 2: Membership: Paragraph 8.0)
12. We adopt a common **Structure for Governance** in our Districts, consisting of our District Leaders' Conference overseen by the District Councils of Stewards and governed by the Council of Servant Leaders and the Spiritual Director. (Annex 2: Membership: Paragraph 11.0)
 13. We subscribe to a common **Process of Emergence** of Community servants for appointment to the governing body of each District, that is, that weighted nominations shall be submitted by all District Covenant Disciples to the Council of Servant Leaders, based on established criteria, for discernment by the Council of Servant Leaders. We further accept a process of emergence for the Council of Servant Leaders, to include eligible covenant disciples of all Districts for discernment by the Spiritual Director. (Annex 2: Membership: Paragraph 11.0)
 14. We accept that the common **Mode of Decision-Making** in the governance of the Community is **collective discernment** and **consensus** of the governing body: that is by substantive unanimity. (Annex 2: Membership: Paragraph 11.0)
 15. We agree to adopt **Financial, Administrative and Communications Systems** formulated by the Council of Servant Leaders. We commit to the principles of integrity, transparency and accountability in all financial, administrative and communication matters, and pledge to disseminate to all members, as well as report to our Diocese, our financial position once every quarter, and annually in its audited form. We also commit to support the Covenant Community through tithes and love offerings in order to fulfill our Vision and Mission, and to effectively conduct our programs of evangelization, renewal and discipleship.
 16. We agree to common **Purposes** in organizing independent, non-profit, non-stock foundations in Districts which require civil recognition, provided they are consistent with the Covenant of Communion, and that every Foundation Charter clearly stipulates that, in cases of legal dissolution or of disaffiliation from BUKAS-LOOB SA DIYOS Covenant Community, all assets net of obligations shall revert to the Diocese in which the District is accredited. We likewise agree that the Foundation shall be managed according to the systems and policies covered under Term No. 15 above, and ruled by the legal provisions of foundations in our respective territories.

We therefore set our hands and hearts, and seal this Covenant of Communion among us who stand in representation of all the Covenant Disciples of Bukas-Loob sa Diyos Covenant Community.

COMMUNITY PRAYER

ABBA FATHER

YOU CALL US TOGETHER BY NAME AND FAVOR US TO BE YOUR PEOPLE. YOU TOUCH OUR SPIRITS WITH YOUR GLORY, FORM OUR MINDS WITH YOUR TRUTH, AND MOLD OUR HEARTS WITH YOUR LOVE.

YOU SET US FREE AND SAVE US BY YOUR FAITH IN YOUR SON, JESUS CHRIST. YOU MAKE US WHOLE AND FILL US BY YOUR TRUST IN YOUR HOLY SPIRIT. YOU GRANT US POWER WITH YOUR GIFTS, WHICH WE YIELD TO YOUR WORD AND SPIRIT. TO GIVE FREELY AND FULLY OF OURSELVES AND TO LOVE AND SERVE ONE ANOTHER AS WE SEEK AND PROCLAIM YOUR KINGDOM.

YOU SUMMON US TO YOUR PRESENCE AS A COMMUNITY OF FAMILIES AND A COMMUNITY OF PERSONS, WALKING THE WAY OF DISCIPLES --- ONE WITH THE PEOPLE OF THIS COMMUNITY AND CONSECRATED BY THE CROSS TO YOUR NAME.

WE ARE YOUR OPEN VESSELS OF CLAY. REFINE US WITH YOUR CLEANSING FIRE. WE HUMBLE OURSELVES BEFORE YOU; WE SEEK YOUR GRACE AND MERCY THAT YOU MAY HEAL OUR LAND AND PEOPLE, BESIEGED BY DESPAIR AND IGNORANCE; BATTERED BY NEGLECT AND DISASTER, BURDENED BY INJUSTICE AND GREED.

ANOINT US, LORD ...

TO BE YOUR FAITHFUL UNDER-SHEPHERDS; YOUR WITNESS TO THE DEAF AND THE BLIND; YOUR MINISTERS TO THE BROKEN AND THE WOUNDED; YOUR COUNSELORS TO THE POOR AND THE LOST; LET US BE YOUR LIGHT, YOUR CHRISM AND YOUR SALT.

WE ASK FOR YOUR STRENGTH AND POWER; WE ASK FOR YOUR GUIDANCE AND LIGHT ...

- ❖ TO BLESS OUR MISSION AND MINISTRY AS SERVANTS OF YOUR PILGRIM CHURCH IN OUR WORK OF A RENEWED EVANGELIZATION;
- ❖ TO RESTORE THE FILIPINO FAMILY IN WHOLENESS AND VIGOR OF SPIRIT AS YOUR SANCTUARY OF LIFE AND LOVE, AS YOUR SCHOOL FOR WISDOM AND WORK;
- ❖ TO FORM UNIONS OF HOUSEHOLDS: BASIC COMMUNITIES OF FAITH, NOURISHED BY YOUR WORD IN JUSTICE, SUSTAINED BY YOUR SPIRIT OF PEACE;
- ❖ TO STRENGTHEN THE FILIPINO PARISH AS OUR CENTER OF WORSHIP AND WITNESS, TO REVIVE THE HEARTS OF OUR PEOPLE BY THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.
- ❖ TO RELEASE BY OUR SHARING AND STEWARDSHIP THE WEAK, THE CRUSHED AND HUMBLED FROM THE YOKE OF POVERTY AND OPPRESSION; AND TO RECEIVE THE FULLNESS OF YOUR GIFTS;
- ❖ AND TO RAISE IN YOUR NAME AN ARMY OF PRAISERS AND INTERCESSORS TO WAGE A WARFARE OF PRAYER FOR THE RENEWAL OF YOUR CHURCH AND NATION.

AND WE BLESS YOU, LORD ...

FOR MARY, VIRGIN MOTHER OF CHRIST AND MODEL OF THE CHURCH FOR HER PROTECTING AND NURTURING CARE ...

ALL THESE WE ASK ...

IN THE NAME OF YOUR SON JESUS CHRIST AND BY THE POWER OF YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, FOR YOU ARE ONE GOD FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.

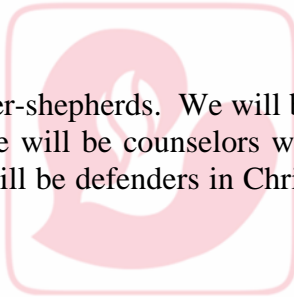
1.0 CHARTER

1.1 VISION

We are a communion of families and a community of persons called together as one people through the moment of encounter and a process of renewal to a relationship of faith, hope, and love with God. We are reconciled with the Father by our saving faith in Jesus Christ, renewing trust in the Holy Spirit, and by our uniting compassion with one another. We are blessed with personal gifts --- spiritual and natural, innate or acquired --- which we yield to the Word and the Spirit. We give freely and fully of ourselves, love and serve one another as we seek and proclaim God's Kingdom. We commit, as disciples of Jesus, to speak the words and do the deeds of Christ among the Filipino people and among others to whom we are called by the Lord.

1.2 CHARISM

We are the Lord's under-shepherds. We will be witnesses to the Word that others may hear and understand. We will be counselors with the Spirit, that others may have healing and wholeness. We will be defenders in Christ of those who suffer injustice and oppression.



1.3 MISSION

The Lord calls us to be Servants of the Pilgrim Church, in her work of a renewed integral evangelization:

- Restoring the Filipino family in Christ
- Forming Basic Communities of faith, or Basic Ecclesial Communities
- Strengthening of Filipino parish
- Breaking the yoke of poverty and oppression; and
- Raising an army of prayer warriors for Church and national renewal

1.4 RENEWED MISSION

As a communion of encountered families,
we are called by the lord
to build communities of disciples of Jesus Christ
who, empowered by the Holy Spirit,
will renew and strengthen our Christian faithful
through programs of Christian Encounter
(Marriage, Family, Solo/Single Parent,

Singles and Youth Encounters,
and Life in the Spirit Seminars)
of Spiritual Growth, of Pastoral Care
and of Poverty Alleviation.

1.5 AFFILIATIONS

- 1.5.a. Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships (Pontifical Council of the Laity - Rome)
- 1.5.b. Marriage Encounter Foundation of the Philippines
- 1.5.c. Archdiocesan Marriage and Family Life Ministries
- 1.5.d. Archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charismatic Renewal
- 1.5.e. Federation of Transparochial Communities of the Philippines
- 1.5.f. Sangguniang Laiko ng Pilipinas (Council of the Laity of the Philippines)



2.0 MEMBERSHIP

2.1 COMPOSITION OF MEMBERSHIP

The Community is composed of members belonging to different parishes within the same diocese (transparochial) and belonging to different dioceses within the same local Church (transdiocesan).

2.2 ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

2.2.a. The entry points to Membership in the General Community are the Marriage Encounter, the Singles Encounter, the Solo Parents Encounter, Family Encounter and Youth Encounter.

Any couple or individual who desires to join the General Community must have been baptized or married in the Catholic Church, and must have complied with the following requirements at each entry point:

- i. through the Marriage Encounter:
 - Couples must be married in the Catholic Church. Applications or exemptions relating to this qualification must be with the prior written approval of the Diocese or Parish or by the District Spiritual Adviser.
 - Widows, widowers, priests and religious (nuns and seminarians) are welcome.
- ii. through the Singles Encounter: unmarried persons who are at least 20 years old;
- iii. through the Solo/Single Parents Encounter: unmarried, separated or widowed persons who are not living in with any person, with children under their parental care;
- iv. through the Family Encounter: children of graduate families, even if they have not joined the Youth Ministry;
- v. through the Youth Ministry or Youth Encounter: any youth, who is still a dependent on their family, and under 20 years old; and
- vi. any member of the clergy or religious who attends the Marriage or Family Encounter and four (4) consecutive worship services of the Community.

2.2.b. The only entry point to Discipleship in the Covenant Community is the Life in the Spirit Seminar:

- i. Couples married in the Catholic Church who have already renewed their sacrament of matrimony, specifically through a Marriage

- Encounter weekend conducted by the Community or by a group recognized by either the Marriage Encounter Foundation of the Philippines, the Worldwide Marriage Encounter, or the Christian Family Movement;
- ii. Graduates of the Community Marriage Encounter, Singles Encounter, Solo/Single Parent Encounter, Family Encounter or Youth Encounter;
- iii. Parents or Community members who may not have gone through a Marriage Encounter, provided that both spouses are at least 70 years old; and
- iv. Any member of the clergy or religious.

2.3 REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

A member of the Covenant Community is either a Committed Disciple or a Covenant Disciple.

2.3.a. A Committed Disciple is one who has freely sealed a written commitment to observe five (5) pledges, and to entry into and complete the Community's Christian Discipleship Formation Program. Pre-requisites to committed discipleship are:

- i. Completion of the Community's Life in the Spirit
- ii. Fulfillment of period of Community Residency specified by the appropriate governing authority, which will be devoted to learning the Community's basic teachings, and sharing in the Community's worship and pastoral life.

2.3.b. A Covenant Disciple is one who has freely sealed a written covenant to observe eight (8) pledges, and to submit their spiritual gifts at the service of the Lord through the Community. Pre-requisites to covenant discipleship are:

- i. Fulfillment of the Community's Discipleship Formation Program, including field apprenticeship in the Mission Homesteads for Full Term Districts;
- ii. Completion of the Community's Discipleship Retreat;
- iii. Completion of the Discipling Program
- iv. Formal invitation from the Council of Servant Leaders upon the recommendation of the District Council of Stewards to join the Covenant Community.

2.3.c. An individual member commits and/or seals his/her covenant to the BLD Community and becomes a member of the District/District-in-Process

- 2.6.b. District Steward
- 2.6.c. Ministry or Program Coordinator
- 2.6.d. Homestead Shepherd
- 2.6.e. District-In-Process Shepherd
- 2.6.f. Class Shepherd
- 2.6.g. Circle Shepherd
- 2.6.h. Life in the Spirit Shepherd
- 2.6.i. Worship Leader
- 2.6.j. Community Teacher
- 2.6.k. Community or District Instructor
- 2.6.l. Life in the Spirit Sharer
- 2.6.m. Encounter Sharer
- 2.6.n. Parish/Institutional Coordinator

2.7 CRITERIA FOR PASTORAL AND APOSTOLIC SERVICE

Common criteria for responsible Pastoral and Apostolic service include:

- 2.7.a. Faithful attendance at Community Worship and fruitful presence at Living Word or Word Sharing Circles;
- 2.7.b. Knowledge and observance of the Word of God and Church Teachings;
- 2.7.c. Adherence to and exemplification of Community Values and Norms;
- 2.7.d. Active personal prayer life;
- 2.7.e. Openness to feed-back and critique; and
- 2.7.f. Good life witnessing.

2.8 ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR PASTORAL TEAMS IN ENCOUNTER PROGRAMS

- 2.8.a. Disciplined prayer life as a couple, family or individual;
- 2.8.b. Evidence of and experience in spiritual counseling gifts; and
- 2.8.c. Absence of unresolved and serious conjugal family problems and/or personal problems.

2.9 ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF COMMUNITY TEACHER OR INSTRUCTOR

- 2.9.a. Evidence of good witness on the assigned topics;
- 2.9.b. Absence of conjugal or family problems that inhibit their teaching effectiveness;
- 2.9.c. Demonstration of natural and spiritual teaching gifts.

2.10 ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF WORSHIP LEADERS

- 2.10.a. Basic understanding of functions of songs and music in worship;
- 2.10.b. Facility in exhortation; and
- 2.10.c. Conjugal (couple) participation in Corporate Worship Service.

2.11 LEAVES OF ABSENCE

- 2.11.a. Any Disciple who wishes to apply for a leave of absence shall consult his/her Pastoral head. The nature and purpose of the leave should be discerned by the applicant and the Pastoral Head. Leaves shall be only from Ministry work, and for serious reasons.
- 2.11.b. The written request for leave should specify the duration and reason for the leave and should be presented to the appropriate governing body at least two (2) weeks before the desired effectivity date. The maximum period of leave is six (6) months.
- 2.11.c. If the leave is approved, all duties and responsibilities of the Disciple will be considered automatically relinquished, although the appropriate governing body may request the Disciple to retain specific duties and responsibilities. However, the Disciple is still required to attend the weekly Corporate Worship in order to retain discipleship.
- 2.11.d. Re-entry policy may be formulated by the District Council of Stewards and approved by the Council of Servant Leaders.
- 2.11.e. Former Servant Leaders, District Stewards/Tricords on Sabbatical Leave shall not be given pastoral nor governance responsibilities. However, they may be requested to perform duties in accordance with their gifting or past experience, provided they are in active standing as Covenant disciples. They can be called to serve as Prayer Leaders, Instructors, Sharers or Coaches.

3.0 COMMITMENT AND COVENANT

3.1 THE COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

The Community Commitment is signed by the Committed Disciple and sealed by the action of the Holy Spirit at the Consecration of the Gifts during the Eucharistic Celebration. It contains a **Preamble** and **Five (5) Pledges**:

3.1.a. The Preamble

We believe that membership in the Spiritual Community of Bukas-Loob sa Diyos requires a total commitment of ourselves to the person of Jesus Christ as Our Lord and Savior. It means union of mind and heart and spirit with other Christian couples and their families, in obedience to God the Father and at the direction of the Holy Spirit. It means the operative belief that living in Jesus Christ is the essence of salvation, and that full Christian maturity develops only from true discipleship with Jesus Christ and love for others.

We profess communion with the Roman Catholic Church, believe in official Catholic doctrine, and observe official Catholic liturgy. We honor the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of God. And we acknowledge the Holy Father, the Pope, as the Vicar of Christ and the successor of Saint Peter.

We therefore commit to the Lord and to the Community that:

3.1.b. The Five (5) Pledges

- i. We shall surrender ourselves totally to God the Father, to Jesus Christ the Son of God and to the Holy Spirit of God; and we believe that God is the Source of all authority. We humbly offer ourselves in submission and servanthood to God's authority as represented by the Catholic Church in the persons of the Holy Father and the Bishops of the Church. We submit to the ecclesial authority of the Bishops of our Diocese and the diocesan Spiritual Director of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

In the Covenant Community of Bukas-loob sa Diyos, we commit ourselves to the pastoral authority of our Spiritual Director, and of those who constitute or represent the Community Council of Servant Leaders.

- ii. We shall complete the Christian Discipleship Formation Program offered by the Community.
- iii. We shall regularly share our knowledge and experience in the Word with other members of the Community at least once a week at our designated Word Sharing Circles.
- iv. We shall nourish our spiritual lives by opening to God through individual, conjugal and family daily prayers, and we will upbuild the Community through intercessory prayer. We shall faithfully pray and worship in unity and fellowship as one Community at least once each week.
- v. We shall remain reconciled and in solidarity with the other Disciples in the Community.

3.2 THE COMMUNITY COVENANT

The Community Covenant is signed by the Covenant Disciple and sealed by the action of the Holy Spirit at the Consecration of the Gifts during the Eucharistic Celebration. It contains a **Preamble** and **Eight (8) Pledges**:

3.2.a. The Preamble

We believe that we, as persons, as a couple and as a family, are summoned by the Lord to membership in Bukas-loob sa Diyos Covenant Community and thus to the holy work of evangelizing and shepherding other persons, couples and families towards a personal relationship with God, through the encounter and the renewal apostolates, and through our own personal witnessing of authentic Christian love and faith, service and worship.

We believe that membership in the Spiritual Community of Bukas-Loob sa Diyos requires a total commitment of ourselves to the person of Jesus Christ as Our Lord and Savior. It means union of mind and heart and spirit with other Christian couples and their families, in obedience to God the Father and at the direction of the Holy Spirit. It means the operative belief that living faith in Jesus Christ is the essence of salvation, and that full Christian maturity develops only from the discipleship with Jesus Christ and love for others.

We profess communion with the Roman Catholic Church, believe in official Catholic doctrine, and observe official Catholic liturgy. We honor the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mother of God. And we acknowledge the

Holy Father, the Pope, as the Vicar of Christ and the successor of Saint Peter.

We therefore pledge to the Lord and to the Community that:

3.2.b. The Eight (8) Pledges

- i. We surrender ourselves totally to God the Father, to Jesus Christ the Son of God and to the Holy Spirit of God, and we believe that God is the source of all authority. We humbly offer ourselves in submission and servanthood to God's authority as represented by the Catholic Church in the person of the Holy Father and the Bishops of the Church. We submit to the ecclesial authority of the Bishop of our Diocese and the diocesan Spiritual Director of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

In the Covenant Community of Bukas-Loob sa Diyos, we commit ourselves to the pastoral authority of our Spiritual Director and of those who constitute or represent the Community Council of Servant Leaders.

- ii. We shall nourish our spiritual lives by opening to God through individual, conjugal and family daily prayers; and we will upbuild the Community through intercessory prayer.
- iii. We shall read, study and live the Word of God in the Holy Scriptures and in other spiritual readings, and we shall regularly share our knowledge and experience in the Word with other members of the Community at least once a week at our designated Word Sharing Circles.
- iv. We shall regularly receive the Sacrament of our Faith, particularly the Eucharist and Reconciliation, and bear witness to the power of God's grace in our lives.
- v. We shall faithfully pray and worship in unity and fellowship as one Community at least once each week.
- vi. We shall in at least one Community Mission or Ministry, guided by the direction of the Council of Servant Leaders through the appointed Pastoral Head.

- vii. We shall actively assist in ministering to the spiritual, personal and material needs of other members of the Community, and of the other members of the Body of Christ in a spirit of self-giving love.
- viii. We shall support the Community's Missions and Ministries with regular tithes and love offerings given according to our true means and out of the fullness of our hearts.

3.2 PARISH SERVICE

Covenant Disciples who wish to make their resident parish their principal avenue service but desire to remain as covenant members shall comply with the following guidelines:

- 3.3.a. The Disciple shall write a letter addressed to the District Council of Stewards, stating the extent of his/her parish service. The letter should be endorsed by his/her Parish Priest. All parish services shall be approved by the District Council of Stewards. The Council of Servant Leaders shall be notified by the DCS regarding such request and approval together with the disciple's personal information sheet.
- 3.3.b. The Disciple may be relieved of his/her regular ministry functions in the Community, but may be required by the Council to serve his/her respective capacity as needed by the Community.
- 3.3.c. The Disciple shall continue to attend only the Corporate Eucharist Assembly on the first week of each month, but must attend parish prayer meetings regularly.
- 3.3.d. The Disciple need not attend the Community's Word Sharing Circles, only if he/she can regularly attend a weekly parish Word-sharing group.

4.0 COMMUNITY VALUES

Thirty-eight (38) values or dispositions of the spirit are valued most by the Community. Community Values are of two (2) categories: Personal and Communitarian.

4.1 PERSONAL VALUES

Personal Values refer to a person's inner, qualitative disposition regarding his/her Christian life with respect to oneself and another.

- 4.1.a. **Responsibility:** (or wholeness of person, soundness of character and rectitude of spirit) is the super-ordinate value binding together and ruling eighteen (18) other Personal Values.
- 4.1.b. **Self-Responsibility:** Fruitfulness; Initiative and Perseverance; Orderliness; Discipline; Temperance; Openness to Learning.
- 4.1.c. **Self-Knowledge:** Prayerfulness; Simplicity; Sincerity; Trust; Advocacy; Openness to Correction.
- 4.1.d. **Self-Giving:** Humility; Vulnerability; Obedience; Dispossession; Compassion; Readiness to Forgive.

4.2 COMMUNITARIAN VALUES

Communitarian Values are values that refer to a person's expressed, active disposition regarding his/her Christian life with respect to oneself and one's Community.

- 4.2.a. **Servanthood:** (or openness to love, willingness to serve, readiness to offer, preparedness to give what is valuable or useful to others) is the super-ordinate value binding together and ruling eighteen (18) other Communitarian Values.
- 4.2.b. **Group Responsibility:** Sense of Mission; Commitment and Involvement; Subsidiarity; Accountability; Stewardship; Commitment to Excellence.
- 4.2.c. **Group Understanding:** Sense of Dialogue; Respect for Person; Truthfulness; Discernment; Consensus; Commitment to Growth.
- 4.2.d. **Group Solidarity:** Sense of Communion; Transparency; Submission; Interdependence; Sharing; Commitment to Reconciliation.

5.0 COMMUNITY NORMS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Ten Commandments are the minimum demands of the Christian moral code. But Christianity is more than a moral code; disciples of Christ are expected to live beyond the demands of the Ten Commandments. Christ invites us to live and love in a more radical way.

We respond no longer by external compulsion of the Law, by the internal propulsion of Grace in the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We are called to **Righteousness** by loving God above all as the expression of our spiritual worship. We are called to **Servanthood** by loving our neighbors as we love ourselves, and our brothers and sisters in Christ as God loves us.

Sacrificial love is the new commandment of Christ. And because love has no limits whatever norms we adopt for ourselves today may change as we grow in wisdom and grace. The norms of the Community should thus be understood as dynamically progressive approximations of the Kingdom norms embodied in our highest ideal, Jesus Christ. As we live the gospel norms, therefore, we more closely approach our vision as a Community of Disciples.

We therefore urge, encourage and support our members to observe the following behavioral patterns which, by our common agreement, characterize the spirituality we advocate as a Community.

5.2 ON WELL-BEING

- 5.2.a. Avoid or overcome addictions to nicotine, alcohol and other drugs, or to over indulgent behavior as in compulsive gambling (electronic and computer games), workaholism, overeating, impulsive buying, etc. through prayers, shepherding, counseling, mutual support groups, teaching, and orderly study of the Word.
- 5.2.b. Keep physically and mentally fit by exercising daily, taking the proper rest and sleep, eating balanced and healthful meals, taking up an enjoyable sports activity.
- 5.2.c. Avoid serving intoxicating drinks, hard liquor or similar liquids at public gatherings under the auspices of the Community, including Encounter class reunions, fellowships, sports or thanksgiving events or similar functions and assemblies. (The Community does not regard the taking of wine as inherently wrong. It recognizes that the fruit of the vine is a substance that is transformed into the Blood of the Lord at the Eucharist.

Moreover, it believes that drinking of wine is to be regarded by Disciples as a private activity with prudent moderation and self-control.)

- 5.2.d. Avoid coming to Community gatherings, e.g. worship services, WSCs/LWGs and District Assemblies and other events/functions mentioned in 5.2.c., reeking with or smelling of alcohol.

5.3 ON FINANCES

- 5.3.a. Fulfill financial obligations fully and promptly.
- 5.3.b. Be free from imprudent borrowings; but in those instances where they fail, the Community will assist them in avoiding unnecessary debts through Pastoral Care like counseling or shepherding.
- 5.3.c. Invest only in legitimate, productive and humane enterprises which conform to and advance the Gospel.

5.4 ON GIVING

- 5.4.a. Give financial aid to those members who have real financial needs (as ascertained by the Community), especially those who are terminally ill and are without adequate resources, by living in faith according to their means rather than lending.
- 5.4.b. Give 3-1/3% of the personal income to the Community, 3-1/3% to the parish, and 3-1/3% for the worship celebrations of the family, as tithe. (Deuteronomy 14: 22-29)

5.5 ON SPEECH

- 5.5.a. Speak well of others.
- 5.5.b. Speak only the truth to others, with prudence and respect.
- 5.5.c. Reject idle talk and gossip, and admonish those who engage in them.

5.6 ON PIETY

- 5.6.a. Pray at least one hour a day.
- 5.6.b. Celebrate and receive the Eucharist at least twice a week.
- 5.6.c. Prayerfully read and meditate on the mass reading of the day.

- 5.6.d. Have a personal Bible easily accessible at all times.
- 5.6.e. Read and systematically study at 2 chapters of the Bible a day.
- 5.6.f. Memorize at least one Bible verse a week.
- 5.6.g. Skip one full meal a week (or the equivalent mortification), with the savings given to the Breaking the Yoke of Poverty Program.
- 5.6.h. Strive to have a working knowledge of the social teachings of the Church.
- 5.6.i. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation monthly.
- 5.6.j. Submit to pastoral authority and care.
- 5.6.k. Be faithful in attending Prayer Meetings, Living Word Circles, Word Sharing Circles, Community Assemblies, Retreats and Recollections.

5.7 ON AVAILABILITY

- 5.7.a. Be present in all Community activities and arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of the scheduled starting time, to allow fellowship with others.
- 5.7.b. Be always ready to serve in whatever capacity the Community is calling us.
- 5.7.c. Actively participate in Community activities, particularly in those areas where are especially equipped or have the required charism.
- 5.7.d. Be diligent, orderly and productive in the performance of our work.
- 5.7.e. Develop our gifts and talents and discipline ourselves so that we can competently exercise these gifts and talents to upbuild the Community.
- 5.7.f. Maximize the utilization of our God-given resources so that we will be self-sufficient in our needs and be able to share with others.

5.8 ON WORKING TOGETHER

- 5.8.a. Invite and enable others to share or contribute to the effective completion of the work.

- 5.8.b. Regard conflict as opportunities for mutual understanding rather than division, and therefore pursue initiatives and actively work towards the resolution of conflicts so that facts are clarified, issues resolved, and persons reconciled.
- 5.8.c. Dialogue in peace with each other and pursue initiatives to exchange, share, discover, and discern together as an alternative to hostile argumentation and debate (equanimity).

5.9 ON DECISION-MAKING

- 5.9.a. Seek relevant information, clarify facts and understand perceptions before making judgements or taking action.
- 5.9.b. Express true opinions, views and sentiments on Community matters, and allow others to express their own.
- 5.9.c. Seek the counsel and opinion from others in the Community who will be directly or indirectly affected by decisions and actions.
- 5.9.d. Accept responsibility and accountability for our decisions and actions.
- 5.9.e. Study and seek understanding of issues regarding major Community decisions.

5.10 ON CARING

- 5.10.a. Attend first to the needs of others.
- 5.10.b. Greet each other with a smile.
- 5.10.c. Make others feel welcome at Community functions.
- 5.10.d. Mutually support and encourage each other to live the norms.
- 5.10.e. Give and receive forgiveness freely.
- 5.10.f. When able, help those in need. When in need, humbly seek help; and when help is given, humbly receive.

5.11 ON FRATERNAL CORRECTION

- 5.11.a. Speak privately to the brother or sister witnessed as committing a wrongdoing for clarification, and if necessary, for correction and counsel.

After all efforts to speak in private with the wrongdoer have failed, speak about what we witnessed only with the one who has direct pastoral responsibility over the perceived wrongdoer.

5.11.b. Be open to receive fraternal correction with wisdom and in peace.

5.12 ON MARRIED LIFE

Coupleness is a Community charism that must be preserved and fostered. We require our Disciples, and encourage and support our members who are in the married state, to be in the grace of sacramental marriage in the Catholic Church.

5.12.a. Have daily conjugal dialogue and prayer.

5.12.b. Acknowledge husbands as head of the family, responsible and accountable primarily for the spiritual, and secondarily, for the material needs of the family.

5.12.c. Consult each other and together discern the will of God in all major decisions. In case of an impasse, the husband must accept the responsibility for, and face the consequences of the final decision.

5.12.d. Give visible witness to their loving relationship.

5.12.e. Practice and advocate only those family planning methods adhered to by the Catholic Church.

5.12.f. Serve together as couples in the Community in a complementary way.

6.0 COMMUNITY CULTURE

The Community's decision in 1985 to adopt the way of life described in the Scripture-based manuscript "Patterns of Christian Community: A Statement of Community Order," inspired the formulation of a desired "Community Culture". Eleven (11) Culture Elements are described. After Community-wide consultation by the leaders of the Community in 1992, the Statements on Sound Community Culture were formed.

6.1 FUNCTIONING AS A BODY

Members are interdependent upon one another and diligently dedicate themselves to doing service. They work actively to build one another and the Community as a whole. Their most important service is to love one another. Every member exercises spiritual and moral authority and has a responsibility for the welfare and mission of the Community.

6.2 PEACE IN THE BODY

Peace comes from obedience to the commandments of God. When members see something wrong in their relationship with another, they resolve it through personal dialogue and seek mutual reconciliation. If they fail to come to terms, they seek a judgment from a member with governing authority over them. Conflicts are the responsibility of the whole body and are to be resolved in peace.

6.3 SERIOUS WRONGDOING

Serious wrongdoing becomes the responsibility of the governors. All serious matters brought to their attention are carefully examined and the member involved either cleared or disciplined by the appropriate governing body in a timely manner. It is not authentic love to leave a member in sin, to allow him/her to falsely believe in his/her innocence, or allow others to wrongly assume his/her guilt.

6.4 SPEECH AND WRONGDOING

Members speak well of their brothers and sisters in the Community. They do not speak ill of, or judge others at any time even if what they are saying is true. If a wrongdoing occurs, parties involved come to a one-on-one personal dialogue. Governors encourage members to personal dialogue. If members are unable to do so, the governors initiate the dialogue and if necessary discipline them. Members who know of a possible wrongdoing by another must speak only about it to a

person responsible over the wrongdoer. Facts are clarified, issues are resolved and persons are reconciled with one another.

6.5 SUBMISSION

Directions are to be received willingly by each member in faithful humility, subordinating oneself but expressing one's views and reservations. Members take the initiative in advocating recommendations to the governing authority and in presenting their proposals on directions so that these are taken in a cooperative spirit and in a way that will strengthen the Community and make it grow.

6.6 UNITY

Unity is the oneness of mind and heart among members of the Community. Governors individually possess the character, charisms and competence to teach, direct, and lead the Community. Members respond to the guidance of the governors with humility of mind, willing to be taught, directed and corrected. Both the governors and the members put lower values on developing individuality of approach or the more correct opinion, but stress mutual understanding and trust as the basis for agreement.

6.7 WISDOM AND CHARACTER OF GOVERNORS

Governors are mature and compassionate, and lead by example. They are firm in giving direction, yet are disposed to change their decision given a convincing reason. They are brotherly but not overly familiar, steadfast and ready to serve with dedication and zeal. They possess in their hearts the good of the Community and its individual members at all times.

6.8 CONFLICT AND MEEKNESS

Members enter discussions in good faith, trusting that other members will give them a good hearing and will want to know the truth and follow it. Members opt for directly and peacefully speaking the truth rather than using pressure or conflict to further their own views; they are willing to listen to and accept opinions different from their own. Those in authority are open to suggestions because wisdom can come from any member of the Community.

6.9 RECEIVING NEW BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Membership to the general Community is open to all who desire spiritual growth. New members pursue learning programs which actualize their spiritual aims. Community leaders take steps to encourage them and watchfully care for their

needs. These needs are identified and studied, and the Community sees that pastoral support is given when they encounter problems. Those who demonstrate full commitment to a spiritual life, adhere to the Catholic faith and show genuine love of others are eventually accepted as members to discipleship.

6.10 SERVANT LEADERS

Servant Leaders ensure shared understanding with all concerned before final decisions are made. They exhaust all reasonable means to obtain facts and information on matters for decision or resolution. Efforts are exerted to arrive at the best possible decision that takes into account the welfare of members as well as the work of the Community. They explain the reasons behind major decisions. Servant Leaders set the example of constantly finding ways to improve individual and group contribution in the conduct of Community activities.

6.11 INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION

Community members perform their most important service within the context of their major commitments in life especially family and occupation. The extent to which members contribute of their time and material resources to the body in its life and mission together will vary from person to person, depending on their state of life.

Members care for others and contribute generously to the needs and work of the Community from their personal resources. They set aside the time to participate in Community activities and to give competent and caring service in their areas of ministry. Members make personal sacrifices, especially in fulfilling all the needs of the other members of the Community. They encourage, nurture and protect their fellow members' spiritual commitment in their lives even outside of the scope of Community activities and services.

7.0 COMMUNITY WORSHIP

7.1 COMMUNITY STATEMENT ON EXCELLENCE IN WORSHIP

7.1.a. ELEMENTS FOR SOUND WORSHIP

- i. Nature and Purpose of Worship
- ii. The Heart of a Worshipper
- iii. The Character of a Worship Leader
- iv. Corporate Worship: A Team Ministry
- v. Parts and Pattern of New Corporate Worship
 - A. Praise, Music and Song
 - B. Prayer, Preaching and Prophecy
- vi. The Environment for Worship
- vii. Discerning Directions for the Worship Service
- viii. Dynamics of the Worship Service
 - A. Prologue/Opening
 - B. Receiving the Word of God
 - C. Opening to the Spirit of God
 - D. Communing with the Heart of God
 - E. Empowering with the Gifts of the Spirit
 - F. Epilogue/Closing
- ix. Fruits of the Worship Service

7.1.b. NATURE AND PURPOSE OF WORSHIP

Worship is the celebration in our lives --- in our spirits, minds, hearts, and in our beliefs, words and acts --- of the Holiness and Sovereignty, and of the Loving-Kindness and Majesty of God. We worship as we outwardly express our repentance, reverence and awe, our love, joy and thanksgiving, through acts of praise and exultation, of music and song, and of prayer, silence and prophecy.

The highest and purest form of worship is the Eucharistic Celebration, instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and handed down through the centuries as the sacrament of worship. All forms of worship are derived from, and serve to affirm, the memorial and sacrificial character of the Eucharist.

In worship, we humbly offer our homage and allegiance to the father, in the name and by the blood of Jesus. We gratefully proclaim the abiding presence of the Spirit within us and in our midst. By faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we open ourselves to communion with the Father through

union with the Lord Jesus Christ and to empowerment by the Holy Spirit through the gifts and fruit which He freely grants.

As we worship from our hearts, we then receive, through an inward flow of grace, the wholeness of our person, and the upbuilding of our Church. This grace of God enables us, individually and collectively, to live out our Community Values of **Righteousness** and **Servanthood**, and to bring to reality the mission entrusted by God to our Community and our Church.

It is from the Community's body of Worship that other forms of Community prayer are empowered. The strength of Community intercession, which propels the vitality of Community action in its mission fields, is drawn from the sustained excellence of Corporate Worship. Likewise, the Community's empowerment for Spiritual Warfare is drawn from the gifts and fruit of the Spirit received in Corporate Worship.

7.1.c. **THE HEART OF A WORSHIPPER**

The heart of a true worshipper is open and responsive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, enabling him/her to be discerning but decisive --- prudent in actions and discriminating with words. He/she is emptied of bitterness, resentment and strife, and therefore open to dialogue and reconciliation with others, actively seeking fellowship with God and offering service to his people. He/she is freed by grace from inordinate attachment and destructive bondage, and lay aside his/her own self-serving motives or ends, advocating principles based on God's standards, rather than human claims or interest.

A worshipper is intimate with God and knowledgeable in God's Word. He/she exudes facility and discipline in prayer and praise, drawing words and thoughts from Scripture. Thus, true worshippers are inclined to seek God's presence at all times and in all circumstances; they are receptive and attentive to persons in need or want, and are aware of events in their immediate Spiritual environment, and their significance in their faith and life. They are always ready and poised to praise and thank God, and honor persons, through humble and upbuilding speech. Obedient to God's will as revealed in His Word, worshippers are at all times deferent to duly-constituted pastoral and civil authority, and faithful in their commitments, particularly those that flow from the covenants they seal with God and Community.

The true worshipper offers his/her first and best fruits to God; therefore in work and ministry, he/she is diligent, thorough, dedicated, striving at all times to give the best that can be offered. The worshipper is aware of the

indispensability of God's grace in his/her life and work, and therefore invites grace, believes in its power, and actively opens himself/herself to the flow of that grace. He/she is conscious of his/her personal strengths and weaknesses, and is ever open and responsive to correction from a responsible source, particularly disciples of the Community and other mature Christians.

Finally, the worshipper is compassionate with others who are in brokenness, pain or need, and reaches out to them, offering healing, seeking dialogue, and working for unity. The worshipper joins in solidarity with others at worship and freely express themselves in glorifying God by praising, singing and praying, allowing the Spirit to move their body, soul and spirit through gestures, words and melodies flowing authentically through their heart.

7.1.d. **THE CHARACTER OF THE WORSHIP LEADER**

A Worship Leader is one who has the heart of a true worshipper, but stands prominently above others in three principal aspects of Christian Life.

First and foremost, the Worship Leaders are **spiritually** equipped, mature and stable persons. Their life, both personal and public, is seen by others as evidently governed, moved and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Both fruit and gifts of the Spirit are manifest in their conduct, particularly in their walk with the Lord. Worship Leaders are clearly observed as actively seeking and following God's will in all aspects of life. This outlook on how they followed Jesus as disciples, enables them to receive the grace of wholeness in their personal, family and Community life.

The Worship Leaders embody the **sacrificial nature** their ministry. They practice the highest standard of discipleship, and live out in inspiring ways the fullness of their commitment to their covenant-relationship with God and Community; this commitment is clearly ingrained in their hearts, and needs no external factors to be quickened. They are therefore disciplined in conduct, faithful to commitments and deferent to the needs of others ahead of their own interest. The Worship Leaders are self-effacing and give unmeasured service to God, Church and Community.

Finally, Worship Leaders are **authoritative** because they are both **knowledgeable** in God's Word and Church teachings, and **credible**, as they live what they preach. They are discriminating in their beliefs, and are not easily swayed by changing or varying opinions. The Worship

Leaders convincingly express convictions which are formed by discernment and experience in the disciplined Christian life they lead.

The Worship Leaders assume the **priestly** role of Christ in the Corporate Worship of the Community. They meditate in the dialogue of communion between God and the Community, and among the members of the body of worshippers. The Worship Leaders sense the needs and sentiments of the Community as a whole in the context of the particular time, and seek the leadings of the Spirit in directing the worship service. At the service itself, the Worship Leaders unite the entire Community and orchestrate the various elements of the service.

The Worship Leaders assume the **prophetic** role of Christ as they discern the theme of the service and the words of Scripture to be conveyed in song and music and in prayers and exhortations. Thoughtfulness and care need to be observed in selecting the songs, formulating the prayers and providing time for the assembly to come to the quiet. Much of this is guided by the assigned Scriptural readings for the week; but special words (*rhema*) may be given by the Lord to the Community in the course of the Worship Leaders' reflective preparations for the worship service.

The Worship Leaders exercise the royal **servanthood** of Christ as they devote substantive time for prayer, study, self-denial, meditation, reflection, dialogue and coordination among the various groups involved in the worship service. As each worship service is unique and non-repeatable, the Worship Leaders need to seriously devote time, effort and spiritual preparation for the service. It is the Worship Leaders' diligence and direction that will enable the worship service to become an offering of excellence to the Lord.

7.1.e. **CORPORATE WORSHIP: A TEAM MINISTRY**

Corporate worship is the Community's anointed act of ministering unto the Lord in solidarity and order, with one mind and one heart. The entire Community is gathered together as God's special people to come into his presence and communion and receive the power of His Spirit. We dedicate the moments of corporate worship to fulfill the commandments of His Love and follow the directions of His Word as wellsprings and guidelights in our Community's life and programs and in our day-to-day lives.

The entire Community shares in the united act of corporate worship as members and faculties of one whole body, moving together in harmony towards encounter and communion with God. We respond as one to the

movements of the Spirit, as directed by the Worship Leaders, in giving praise and glory to the Lord.

The Praise Ministry, coordinated by the Music Leader and in accord with the Worship Leaders, ministers to the entire Community --- enabling all to fully participate in the expressions of praise through music and song.

All Community Disciples, particularly the District Stewards and bearers of ministerial and pastoral responsibility, share in the privilege of supporting, lifting and sustaining the acts and motions of praise and worship expressed or initiated by the Worship Leaders.

Assigned Community Intercessors actively support the Worship Leaders and Praise Ministry in the conduct of their respective roles and functions. They are distributed strategically in focal places, interceding for the outpouring of the Spirit upon the hearts and minds of the Community of worshippers.

Readers of the Word are prepared and guided by the Liturgy Ministry for their function before the worship service through advance study and reflection on the assigned scriptures, and through simulated rehearsal. They proclaim God's Word with solemnity, clarity and purposefulness.

The assigned Preacher --- a mature, gifted and credible Disciple who delivers the reflection on God's Word --- enlightens the assembly with a simple and clear explanation of the core message of the assigned Scriptures, whose relevance and significance have been previously discerned with the Worship Leaders. The preaching moves the worshippers and the Community into personal or collective decisions to act in obedience or response to God's Word.

The Council of Servant Leaders will ensure an exchange of reflections and responses to completed worship services for the purpose of indicating areas of possible improvement, as well as of correcting inadvertencies or failings.

7.1.f. PATTERNS OF NEW COVENANT WORSHIP

In the New Covenant established and enfleshed in Jesus Christ, our personal and communal hearts are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. No longer are we separated from God by the "veil" in the Temple of the Old Covenant, which excluded worshippers from the "Holy of Holies". By our Baptism and incorporation into the body of Christ, and by our faith in

Jesus, we are in Christ, and Christ is in us. Thus, the Triune God indwells in our hearts individually and collectively.

Worship activates our consciousness, in an external and explicit manner, of a reality which is interiorly and implicitly present. At worship, the presence of God “rises”, as it were, from a latent but nonetheless operative state, to an actualized reality.

It is purely by the work of the Spirit that God’s presence is manifest at worship. No human formula (such as ACTS or similar processes) quickens the presence of God. The Spirit works freely, but acts on and through the Word of God; the Word and the Spirit alone invite the presence of God. Praise, songs and music, will not evoke the grace of the Spirit unless they declare the power of God’s Word. Scripture-based prayer, preaching and prophecy convey the Word and invite the Spirit to stir the loving presence of God within the hearts of worshippers and in the midst of the assembly.

Praise, Music, Song and Prayer. Praise is the verbal acknowledgement of God’s Holiness and Majesty, His inherent and inexhaustible Goodness and Benevolence. God needs no praise, and is given honor and glory by His people not for His sake, but for ours. Our praise of God establishes His place within and amongst us, and our place in Him: we are His creation, His handiwork flowing from His mind and heart, endlessly and absolutely dependent on Him. We are “in” Him, as we are in Christ. He , in turn, is presenting to us, nourishing and sustaining us, offering us a limitless and ceaseless flow of grace. At all times and in all conditions, we exude the praise of God from our hearts, testifying to our ingrained convictions that God is our Source and End.

The expressions of our worship flow as springs of living water through the merged medium of music and song-rhythms lifting in our spirit, fused with words flowing from our heart. The sentiments we feel about God and towards Him are expressed from the core of our spirits in deeper, more intimate ways through music and song. Prayer articulates in heartfelt words, spontaneous but reverent gestures and expectant silence, the inward dispositions of our soul, fragile and empty by itself without the sustaining power of God, but alive and glowing whenever touched by the fire of His Spirit. In both song and prayer, we are first of all the instruments of God’s Word, and only then, the vessels of our own human spirit. As we sing and pray at worship, the Spirit transforms the dialogue between God and ourselves into a mystical communion of persons.

Preaching, Prophecy and Silence. In the course of the worship service, the Worship Leader may be led to preach words or messages they receive before or during the service. This is done in a prayerful manner, and the words or messages are addressed to the assembly. Worship allows no room for condemnation or judgment, as this detracts from the focus of the service; rather, the rousing of the assembly towards edification and the uplift of the Community and praise of God is the principal concern. The words or messages preached are in line with the theme and direction of the worship service, and are best delivered before the assembly comes into dialogue with God.

The worship service then moves into a verbal (through prayer) or vocal (through songs) reflection and internalization of the words or messages delivered by the Worship Leader. These prayers and songs lead the worshippers to contemplate the conditions of their hearts, their minds and spirits, and to examine the true state of righteousness before God and His expressed standards. It is the sense of gap or distance that brings the worshippers to humble repentance, enabling us to see ourselves as we really are --- on our own, in frailty, weakness, unworthiness --- and yet in Christ, offered comfort and love by the Father, and given strength and resolve by the Spirit. We are overwhelmed by our realization that without Christ in our hearts, we are as nothing in the eyes of the Father. And that sense of an inner vacuum opens the door to the Spirit, leading to the entry of grace --- which restores our communion with God and affirms His loving kindness.

At appropriate times during the service, particularly at the moment of quiet communion with the Lord, silence becomes the appropriate disposition of worship. The “quiet” is beyond a mechanical, perfunctory stillness; it is a reverential quiet, of at least 3 minutes. It is meant to allow the presence and glory of God to engulf the assembly --- a time for encountering the Glory, experiencing the Presence, ministering to the Person, relishing the Love, embracing the Truth, receiving the Healing, being enveloped by the Power of God. It is also the time for releasing the gifts of the Spirit, particularly the Words of Knowledge, of Wisdom, and of Prophecy, and for allowing the Gift of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues to emerge. The Quiet is the time that the Spirit speaks and acts and moves through the members of the assembly who exercise His gifts. Only the chosen prophets of the Community may verbalize the messages they receive; all others write their inspired words for submission to the discernment of the Community Council.

7.1.g. **THE ENVIRONMENT FOR WORSHIP**

In the New Covenant Worship, the ancient barriers between worshippers and the Outer Court, the Inner Court and the Holy of Holies are dispelled. Jesus' act of perfect love in Calvary permanently rent the veil of the Temple. Now, we, those who worship in Christ, are the Temple; and thus, the old Covenant sacrifice is transformed into New Covenant worship by the truths of the Incarnation and of the Spirit's indwelling presence. The Holy of Holies becomes the **worshipper's heart** where God resides for the people of His faith, but which still may retain elements that shunt aside, crowd out or bury the living presence of God by our pride and unforgiveness. The Inner Court is the environment of the **worshipper's mind**, where awareness of the presence of God wrestles for pre-eminence with one's consciousness of secular concerns, but which must be governed by the Spirit as a precondition for worship. The Outer Court is the **immediate human and physical environment --- the Community itself**, the hall of worship and its appointments.

Yet there is also an outer human environment: adults who are present but unprepared for worship, or children who, though welcome, sometimes distract. All are invited to worship; and these, such as drivers or aides, are ministered to in organized word-study groups, with the end in view of attracting them to eventually join the worship service. Children are gathered in a special room and cared for or instructed in God's Word and the fundamentals of worship. Members are designated specially for these regular auxiliary services.

The whole environment is thus cleansed, purified, attuned and consecrated for worship. Intercessors bless the surroundings at least 45 minutes before the start of the service through prayer, conducted inconspicuously and in a subdued manner, from one designated area of the hall. The entire worship team, including the Worship Leaders, Praise and Intercessory groups, Readers and Preachers of the Word are prepared and anointed through the service of an Anointing Servant, who is also a Worship Leader, at least 30 minutes before the start of the service. In a concise, straightforward manner, through appropriate and authoritative prayers and songs, the anointing of the Spirit is invoked upon the entire worship team, upon the instruments and equipment used for worship, and upon the hall and the assembly. The anointing is served simultaneously with the praying of the Holy Rosary, which will be led meditatively by a designated Intercessor, using the Scriptural format. The hall of worship is open for fellowship until the Rosary is recited, at which time all Disciples and Aspirants are already seated in solemnity in the worship hall. The anointing is completed in 15 minutes before the appointed time for worship. New songs, limited only to two at each service begins promptly at the designated time.

The place for worship must first of all be a faith-oriented place --- if possible a church, a church hall, a function hall of an educational institution, or an auditorium known to be free from “worldly” use. It must allow comfort, ease in movement and adequate lighting.

7.1.h. **DISCERNING DIRECTIONS FOR THE WORSHIP SERVICE**

A Community’s worship is a continuing, regular dialogue with the Lord meant not only for encounter and communion, but also for equipping, upbuilding and guidance in our mission and role in God’s plan. It is essential that directions on the worship service be carefully and thoroughly discerned by the Worship Leader. Although the worship service is presided over by different leaders, the unity of mind and heart among Worship Leaders must engender continuity and purpose. The assigned Worship Leaders do not act on their own, but rather on behalf of the Community.

The themes and directions for every worship service are prompted by collective discernment --- that is, as guided by the Council of Servant Leaders in consultation with the Spiritual Director and in consonance with the liturgical seasons as well as themes of the Church. Only as exceptions are deviations from the current liturgical movements allowed --- and these, for extraordinary reasons of Community-wide significance. The Council’s discernment may be given on a monthly basis, as the first Living Word Circle session of each month is normally devoted to waiting on the Lord for directions. This discernment may also be based on the liturgical seasons, such as Lent, Easter, Pentecost or Advent.

The Worship Leaders, upon receiving the general directions from the Council, then move into sustained prayer and fasting, to invite the leadings of the Spirit. They may likewise consult others in Community; a concrete output of the discernment is the list of songs submitted to the Praise Ministry two weeks before the date of the assigned worship service. The Praise Ministry, who by then, would received a tentative list of songs and the themes of prayer from the Worship Leaders, dialogue with the Worship Leaders on the sustainability of the songs and their musical compatibility with the theme, direction and movement.

The Worship Leaders may include, in the segment reserved for Intercession, a sharing --- their own, or another Disciple’s testimony --- of an answered prayer, or the need for Community intercession. Such a sharing is prepared for in advance with the help of an assigned Community Teachers, and does not exceed 10 minutes.

7.1.i. **DYNAMICS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICE**

Communion with the Father is at the center of the worship service; this can only be received through the mediation of Jesus Christ and by the action of the Holy Spirit.

The Word and the Spirit unite in the individual and communal hearts of worshippers to engender the event of communion: the Word must therefore be the first movement in worship. Various means to proclaim the Word recommend themselves to the Worship Leaders. In order to unite with the mind of the larger Church, the liturgical readings for the previous Sunday (which encapsulate the entire week's Scriptures) are read by pre-assigned Readers. The Worship Leaders also discern appropriate Scriptures to plant into the hearts of worshippers --- verses which amplify on the theme or induce the spiritual disposition suggested by the direction. A promise contained in the readings may be highlighted as a focal word around which to focus and deepen the worship service.

i. PROLOGUE

The worship service is opened by an introduction of the theme and direction, with the promise of God's Word for the Week. The Community shall then be led to an invocation of the Name of Jesus, by whose authority and under whose cover we approach the Father with praise as our sacrifice. These may be internalized with two or three songs of praise and exaltation. The Liturgy of the Hours may be infused into this segment.

If new songs are to be introduced, these are rehearsed with the Community after the introduction of the theme and direction, clearly indicating the relevance and meaning of the new songs. This need not take more than 15 minutes; only two new songs at each worship service are to be introduced.

In leading the introductory songs of joy, praise or exaltation, Worship Leaders are exhorted to refrain from resorting to spectacle or gimmickry. God's Word, in speech or song, is sufficiently powerful; contrived artificiality will only draw attention to itself rather than to the Word of truth. Worship Leaders and the Praise Ministry are thus to conduct themselves in a lively and free, but moderate manner, both in body motion and in voice pitch and volume. Praise and exaltation need not be rendered in shrill tones or rabid movements, but on the contrary, with grace and temperance. While some communities or prayer groups may advocate

extreme liveliness and even abandon, the values and temper of the Community in general suggest the need to retain dignity and restraint.

In order to “enter” into the spiritual realm of praise and worship, the Community must be exhorted and led through two processes: that of cleansing the immediate and internal environment (the hall of worship and the worshippers’ senses, mind and heart) from concerns of the flesh, the world, or the self, and thus preparing to move into the realm of the Spirit.

Four movements comprise worship. *Receiving the Word of God, Opening to the Spirit of God, Communing with the Heart of God, and Empowering with the Gifts of the Spirit.* These movements flow in a mystical way throughout worship: one is in the others in a merging, interactive way, rather than a discrete, sequential manner.

The reflection or preaching offered after the Reading of the Word serves to illuminate the meaning of the Scriptures. Songs sung throughout the worship service build on the theme and direction; they flow smoothly from one song to the next, supporting and augmenting the prayers, so that the mood is sustained and the intensity gradually heightened. It is essential that these songs are rooted clearly on God’s Word in Scriptures and not on human feelings or interpretations, or on socio-cultural values.

ii. RECEIVING THE WORD OF GOD

The Word of God nourishes the worship service from beginning to end: it is the bread that combines with the wine of the Spirit in the feast that we share with the Lord. God’s Word is given to us freely and bountifully by the Lord in the form of Scripture, exhortation and song. Thus, the worship service holds up the light of God’s Word as our first movement in the act of communing with the Lord: God reveals, and Christ speaks to His bride, His love and the ways in which He expresses this love --- affirming, assuring, comforting, encouraging, inspiring, softening, teaching, healing, forgiving, nourishing, restoring, strengthening.

God’s Word for the **day** or the **week** (the day’s, if the worship service is a celebration of a feast or observance; the week’s if the worship service is observed for pastoral care) is read by prepared Readers who have been selected for this special ministry. Scriptures are read jointly either by couples or by singles. Clarity, fullness of diction, and intonation for meaning, are essential in delivering the Word.

Worshippers must be aware that listening to God's Word is prayer; God is present as the Word is read. Therefore, true worshippers observe solemn respect, attentiveness and interest during the ministry of the Word. All must be seated before the Readers begin to read; internal distraction and physical movement must be avoided. The Psalm is a particularly effective means of Community participation and should therefore be sung in appropriate harmonious and liturgically correct manner. The Praise Ministry sings the Psalm based on Church liturgy.

After God's Word is read, its meaning and relevance are explained and shared with the assembly in simple, comprehensive and creative ways. A mere repetition of published commentaries is not acceptable. The Preacher or Commentator enflashes the meaning of the Word in concrete human context of the Community. Discerned in advance by the Council of Servant Leaders, the preaching of the Word fulfills the purpose designed by God: to move the listeners to either **understanding**, **decision**, or **action**. The exhortation, commentary or preaching is paced in a manner that allows the deepest level of understanding by the listeners; it clearly emanates not from "sense" or human knowledge, but from "revelation" or divine knowledge --- thus clearly from the mind of Christ. Insight into the purpose of God contained in the Scriptures becomes evident from the preaching. The reflection is purposeful and pointed, and not rambling or diffuse. In the context of the Community, the reflection further allows, but only if appropriate, the understanding of a Community principle, value, norm or policy.

As songs and music can be potent channels of both Word and Spirit, the Worship Leaders, the Praise Ministry and all Readers of the Word are continuously aware of their roles as instruments of the Lord's truth and love throughout the worship service. Generally, the congregation leaves the hall carrying the message of the worship service in their hearts through one or a few words or songs which have touched them profoundly.

Praying in tongues, singing in tongues and loud (or high) praising may be used to punctuate prayers or songs. The nature and tempo of selected songs suggest the form of tongues or praising used.

iii. OPENING TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD

God's Word touches the emptiness or brokenness, the joy or longing in the hearts of worshippers, moves them to repentance and quickens their desire to receive God's Spirit in the very core of their beings. The Worship Leaders then move the assembly to respond to the Word of God by

expressing the condition of their hearts which need to be ministered to by the Spirit of God.

In prayer and song, the Worship Leaders lead the assembly to **first** acknowledge these conditions (emptiness, brokenness, and joy or longing); and **then** to invite the Spirit to rise from the depths of their own spirits, roused from the dormancy of His indwelling presence. The action of the Spirit, activated by the Word, is to animate the worshippers --- individually and as one assembly --- to a deeper awareness of the presence of the Father. The mystical experience of the presence of God is not one of movement, but one of “imbuement” --- a filling up of the metaphysical (and often even the physical) space within the worshipper’s personal reality, creating the sensation of being “lifted up” and enveloped by the presence of God.

The two basic movements in this phase of Opening to the Spirit are distinct and different. The **first** movement --- that of emptying, cleansing, revealing the innermost conditions of frailty and dependency on God --- is an “**I**” or “**We**” phase. Here we are to empty ourselves even of ourselves -- our inclinations and fears, our desires and burdens. At this point shall the Disciples of the Community present their tithes as expressions of allegiance, detachment and submission; this will be done in reverential order. The songs and prayers are expressive of these stirrings within ourselves, and characterize the poverty and incompleteness of ourselves in transit to uniting with God. It is also at this point that **Intercession** properly belongs; as the Worship Leaders present to the Lord the prayers of the Community, we respond with **prayers of agreement**. A brief period of silence (not more than 1 minute) is observed, when individuals or couples may also present their needs and requests to the Lord in silent prayer.

The **second** movement --- that of inviting, beseeching or imploring the Lord to touch us with His power and might --- is a “**You**” phase. Our focus is on God, acknowledging His Majesty and Loving-kindness, relating to Him our wonderment and awe at His Holiness and Sovereignty, and pleading with Him to manifest His love and presence. The songs and prayers are **expressive of the character of God**, and of our burning desire to be gifted and quickened by His Presence, to be embraced into His Heart and engulfed into His Being. We need no longer turn to external reminders, such as acetates or printed guides. The songs shall henceforth be sung from the heart; the prayers spoken from the spirit.

Opening to the Spirit of God leads us to the threshold of the presence of the Father, which, we discover, is the threshold of our own hearts, the

tabernacle not made by human hands, but fashioned only by God Himself --- the place of which Jesus promised He and His Father would make Their dwelling. We then are the temple of God; the Father's throne is the center of our heart.

iv. COMMUNING WITH THE HEART OF GOD

This is the moment: of encounter, of union, of love --- God's love in Christ through the Spirit, receiving us into His Heart. We stand in awe of the presence and glory of God and proclaim that presence in song and prayer. With music that portrays the profoundness of that moment of encounter, and with words that do not seek to explain or analyze, but simply to extol, to celebrate, to solemnify, we relish that union of our hearts with the heart of God. The Worship Leaders must solemnify the sacredness of these moments with subdued, supportive prayers, underlining but never replacing or disrupting, the eloquence of the encounter.

At the very moment of encounter, there is no more need, nor capability, nor propriety to turn to words of music. We come into the quiet of metaphysical encounter. The purpose of the dialogue has been achieved. We are in a love union with God. And we need time for silence, for the unspoken discourse that flows between our heart and God's. And it is in this quiet time that God's Word and Spirit act for Him --- to restore, to soothe, to comfort, to upbuild, to nourish, to fortify us. Also at this time of quiet does God plant His Word into our heart --- for ourselves alone or for the whole Community. It is at this time that the light of Christ illuminates our minds and infuses into our understanding the truth of His revelation.

It is the core of **worship** that we receive the light of **wisdom**, the fire for **witness**, the zeal for **work**, the fortitude for **warfare**. Worship is the event at which we are moved and shaped by the loving hand of God. Therefore, we are to listen to the voice and sense the touch of God, with our fullest concentration.

v - EMPOWERING WITH THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

The Spirit of the Lord will move at this quiet time to urge those who are gifted with prophecy to deliver the Word to the assembly. It is the Holy Spirit, not the Worship Leader, who will stir up His gifts; this movement will occur spontaneously. Those who have been chosen as servants of the Word (or prophets) of the Community may deliver the message aloud and clearly that the entire assembly may hear. Affirmation of the prophecy

may be expressed softly by worshippers who are moved by the message. Those who are not designated prophets are to put to memory the message(s) they receive and submit them in writing to the District Council of Stewards after the worship service, for discernment and response by the District Council of Stewards/Council of Servant Leaders.

Prophecies may also be uttered in tongues, and translated in normal language by those who have gift of interpretation. If the Worship Leaders are moved and empowered, they may declare words of wisdom or knowledge addressed to the assembly; but only the chosen prophets may issue prophetic words. These words are purposed for God's end of revelation: to disclose truth or grant insight; they are never to be used to denounce or correct any person. The words of prophecy may serve to "forth tell" about significant concerns or expectations of the Community or of the Church, or to affirm, exhort, admonish or warn the Community about matters affecting it, or about its actions or omissions.

The Spirit may lead the Worship Leaders to invite persons to the front of the assembly, to be prayed over: either to express their commitment to the Lord, or to receive the healing power of the Lord. Prior preparations must have been arranged so that this process can proceed with order and efficiency. Marshals or Ushers shall have been notified on how to respond to this lead of the Spirit: particularly how to prepare those who respond to the call. Aides in the healing service shall have been briefed about their functions: specifically how to break the fall of those who may be slain in the Spirit (who must not be roused before they are moved to rise on their own); and how to minister to them in intercessory prayer as they are resting in the Lord. The Aides will further speak with those who are prayed over, to determine the immediate effects of the prayer, and their responses to the healing they received.

Intercessors shall have been prepared in advance to cover the Worship Leaders and the other assistants with prayer and support. The possible incidence of demonic oppression or interference at the service must be recognized, by alerting a core of trained prayer warriors for spiritual warfare and deliverance. The Praise Ministry shall have pre-arranged programs of musical support for healing or altar call contingencies.

The conclusion of the empowering phase of the worship service is exultant thanksgiving and high praise, through a song of proclamation.

v. EPILOGUE

The appropriate time for Community announcements is at the end of the Empowering segment. The announcements shall be brief and concise; they shall contain relevant news and developments in the Community, and shall be read in a lively and interesting manner by the Presiding Steward or, in his absence, by a designated Steward. The call for the presentation of **Love Offerings**, will be made before the closing song, indicating the needs of the Community. The Worship Service is closed with an appropriate song of exhortation; love offerings are presented as the assembly leaves the worship hall.

7.1.j. FRUITS OF THE WORSHIP SERVICE

Worship binds the Community **together** as one people and collectively **with God**; it is the principal means of **Communion** among the members of the Community, and is the forum for communal fellowship with the Holy Spirit. In the context of BUKAS-LOOB SA DIYOS Community, it is the unique occasion at which the entire Community comes together as one. The primary fruit of worship therefore is unity of mind, heart and spirit, from which all anointing flows. In the same context, participation at the Worship Service is the most profound and concrete expression of membership in the Covenant Community as it affirms and solidifies the individual member's **allegiance to Christ** as the center and head of the Community, as well as its **commitment** to other Community members.

The spiritual empowerment that flows (and exclusively originates) from the worship service moves into intercession and Spiritual Warfare, and prepares and sustains the entire Community and its members for the pursuit and fulfillment of the Community **Mission**. It is impossible to administer harmoniously the various activities and programs of the Community Institutes, Centers, without gathering for worship with regularity and commitment. The worship service is a forum for keeping in personal touch with members of the Community who work in separate ministries, or live in different places. It is also the logical venue for Marriage or Family Encounter classes to come in contact or communicate with each other.

“Community” is the legacy of Christ for those who follow and believe in Him; Christianity is lived in Community. The Worship Service is the event at which the Community is at its most vibrant plane of life --- glorifying the Triune God together in the name of Christ and with the

leading of the Spirit. It is the wellspring of Christian life --- the event at which God personally shepherds His people as one body.

7.2. FAITHFULNESS IN ATTENDANCE AT CORPORATE WORSHIP

7.2.a. COVENANT: FREE EXPRESSION OF DISCLESHIP

Entering the Covenant Community is a personal response to the call of the Lord. No one is coerced into accepting the Community covenant. Each Disciple is asked to discern his/her readiness and willingness to accept this calling. The Discipleship Retreat where the covenant is explained is the venue for this discernment. The values of Christian humility and obedience, which are the foundations of discipleship, are taught, prayed about and discussed in the context of Community life. During the personal dialogue with assigned Servant Leaders, each Disciple is again reminded of the covenant terms, before his/her acceptance. In sum, the covenant is a solemn contract between the Lord and the Disciple to live Christian life through the Community.

7.2.b. SUBMISSION TO PASTORAL AUTHORITY: ESSENTIAL CONDITION

The first term of the covenant is submission and commitment to Christ. It is expressed concretely in the Disciple's acceptance of the pastoral authority of the Church and the Covenant Community. Submission is the fruit of one's initial decision for discipleship in Community. In the context of our Covenant Community, submission to pastoral authority means our submission to the Spiritual Director and to the Council of Servant Leaders.

7.2.c. COVENANTAL TERMS: SOLEMN PLEDGES

Covenant Community is a deepened lay expression of the consecrated life of faith, hope and love. Each one of the eight terms of the Community Covenant is a solemn pledge, a solemn promise before the Lord and each other.

Covenantal terms are therefore not optional or desired behaviors. They are obligations that each one of us freely embraces and agrees to fulfill responsibly. Some, however, are of such a nature that only the fruits, rather than the disciplines, are open to pastoral evaluation (e.g. personal, conjugal and family prayers). Others are of such a delicate character that they are more properly self-regulated (e.g., material assistance to others and the practice of tithing). But others, as they are not only open and

verifiable acts, but observances of faithfulness to communion and mission, can and should be pastorally supervised --- attendance at worship services and word sharing sessions, pastoral care and ministry work, are examples.

Governance is never a substitute for that essential interior desire and motivation in the hearts of disciples to fulfill their covenantal pledges. However, the Community will be seriously remiss in its governance if it refuses or neglects to supervise the orderly adherence to these pledges.

7.2.d. POLICY ON ATTENDANCE AT WORSHIP: AN ACT OF PASTORAL AUTHORITY

There are eight terms in the Community Covenant. Foremost among them is submission to Christ through persons with pastoral authority. However, equally important is personal and Community worship. Our personal presence to honor the Lord together in Community worship is undeniably a measure of our personal commitment, and an opportunity to be one with each other in fellowship with the Lord.

The mandate to all Districts to adopt a policy on faithfulness in attendance at Community worship after Community-wide consultation and discernment is an act of both the Council of Servant Leaders and the Spiritual Director, and becomes a pastoral mandate for all who are in covenant.

7.3. PRAISE AND WORSHIP SOUND MODEL

7.3.a. QUALITIES / QUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBERS

- i. A member of the Praise Ministry must be known to exhibit the gifts of prayer and exhortation, to find joy in giving praise and worship to the Lord, and to bear the fruit of the Spirit in his/her life.
- ii. Members should substantively demonstrate the outward as well as interior qualities of true discipleship in the Lord. They are particularly cleansed in speech and refined in demeanor and attire, and are living faithfully the Word they proclaim in song and music.
- iii. Members must demonstrate God-given talent for either singing, playing appropriate musical instruments, supervising sound-enhancement systems or administering to the material needs of the ministry.

- iv. All members of the Praise Ministry must be Covenant Disciples of the Community.
- v. Non-covenant members may, however, be accepted as trainees, apprentices or understudies under the following conditions:
 - they have gone through the Life in the Spirit and have completed their Service and Intercessory Ministry residencies.
 - they pass the auditions.

Full member status can be granted only after all requirements for discipleship are completed and the prospective member signs the covenant.

7.3.b. ATTITUDE/COMMITMENT/WITNESSING

- i. Obedience to God's Word and submission to pastoral or designated authority provide order and direction to the ministry.
- ii. Praise members respond to the call of service with an attitude of enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility, made operative through consistent and punctual attendance at scheduled ministry activities, accomplishing assignments with cheerfulness, reliability and diligence.
- iii. Members serve with whole-hearted cooperation, giving priority to Ministry work without hampering their personal order in life.

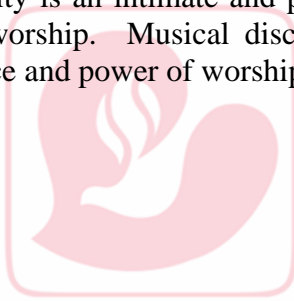
7.3.c. CONDUCT AT PRAYER MEETINGS

- i. A prayer meeting is a privileged encounter with God; prayers and songs are dialogues with the Lord alone, and deserve the highest order and perfection.
- ii. The Praise Ministry should reflect the mood of the songs and appropriately communicate their message.
- iii. Authentic praising, specially singing in tongues, must come from the heart. Discordant sounds should be avoided; the sound volume of the instruments should support rather than drown out the voices. Notes and acetates are no longer necessary at moments of worship.
- iv. Praise members should be:
 - Always aware of God's holy presence;

- Attentive to the Music Leader and Worship Leaders;
- Dressed in a manner pleasing to the Lord; and
- Disciplined in behavior.

7.3.d. CHARACTER (TECHNIQUE AND STYLE)

- i. The Ministry shall develop an indigenous character reflective of the Community's charisms.
- ii. The Ministry shall catalyze the Community at worship, singing to the Lord harmoniously in one spirit and one voice, praising aloud in an uplifting manner at appropriate times at the instance of the Worship Leader, with voices and sounds supportive of mood and movement.
- iii. Musicality is an intimate and profound expression of the spiritual act of worship. Musical discipline and excellence magnify the substance and power of worship.



8.0 PASTORAL CARE PRINCIPLES

8.1 FOUNDATION SCRIPTURE

“The thief comes to steal and slaughter and destroy. I came that they might have life and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.” (John 10:10-11)

8.2 FOREWORD

Our personal wholeness --- our well-being of body, soul and spirit --- flows from that event which enfleshed God’s boundless love for all and each of us: Jesus’ death on the cross.

In turn, we who are Christ’s disciples offer a **compelling response** to return God’s love by offering ourselves in the same love --- no longer in death, but in life --- for the wholeness and well-being of others: *“This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”* (John 15:12-13)

Yet we cannot render this love for our “friends” by our single, individual efforts **alone**. As in all commands given by the Lord, this great commission to offer the love of a shepherd for his sheep, is a collective responsibility – one that is best lived out and fulfilled **in Community**.

Just as Jesus entrusts the “keys of the kingdom”, the authority over His Church, to Simon Peter (Matthew 16:17-19), the Lord likewise, in a post-resurrection dialogue, gives Peter the charge of pastoral care as a direct response of his love for Christ.

“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, *“You know that I love you.”* At which Jesus said, *“Feed my lambs.”*

A second time, He put the question: *“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”* *“Yes, Lord,”* Peter said, *“You know that I love you.”* Jesus replied, *“Tend my sheep.”*

A third time Jesus asked him, *“Simon, son of John, do you love me?”* Peter was hurt because He had asked a third time, “Do you love ME?” so he said to Him. *“Lord, You know everything. You know well that I love you.”* Jesus said to Him. *“Feed my sheep.”* (John 21:15-17)

“Do you love me?... Feed My Lambs ... Tend My sheep ... Feed My sheep.”

This series of direct commands to Peter indicates:

- 8.1.a that pastoral care for God’s people is the way that Christ urges us to express our response of love for Him;
- 8.1.b that pastoral care is a progression of direct personal actions that we take, to ensure the welfare of Christ’s faithful people:
- 8.1.c that pastoral care is given to all of God’s people in Community: the young and the old, the ill and the well, the weak and the strong; and
- 8.1.d that pastoral care is given to draw each member of the Community into life, growth and maturity and towards both temporal and spiritual fruitfulness.

The pastoral care of Community is situated within the auspices and ambit of the institutional Church under the authority of Simon Peter, or the Roman Catholic Church. We are under the pastoral authority of our Church’s Bishops and we exercise pastoral care in our Community as ***“lay under-shepherds.”***

Our personal wholeness --- our well-being of body, soul and spirit --- flows from the event which enfleshed God’s boundless love for all and each of us: Jesus’ death on the cross. In turn, we who are His disciples are asked to follow the way of Jesus, to love by offering ourselves – not in death but in life – for the wholeness and well-being of others ***“This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”*** (John 15:12-13)

8.3 DEFINITION AND RATIONALE

PASTORAL CARE is the program by which Bukas-Loob Sa Diyos, as a Community, express our response to God’s covenant love by nurturing and caring for each other, thus bringing to full maturity in Christ all those whom the Holy Spirit has entrusted to our Community. Looking at this definition more closely we can gather the Pastoral Care has at least the following five (5) essential elements:

- 8.3.a. It is a **Program**, meaning, it is a continuing endeavor and not a one-event activity;
- 8.3.b. It is our **Response** to God’s covenant love. 2 Cor. 5:14 says: “The love of Christ impels us who have reached the conviction that since one died for all, all died, He died for all so that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised up”;

- 8.3.c. It is a **Call** --- to nurture and care for each other. As members of a Christian Community, we are called to shepherd and to minister each other towards spiritual health and maturity;
- 8.3.d. It becomes our **Responsibility** to people under our care ---to bring them to full maturity in Christ;
- 8.3.e. It is for all those whom the Holy Spirit has entrusted to our Community. Our responsibility begins when we bring an individual, a couple, or a family to Christ through our Encounter Programs or Life in the Spirit Seminar.

Maturity is the end result. That maturity is seen in stability of attitude, consistency of commitment and the willingness to share freely what one has been given by the Lord directly and through the ministry of others.

To mature in Christ means to bring a person to a stature where Christ increases and the “I” decreases (John 3:30). As one learns to habitually obey the Word of God, he/she develops the lifestyle and character of Jesus Christ Himself.

“To become one in faith and the knowledge of God’s son, and form that perfect man who is Christ come to full stature. (So that we are) ... children no longer, tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine that originated in human trickery and skill in proposing error. Rather, let us profess the truth in love, and grow to the full maturity of Christ the Head. Through Him the whole body grows, and with the proper functioning of the members joined firmly together by each supporting ligament, builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:13-16)

8.4 OBJECTIVE: TO EMPOWER DISCIPLES IN THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

This empowerment consists of:

- 8.4.a. Leading them to maturity in Christ through the **exercise of their natural and spiritual gifts.**
- 8.4.b. Enabling them to **overcome problems and afflictions** (trials, testings, temptations) in their daily personal, family, vocational and Community life;
- 8.4.c. Training them to **minister to each other’s material, psychological and spiritual needs;**

- 8.4.d. Cultivating **Christian stewardship** in their personal, family, vocational and Community life; and
- 8.4.e. Developing **sound personal relationships based on sacrificial love** and borne of the fruit of the Spirit.

8.5. SCOPE

Pastoral Care begins the moment we bring a person to Christ in Marriage, Family, Singles and Solo/Single Parents Encounter and Youth Encounter. When one joins our Community, he/she unites with us in faith and becomes a part of our spiritual union. Jesus Christ is the Head and we are His members. As every part does its share, it engenders growth in the body.

The program grounds members on sound Biblical foundations for practical living **in the various areas of the member's life: his marriage, family, workplace, Community and Church.**

All pastoral care programs must work within one's "**unity of life**": his existence as a member of the Church and as a citizen of human society (Gaudium Et Spes #43, 59). There cannot be two parallel lives in a person's existence: on the one hand the so-called "*spiritual*" life, with its values and demands, and on the other hand, the so-called "*secular*" life, that is his life in a family, at work, in social relationships, in the responsibilities of public life and culture. In bringing their lives into a process of maturation, the manifestation of the *unity of "who they are"* in the Community and in society as well as the condition for the effective fulfillment of their mission must be evident.

"I plead with you, then, as a prisoner for the Lord, to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." (Ephesians 4:1)

"May the God of peace make you perfect in holiness. May he preserve you whole and entire, spirit, soul and body, irreproachable at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

8.6 MEASURES

In the conduct of Community life, various ways of administering pastoral care present themselves. The invocations of Christ to the apostle Peter suggest some measures of pastoral care, which can be constructively taken to lead disciples into maturity in the Spirit.

- 8.6.a. "Feed My lambs"- Correction -Witness - Counseling -Teaching
- 8.6.b. "Tend My sheep"- Discernment -Intercession - Spiritual Warfare-Discipline

8.6.c. “Feed My sheep” - Discipline -Stewardship- Ministry -Mission

8.7 EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIAN MATURITY

The journey towards attaining the “fullness of Christ” is a continuing one. Christian maturity is, in the core, the action of the Holy Spirit upon the person who fully opens his/her mind and heart and will to God’s grace and power. The sealing of one’s covenant with the Lord is the visible expression of what is hoped for as an invisible reality: the unfolding of the Spirit’s work in forming our character after the pattern of Christ’s own character. A Covenant Disciple, therefore, is expected to possess and exude the following characteristics:

- 8.7.a. A true disciple is spiritually free
 - i. no longer bound by sin (*1 John 3:8-9*)
 - ii. dead to flesh, alive in the Spirit (*Romans 8:10-14*)
 - iii. mind renewed by the Word (*Romans 12:1-2*)
- 8.7.b. A true disciple walks in the Spirit of God.
 - i. discerns good from evil (*Hebrews 5:13-14*)
 - ii. is a true worshipper (*John 4:24*)
 - iii. does good works (*Ephesians 2:10*)
- 8.7.c. A true disciple bears the fruit of the Spirit.
 - i. walks in love (*Galatians 5:22-24*)
 - ii. multiplies by discipling (*John 15:8*)
 - iii. functions in the power of the Spirit (*1 Corinthians 12:4-11*)
- 8.7.d. A true Disciple’s prayers are answered by God.

8.8 FORUM FOR PASTORAL CARE: WORD SHARING CIRCLES

The LIVING WORD and WORD SHARING CIRCLES are the primary forum for the Pastoral Care Program. And since the spirit of intimacy is best promoted among people who have learned to regard each other with openness and respect, which usually happens over time, it becomes necessary for a circle to have a semblance of permanence with regards to its membership. Moreover, assigning members to a permanent circle, will afford the leadership with a practical and easy way of monitoring members’ spiritual growth and development. Circle Members shall gather together every week for the following purposes:

- 8.8.a. To learn and apply the Word of God in their personal, family, vocational and Community life;

- 8.8.b. To understand the values, norms, and policies of the Community and the significant teachings of the Church:
- 8.8.c. To minister to each other's needs and burdens:
- 8.8.d. To encourage each other in the exercise of spiritual and natural gifts; and
- 8.8.e. To build sound interpersonal relationships in the Lord.

8.9 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CIRCLE SHEPHERDS

The front-line work of pastoral care is carried out by the Circle Shepherds, who are given charge of the basic cell-group of the Community --- the Pastoral Circle. Their functions are:

- 8.9.a. General: To administer pastoral care for all Circle Members:
- 8.9.b. Particularly:
 - i. To preside over Living Word/Word Sharing sessions, and in particular, to ably conduct the Circle's Bible Study segment;
 - ii. To share in the function of Community governance by communicating and fostering the values, norms, and policies of the Community;
 - iii. To motivate the presence of Circle Members for Worship Service, Word Sharing and other gatherings of the Community;
 - iv. To assist in discipleship formation and ministry development of Circle Members; and
 - v. To aid Circle Members in building sound personal relationships in the Lord; within the Circle, in their respective families and with others within and outside the Community.

PASTORAL CARE: GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNION

“Anyone who loves Me will be true to My Word, and My Father will love Him; We will come to Him and make our dwelling place with Him.” (John 14:23)

One’s response, individual and collective, to the saving, healing and sustaining love of God in Christ is, according to Jesus, to be expressed in being “true to (His) Word.” To be true to the Word of Christ means first of all to know and understand it, and then to adhere wholeheartedly to its meaning and application in our lives. It is our faithfulness to God’s Word that activates the movement of the Holy Spirit in and through us. In various Scriptural passages, Jesus declares His kinship to those who act in His Word (e.g. Matthew 12:48-50) and His presence among those who gather in His Name (e.g. Matthew 18:29). Obedience to Christ is the necessary pre-requisite to fellowship with the Spirit.

We are not able, by our own power alone, to comply with the demands of the Gospel (“My Word”). The Holy Spirit is the power Who fills in that gap between what we can do and what we must do, to live in grace. It is the Paraclete Who instructs us in the fullness of the Gospel and **empowers** us to act in accordance with the standards of Christ. In this context, therefore, pastoral care is our willingness, ability and resolve to become the living instruments of the Holy Spirit in this two-fold purpose of instructing and empowering the disciples of the Lord. The end result of spiritually enlightened pastoral care is “**maturity in Christ**” (Ephesians 4:13-15).

Before we can deal with the distinctions between pastoral authority and pastoral responsibility, we must first survey the scope of concrete pastoral care in our Community and ask the question: *Who are those whom we are to offer pastoral care?* The answer is not simple, because there are levels of pastoral care, corresponding to groups of persons who enter the Community at various times and for various programs.

First among these groups are those who discover God’s love through our encounter weekends: the Marriage, Family, Singles and Solo/Single Parents and Youth Encounters. These group experiences are the first gateways through which the Lord calls persons to Community; they comprise the first **communities in need** for pastoral care. And the first exercise of pastoral care we offer them is that of **Christian witness** --- our witness to the power of God’s life, God’s love and God’s truth in our lives. We witness with our words, but more essentially with our actions.

Beyond this, we are also called upon to offer our new entrants a simple but enlightened process of knowing and understanding God’s Word, and of sharing and savoring His Spirit --- in a word, access to a pathway of discipleship. In our Community, this access is through the Life in the Spirit Seminar, including its pre and post programs. In the context of our Community’s outlook, the LSS is thus not primarily an evangelical program, in the

sense of sowing the seeds of God's Word, but rather a **pastoral event**. Baptism of the Spirit is the first step in living the fullness of Christian life in disciplined discipleship with Christ, the Good Shepherd Who leads us with His "rod" (God's Word) and his "staff" (God's Spirit). Our responsibility in shepherding persons through the Life in the Spirit Seminar is to introduce them to an openness of spirit to a personal encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit --- **a personal witness and guidance towards personal reconciliation with God**.

The dynamic personal experience of receiving the Spirit of God in the Life in the Spirit Seminar must be pastorally guided; it cannot be left to germinate on its own, unpastored and uncultivated. As we learned from the parable of the seed, we must keep the soil of the human heart fertile (Luke 8:15) to receive the seed of life. God's Word must be more fully known and understood, both as Person and as Principle. This is done within the full year of the Post LSS Shepherding Group (PLSG) program. During this year, the Community's pastoral responsibility is merely exhortatory and instructional; we offer **shepherding before counseling and teaching**. After the PLSG year, the full **Christian Formation Program** is offered and commitment to the discipline of the Community is required for all who accept the invitation to discipleship.

One might ask: *What is our pastoral responsibility to those who complete the encounter weekends but do not join the Life in the Spirit Seminar, or who receive the Baptism of the Spirit but do not join the PLSG program, or who join the PLSG program, but do not commit to discipleship formation?* We are responsible, first of all for continually inviting them, through their Class Shepherds, LSS Shepherds and PLSG Shepherds, through personal and group contact or through the publications of the Community, to pursue the continuation programs leading to discipleship. We invite and welcome them to our worship and fellowship gatherings to sustain our contact with them. We collectively have pastoral responsibility to place them in other faith or prayer groups more accessible or acceptable to them. We offer pro-active concern.

Discipleship is a way of life in which the total person (body, soul and spirit) and all areas of life (personal, family, professional, civic and Community) are yielded to the Word and the Spirit. Those who enter into a formal commitment to journey in discipleship with the Lord in the Community freely express their personal acceptance of the pastoral authority of Christ through the persons who share in the function of Community governance. They enlist as Committed Disciples in the Discipleship Formation Program. They are then assigned to Ministries and Homesteads and placed under the care of a "Circle Shepherd" --- a term which empowers a responsible Covenant Disciple to exercise by delegation both authority and responsibility in pastoral care for either a Committed or Covenant Disciple. During the three-year formation program of the Committed Disciple, the Community's role is two-fold: **disciplined training and disciplined spirituality**. This role is experienced collectively, but the principal agents are the Circle and Homestead Shepherds. The aim of this phase of pastoral care is maturity in Christ. After the

Committed Disciples' journey of three phases, they are invited to seal the covenant with the Lord through the Community.

Pastoral care involves the exercise of **pastoral authority** and the conduct of **pastoral responsibility**. Both are functions done in the name of Christ and on behalf of the Christian Community. Pastoral authority, however, is a function that belongs properly to the Community --- an institutional function delegated to the person only because that person shares in the exercise of the Community's governance function. Pastoral authority is an exercise of the twin offices of prophet and pastor in the stewardship of Christian Community. Pastoral responsibility, on the other hand, belongs to both the person and the Community, and does not depend on whether the person is exercising the governance function. Everyone in the Community retains a pastoral responsibility for every other person in the Community, as well as for some other outside the Community.

But only those who share in the exercise of the function of governance within the Community have pastoral authority over others. Moreover, pastoral authority follows the line of governance; a Homestead Shepherd does not have pastoral authority over a Circle Shepherd of another Homestead. Finally, pastoral authority can be exercised only in matters covered by the canons (or laws), decrees, covenants, policies, rules and regulations of the Community of Faith. In these matters, submission to pastoral authority by the Committed or Covenant Disciple is required; non-submission is a violation of the Community Covenant and may be regarded as serious wrongdoing. Pastoral responsibility, on the other hand, covers all the areas of the Disciple's or member's life (including family relationships and business conduct). In these areas, the shepherd's responsibilities are only to intercede, counsel or correct the person in his/her charge. The principal and final responsibility to order all the areas of a person's life belongs to that person; pastoral responsibility is limited to an **instructional, exhortatory and intercessory** character.

In the course of Christian life and ministry, members of the Community, whether new or experienced, will suffer illness, trials, problems and conflicts. Those who exercise responsible pastoral care need to be equipped in ministering to those who are afflicted with these burdens. It is therefore essential that Circle Shepherds and Homestead Shepherds be trained in basic Christian Counseling. Persons who need more advanced or even professional counseling will be referred to Community Counselors, who will address the particular concern towards healing and restoration.

When the Disciple's covenant is offered in the Eucharistic Celebration and sealed by the Holy Spirit the Disciple moves into the core of the Covenant Community. He/she becomes a responsible sharer of the covenant pledge of pastoral care – the seventh term of the Community Covenant. Additionally, the Disciple also shares in the unfolding of the Community's Mission. The Community is collectively responsible for the pastoral care of Covenant Disciples, but pastoral authority still follows the pastoral structure. Our responsibility lies in **empowering Disciples for covenantal faithfulness, and equipping**

and deploying them for ministry. The final accountability for pastoral care resides jointly in the Council of Servant Leaders and particularly on the Head Servant.

PASTORAL CARE

COMMUNITIES OF NEED	RESPONSIBILITY	AGENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ENCOUNTER CANDIDATES/GRADUATES 	CHRISTIAN WITNESS/ GUIDANCE	ENCOUNTER PASTORAL TEAM CLASS SHEPHERDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ POST-LSS GROUP 	COUNSELING/TEACHING/ CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE	COMMUNITY TEACHERS/ CIRCLE SHEPHERD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMMITTED 	DISCIPLINED TRAINING/ DISCIPLED SPIRITUALITY/ MINISTRY COORDINATORS (INSTRUCTION/EXHORATION/ INTERCESSION)	COMMUNITY TEACHERS HOMESTEAD SHEPHERD CIRCLE SHEPHERD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COVENANT DISCIPLES 	COVENANT LIFE MINISTRY MISSION	COMMUNITY TEACHERS/ MINISTRY COORDINATOR/ CIRCLE SHEPHERD DISTRICT STEWARDS SPIRITUAL ADVISER

8.11 CIRCLE PROMISES (Adopted with revisions from Loren Sanford)

After the family, the Circle is the primary face-to-face group in which Christian Community life unfolds. The members of the Circle then have an intimate personal relationship in the Lord, which provides the spiritual and moral support for each other. It is therefore important that members of the Circle bind themselves with relational promises, to seal this relationship in the Lord.

8.11.a. The Promise of **Grace** (*Colossians 3:5-14*) I will love you, and accept you as my brothers and sisters, no matter what you say or do, or what you don't say or don't do. I will love you in whatever form you come.

8.11.b. The Promise of **Truthfulness** (*Ephesians 4:25-32*) I will not hide from you what I feel about you, good or bad, but I will seek the timing of the

Spirit to deal openly and directly with you in a loving and forgiving way, so that you are affirmed when in need.

- 8.11.c. The Promise of **Openness** (*Luke 11:37-41*) I will open myself to you inwardly my hurts, joys, hopes, disappointments; I will affirm you by needing you and making you a part of my inner life.
- 8.11.d. The Promise of **Sacrifice and Prayer** (*Philippians 2:1-11*) Particularly in our gatherings, but throughout the week as well, I promise to make your needs more important than my own --- as we talk, worship and pray together. I will pray daily and diligently for you; I will work to be sensitive to the Spirit concerning you.
- 8.11.e. The Promise of **Availability** (*Acts 2:43-47*) I will seek to serve you with my time, energy, wisdom, finances and material goods. When you need my physical aid, I will be present with anything I have.
- 8.11.f. The Promise of **Reliability** (*Hebrews 10:19-21 and Luke 9:57-62*) I will regard the time which my group spends together weekly as time under the discipling hand of Jesus in our midst. I will not grieve the Spirit or hinder His work in the lives of my brothers and sisters by my absence, except in emergency. By His permission and through prayer alone will I consider absence.
- 8.11.g. The Promise of **Accountability** (*Ezekiel 3:16-21 and Mathew 18:15-20*) I give you the right to question, confront and challenge me in love when I seem to be failing in any aspect of my life under God. I trust you to be in the Spirit and led by Him when you do so. I need your correction and reproof so that I may ever better fulfill my God-given ministry among you. I promise not to be defensive. (See Proverbs 12:1.15; 13:1, 10, 18)
- 8.11.h. The Promise of **Confidentiality** (*Proverbs 11:9; 12:22-23; 13:3; 15:4; 18:6-8*) I realize that much of what we share would be harmful to you who shared it, were it repeated in other company; therefore personal matters stop here. I will confine our sharings of personal matters within our circle. I will say nothing outside the group that might be injurious or embarrassing for anyone of you.
- 8.11.i. The Promise of **Outreach** (*Mathew 25:31-46*) I promise to find ways to sacrifice myself for those outside our fellowship or faith in the same way that I have promised to sacrifice myself for you, my brothers and sisters. I will treat unbelievers exactly as if they were believers. I will do it in Jesus' name so that others are added to the kingdom of God in His love.

9.0 MISSION HOMESTEADS

The Front Lines of the Community Covenant

“Communion leads to mission, and mission itself, to communion. Communion and mission inter-connect and imply each other, to the point that communion represents both the source and fruit of mission.” (Christifideles Laici 31 & 32)

9.1 NATURE AND PURPOSE

- 9.1.a. God calls every Christian to discipleship in Jesus Christ. He first invites us to a personal and intimate relationship with His Son, Who is the Way to the Father. As we follow Jesus in obedience to God’s Word with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we come into union with the Triune God. The love of God impels us to share this union with others who likewise experience the awakening, healing and empowering touch of the Lord. We are then gathered into a **communion of faith, hope and love** --- a Christian Community.
- 9.1.b. A Community of disciples of the Lord does not exist only for itself or its members; it exists for the world. As the Father sent His Son to bear His love for the world, so does the Son send His disciples to bring the Father’s love to the world. Through *responsive and pro-active mission*, we bear the blessed fruit of our discipleship.
- 9.1.c. This merging of communion and mission --- this blending of pastoral care and evangelical zeal --- is brought into dynamic reality in the Community’s **Mission Homestead**.

9.2 THE MISSION HOMESTEAD

A **Homestead** is a **cluster of Word Sharing Circles** whose members both **shepherd each other** towards spiritual health and maturity and **work with each other** in the accomplishment of their particular share of the Community’s ministry and mission.

9.3 FUNCTIONS OF THE MISSION HOMESTEAD

- 9.3.a. The **Mission Homesteads** are the *“line divisions”* of the Community; they form the Community’s **Mission Corps**. **Their primary function is to execute the Community’s principal work**, which are:
- i. assisting disciples in their growth to maturity in their spiritual gifts; and,

iv. using these gifts to share the Word and the Spirit of God with others who seek the pathways of Christian discipleship.

9.3.b. In the process of exercising this primary function, Christian personal relationships will form among the Members of the Homestead. These Word-rooted relationships will enable them to fulfill the seventh pledge of their Community Covenant:

“We shall read, study and live the Word of God in the Holy Scriptures and in other spiritual readings, and we shall regularly share our knowledge and experience in the Word with other members of the Community.”

9.3.c. The **Homestead** is also an inter-disciplinary team equipped to provide the supplementary function of rendering the entire range of services required for the mission agenda:

- i. Witnessing in the encounter and renewal programs;
- ii. Shepherding renewal candidates and encounter classes;
- iii. Teaching the basic formation syllabus;
- iv. Leading Praise, Worship, Intercession and Liturgy, and
- v. Providing Auxiliary Administrative and Management services.

9.3.d. The Community’s **Councils** and **Ministries** support the Homesteads in their needs for governance and direction, formation in the Word of God and counseling in the Spirit of God, information, and provision of human, technical and material resources.

9.4 MISSION SERVICE AND LEADERS

9.4.a. The **Homestead** is composed of between four (4) and seven (7) **Word Sharing Circles**. The **Word Sharing Circle** is the primary forum for the Community’s pastoral care program. **The Circle is the basic cell group of the Community, where primary pastoral care is administered.** . It is the place of intimacy where members open their hearts to learn and share the meaning and relevance to their lives of God’s word to the Church and the Community. In the Word Sharing Circle, Members Live out the third pledge of the Community Covenant:

“We shall actively assist in ministering to the spiritual, personal and material needs of the other members of the Community, and of the other members of the Body of Christ in a spirit of self-giving love.”

Each **Circle** is composed of:

- i. Three (3) to five (5) couples; or
- ii. Six (6) to ten (10) disciples.

9.4.b. Each **Circle** will be under the pastoral care of one (1) **Circle Shepherd** who may be either a Couple or a Single who is appointed by the District Council of Stewards.

The **Circle Shepherd** shall:

- i. Preside over the Word Sharing Circle sessions;
- ii. Aid Circle members in building sound interpersonal relationships in the Lord within the circle, in their respective families and with others, within and outside the Community;
- iii. Motivate the presence of Circle members in the Worship Service, Word Sharing Circle sessions, official gatherings of the Community and service in the Community's mission;
- iv. Share in Community governance by communicating and fostering the values, norms and policies of the Community; and
- v. Assist in discipleship formation and ministry development of Circle members.

9.4.c. Each **Homestead** shall also have a matrix team of mission-equipped members representing different ministries needed for the accomplishment of mission objectives. The minimum number comprising this team are:

- i. Two (2) District Teachers
- ii. Two (2) Praise/Worship Leaders
- iii. Two (2) pairs of Marriage Encounter Team Couples
- iv. Four (4) Life in the Spirit Seminar Witnesses
- v. Three (3) Accredited Praise Singers
- vi. One (1) Accredited Praise Instrumentalist
- vii. One (1) Bookkeeper
- viii. One (1) Property Custodian

9.4.d. Each **Homestead** is under the direct management of one (1) **Homestead Shepherd Couple** appointed by the District Council of Stewards with the approval of the Council of Servant Leaders. The **Homestead Shepherd Couple** shall:

- i. Manage the affairs of the Homestead guided by the Covenant of Communion, the Community Statement on Sound Homestead Management and Guidelines set by the District Council of Stewards;
- ii. Provide pastoral care for the Homestead's **Circle Shepherds** and conduct a monthly Living Word Group Session with all Circle Shepherds in the Homestead;
- iii. Ensure that the Circle Shepherds perform their pastoral duties and responsibilities in their respective Circles;
- iv. Exercise direct supervision during mission-related activities over the functional workers serving with their Homestead;
- v. Join other **Homestead Shepherds** of the District in a Word Sharing Circle at least once every month; and
- vi. Submit a comprehensive report on every mission activity to the District Council, through the Mission Steward.

9.4.e. The **Word Sharing Circle (WSC)** is the **principal forum for pastoral care**.

- i. All Homestead Circles gather together in assembly at the designated date, time and venue. The Homestead Assembly begins with a **common opening praise**, and a **word of prayer** led by the **Homestead Shepherd**. The Scriptures for the **previous Sunday** and the **Community's worship theme for the week** are read. A brief period of three minutes is spent in **quiet reflection** on the readings.
- ii. The **Circles** then break out for their respective Word Sharing sessions. The sessions are conducted by the **Circle Shepherd** on the following **format**:

❖	Opening Prayer	Circle Shepherd
❖	WORD Sharing (<i>moderated by the Circle Shepherd</i>)	Individuals
❖	Prayer	Individuals
❖	Direction from the Word	Circle Dialogue

- ❖ Prayer for Members Circle Members
- ❖ Closing Prayer Circle Shepherd
- iii. The **Circles** reassemble as a **Homestead** for the **Communal Fellowship**, which is again presided over by the **Homestead Shepherd**.
 - ❖ Greetings for Celebrants
 - ❖ Announcements
 - ❖ Meeting on Organizational Concerns
 - ❖ Closing Prayer and Song
- 9.4.f. All Homestead Members are expected to serve as either **LSS Shepherds**, **Encounter Auxiliaries**, **General Intercessors** or **Administrative Assistants**. These assignments will be made by the **Homestead Shepherd**, and may differ according to the requirements of each mission activity.

9.5 OTHER COMMUNITY HOMESTEADS

Besides the **Mission Homestead**, which is the subject of this Model, two (2) other kinds of Homesteads may make up the Community:

- 9.5.a. **Formation Homesteads** are clusters of Word Sharing Circles of non-covenant members passing through the process of discipleship formation and are in the pastoral care of Covenant Disciples attached to the District Ministries;
- 9.5.b. **Ministry Homesteads** are clusters of Word Sharing Circles of covenant disciples who are not assigned to Mission Homesteads, but remain in their respective ministries: the Praise, Service and Intercessory Ministries.

9.6 HOMESTEAD MANAGEMENT

The **Homestead Shepherd**, in consultation with the **Circle Shepherds**, may assign responsibilities to members to aid in the management of the homestead. The following functions may be assigned to Circle Members:

- 9.6.a. **Administrative Couple/Disciple**

- i. To take care of communications and records in the homestead;
- ii. To monitor attendance at Community and Homestead activities;
- iii. To manage the Homestead's information system, including the Directory.

9.6.b. Praise Couple/Disciple

- i. To organize and maintain the instrumentalist and singers who will form the Homestead's Praise group;
- ii. To lead and animate the praise and worship segments of mission activities; and
- iii. To account for the safekeeping of the Homestead's musical instruments, equipment and resources, including musical scores, tapes and materials such as acetates.

9.6.c. Treasury Couple/Disciple

- i. To account for Homestead funds;
- ii. To submit monthly and annual financial statements to the District Council;
- iii. To act as custodian of Homestead records and assets;
- iv. To prepare the annual consolidated and ad-hoc project Homestead budgets; and
- v. To arrange logistical requirements of the Homestead.

9.6.d. Service Couple/Disciple

- i. To attend to the venue, physical arrangements and facilities for Homestead meetings and activities; and
- ii. To manage the registration and ancillary service needs at Homestead meetings and activities.

9.6.f. Intercessory Couple /Disciple

- i. To supervise the Homestead's Intercessory work as required; and
- ii. To arrange for the Homestead's Liturgical requirements.

9.7 FREQUENCY AND VENUE OF MEETINGS

- 9.7.a. The **Homestead** will meet **weekly** at a venue determined by the Homestead Shepherd responsive to the concerns and constraints of the

Members. They shall meet as **Word Sharing Circles** during the first, second and third weeks of the month, as follows:

- i. First Week: Word Sharing sessions with Circle Shepherds.
- ii. Second Week: Word Sharing sessions among Circle Members (without their Circle Shepherds).

(Circle Shepherds will have Word Sharing sessions and Business Meetings with their respective Homestead Shepherds.)

- iii. Third Week: Word Sharing sessions with Circle Shepherds. The Homestead Shepherd may join the Homestead's Word Sharing Circles on a rotation basis.
- iv. Fourth Week: Homestead Assembly to discuss concerns and assignments given to the Homestead.
- v. Fifth Week: Homestead Fellowship.

9.7.b. The Homestead Shepherd may join the Homestead's Word Sharing Circles on a rotation basis.

9.7.c. The District Pastoral Steward and the Pastoral Coordinator will have a regular monthly meeting with the Homestead Shepherds to discuss pastoral concerns and problems.

9.7.d. The District Mission Steward will also meet with the Homestead Shepherds to discuss mission-related concerns and activities.

9.7.e. Formation Homesteads will have a different meeting pattern.

- i. The First and Third Weeks will be Word Sharing sessions, devoted to the pastoral care of Aspirants (or Committed Disciples in formation).
- ii. The Second and Fourth Weeks will be devoted to teaching or formation programs for the Aspirants.
- iii. Covenant Disciples in Formation Homesteads will have their Word Sharing sessions on the Second and Fourth Weeks, while the Aspirants attend the teachings.

9.8 PASTORAL PRINCIPLES

The Community's **Covenant of Communion** establishes the Principles from which the Community's Pastoral Care Program is drawn. The **basic pastoral structure** is the **Pastoral Circle**, described in Paragraphs 9.4.a. and 9.4.b. above.

9.8.a. The **Pastoral Circle** has the following **purposes**:

- i. To minister to each other's material, psychological and spiritual needs;
- ii. To develop sound Christian relationships among Community Disciples through prayer and by caring, comforting and nurturing one another;
- iii. To learn to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth as a small Community;
- iv. To learn and apply the Word of God in their day to day living (personal, family, vocational and Community life), thereby enabling them to overcome problems and afflictions;
- v. To encourage each other in the exercise of spiritual and natural gifts; and
- vi. To understand and practice the values, norms and policies of the Community and the significant teachings of the Church.

9.8.b. **Pastoral Teachings**

- i. Supplementary discipleship teachings are encouraged, with prior request of the District Council of Stewards and approval of the **Council of Servant Leaders**, for the purposes of enhancing the exercise of spiritual gifts, improving the effectiveness of ministry and mission work, deepening personal spirituality or gaining greater understanding of the Bible or the Magisterium.
- ii. These teachings will be scheduled in ways that do not disrupt or impede the process of Word Sharing Circle sessions and the demands of the mission agenda.

9.8.c. **Personal Counseling and Discernment**

- i. Participation in a Pastoral Circle entails some degree of compassionate involvement in the problems of other members of

the Circle. All Christians are called to share in the lives of people in need, especially in the intimacy of a Christian pastoral group.

- ii. Concerns that we normally encounter in our lives are usually caused either by **lack of essential needs** (e.g., illness, emotional stress, financial insufficiency, unemployment), **personal misfortune** (death or dread disease, disaster, financial loss, unemployment). Not infrequently, we are disturbed by **unsatisfied wants**, such as discomfort, inconvenience or shame.
- iii. Although the ministry of pastoral care asks of us to listen to the problems and bear the burdens of other Circle Members, it is important to remember that we minister not with our own resources or skills, but with powers entrusted to us by the Holy Spirit. We therefore **provide counseling with the Spirit and administer discernment by the Word through the instrumentality of prayer**. We can **pray with** or **pray for** those who seek our assistance in the way of counseling or discernment.
- iv. The persons whom we minister to --- not ourselves --- are the ones who are to make decisions and undertake measures to deal with their concerns or problems. We bear their burdens, but do not solve their problems for them.
- v. Sometimes, we discover that one or a few Circle Members suffer from **emotional** or **psychological disorder**. As we do not normally have the professional expertise to contend with this human condition, we can go only as far as helping the person involved recognize his/her need for professional counseling. Beyond this, our only acceptable recourse is to refer the person to experienced and accredited professionals.

9.9 MISSION PROGRAM

9.9.a. Every Mission Homestead has the fundamental responsibility of proclaiming the Good News to others. Aside from the Homestead's witnessing in personal and Community life, it shall undertake mission through the various "*ad extra*" objectives of the Community. In this centrifugal orientation, the Homestead looks outward and directs its attention on its ultimate end of serving the larger Church and Society.

9.9.b. The Mission Homestead's ability to effectively respond to opportunities for mission requires versatility in approach. The Community's Mission Objectives allow the following entry points:

- i. Encounter Weekends
(Marriage, Family, Singles, Solo Parent, Youth);
- ii. Life in the Spirit Seminar;
- iii. Spiritual Growth;
- iv. Pastoral Care; and
- v. Poverty Alleviation (including livelihood and housing).

Mission Homesteads are equipped to respond to this range of need.

9.10 PROTOCOL FOR MISSION

- 9.10.a. The **District Mission Steward** and **Homestead Shepherds** meet regularly to discuss requests from Districts-in-Process, Diocesan Parishes or Institutions for any of the mission programs, according to the guidelines of the Community.
- 9.10.b. Requests that fulfill the Community guidelines are submitted to the District Council of Stewards for approval.
- 9.10.c. Upon the District Council's approval, the District Mission Steward will officially communicate the Program Community's acceptance of the request, and seek the designation of a Program Coordinator from the appropriate authority in the requesting party. The Coordinator shall be the Homestead's principal liaison with the requesting party.
- 9.10.d. The District Mission Steward will issue a Mission Order for the designated Mission Homestead.
- 9.10.e. The Homestead Shepherd shall assign a Homestead Circle as the lead group for a particular mission assignment. In turn, the Circle Shepherd shall assign a Circle Coordinator.
- 9.10.f. The Circle Coordinator shall immediately communicate with the Program Coordinator of the requesting party. The Circle Coordinator will then draw up a **Program Profile**, indicating: intended participants and relevant demographic information; socio-spiritual context; purposes, resources and constraints. The **Program Specifications** will indicate: the venue, physical facilities, and manpower and logistical needs. Based on the Program Profile and Specifications, the Circle Coordinator will draw up a **Program Budget, indicating Sources and Uses of Funds**.
- 9.10.g. **The standard policy is that the requesting party will underwrite all mission-related expenses**, including meals and refreshments for

participants and auxiliaries, program materials, stipends for the Team Priest, local transportation and accommodations of the Pastoral Team, rent of venue and equipment. The program's financial requirements from the Community will be determined by the outcome of discussions between the Circle Coordinator and the Program Coordinator.

- 9.10.h As a rule, the Community's only commitment consists of providing the mission teams: the Pastoral Teams (Team Priest, Sharers or Presentors, Teachers), Shepherds and Auxiliaries for the Praise, Intercessory and Service Ministries.
- 9.10.i. The Circle Coordinator then submits the **Profile, Specifications and Budget** for discussion among the Homestead and Circle Shepherds. The Homestead Shepherd submits the **Program Report and Recommendations** to the District Council through the Mission Steward within two (2) weeks from the formal meeting between the Circle Coordinator and the Program Coordinator.
- 9.10.j. The District Council of Stewards will then deliberate on the Program Report and Recommendations, and render a final decision at least six (6) weeks before the scheduled mission.
- 9.10.k. Upon approval of the mission, the Homestead and Circle Shepherds together discern the composition of the Pastoral Team and the Homestead's contingent of auxiliaries, based on their standing in the Homestead and District, and on their suitability to mission-specific needs.
- 9.10.l. The Circle Coordinator will communicate regularly with the Program Coordinator, in order to efficiently prepare the necessary groundwork for the mission. The requesting party shall be consulted in all phases of the preparations.
- 9.10.m The Homestead Shepherd will be responsible for all interface communications (with the Pastoral, Evangelization, Formation and Management Groups) in the District.
- 9.10.n. The Community's official Manuals and Guidelines will be substantively followed in the implementation of the Mission Program. Variations or deviations from official procedures will be either previously cleared with, or subsequently reported to, the appropriate District Steward.
- 9.10.o. An official comprehensive report of the mission shall be submitted within two (2) weeks after the completion of the mission. The report will be both **quantitative** (number of participants and auxiliaries, amount of materials

and funds used, et al.) and **qualitative**, indicating gains and losses, mistakes and failures, insights and learnings, and the mission's contribution(s) to the Community's over-all mission objectives. The report will also recommend to the District Council the measures needed to sustain the spiritual and social seeds planted in the mission field, and indicated suggested time frames. All Mission Program reports are collated and submitted by the DCS through the Mission Steward on a quarterly basis to the Council of Servant Leaders through the Mission Servant Leader.

9.11 EQUIPPING FOR MISSION

The Homestead shall continually equip itself for mission by identifying, cultivating and sustaining the gifts and talents of its members for the exercise of the following ministry functions:

9.11.a. Witnessing as Sharers and Presentors;

9.11.b. Leading Worship and Praise;

9.11.c. Teaching;

9.11.d. Music and Singing;

9.11.e. Shepherding;

9.11.f. Intercession and Liturgy;

9.11.h. Auxiliary Administrative Services.

9.12 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

9.12.a. Servanthood, particularly in the service of the Lord, requires our giving the best of ourselves and the pursuit of excellence in ministry and mission. The work of the Lord deserves no less than the highest standards of performance. This in turn demands a **spirituality of commitment, discipline and diligence**.

9.12.b. The readiness and capability of Homesteads to serve in mission will be determined by quarterly evaluations of their performance capability, and will be measured in the following indicators:

- i. Percentage of membership attendance at District Corporate Worship, District and Homestead Assemblies, Word Sharing Circle Sessions, Supplementary Teachings and Mission Programs;
- ii. Perseverance and consistency of Word Sharing Circle membership;
- iii. Number of outreaches served and satisfactorily completed;
- iv. Number and quality of members developed into Pastoral Team participation (as Worship Leaders, Teachers, Sharers, et al.);
- v. Percentage of Homestead membership completing the Diaconate Program of the *Christian Discipleship Formation Institute*;
- vi. Other indicators developed by the Community Councils.



10.0 AUTHORITY

10.1 ECCLESIASTICAL

As every Disciple lives within a parish or diocese, they are therefore under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of their Parish Priest and/or Diocesan Bishop. Episcopal Vicars may be assigned to exercise ecclesiastical authority over Disciples living within a Diocese or Parish, who are members of a Community District.

The **Spiritual Director of the Community** will request the Diocesan Bishop, where a District is serving, to assign a Spiritual Adviser for the District, the functions of whom are as follows:

10.1.a. District Spiritual Adviser

The Spiritual Adviser of the District or District-in-Process is a priest duly appointed by the Arch/Bishop in the arch/diocese where a Community District or District-in-Process serves. It is highly preferable that the Spiritual Adviser is already in the charismatic renewal movement and or willing to join the Community's encounter and renewal programs as either an observer or a participant.

10.1.b. Functions of the Spiritual Adviser

- i. Substantive (MUSTS)
 - To provide spiritual guidance and direction in District affairs and activities;
 - To administer pastoral care collectively to the District Council of Stewards;
 - To minister to District Disciples requiring spiritual guidance and/or special counseling at the recommendation of the Pastoral Steward.
- ii. Optional (WANTS)
 - To preside over the District's Monthly Eucharistic Celebrations, or to concelebrate with the Covenant Community's Spiritual Director and/or the Diocesan Bishop;
 - To serve as Spiritual Director in the District's Life in the Spirit Seminar;

- To serve as Presenting Priest in the Pastoral Team of the District's encounter programs (ME, SE, S/SPE, YE, or FE);
- To conduct the Disciples' Retreat in representation of the Covenant Community's Spiritual Director;
- To conduct special retreats or recollections as required by the District Council;
- To conduct special teachings for the District (e.g. Catechism of the Catholic Church; Social Teachings of the Church, etc.)

10.2 COVENANTAL

Every Disciple is also under the governance and pastoral care of those who are in authority in the Covenant Community. Besides the Spiritual Director, those who are in authority are the Council of Servant Leaders and the District Stewards, who are Pastoral Heads in the Community.

10.2.a. A Pastoral Head is a Covenant Disciple who has been granted the responsibility of governance over Apostolates, Districts and Ministries.

10.2.b. The Spiritual Director is the Pastoral Head of the Council of Servant Leaders and the entire Covenant Community.

10.2.c. The Council of Servant Leaders is collectively the Pastoral Head of all District Councils of Stewards.

10.2.d. The District Steward is the Pastoral Head of either a Ministry or a group of Program Coordinators

10.2.e. The District Pastoral Steward is the Pastoral Head of all the Homestead Shepherds.

10.2.f. The Homestead Shepherd is the Pastoral Head of all Circle Shepherds of a particular homestead.

10.2.g. The Circle Shepherd is the Pastoral Head of the Circle Members.

10.2.h. The District Council of Stewards is collectively the Pastoral Head of the District Leaders Conference.

10.2.i. The Ministry or Program Coordinator is the Pastoral Head of the Ministry or Program Disciples.

10.3 LEGITIMATE EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY

No Disciple in the Covenant Community possesses authority in his/her personal capacity. Authority is legitimately exercised only when it is used to implement the decisions or policies of the governing bodies in the Community: the Spiritual Director, the Council of Servant Leaders or the District Council of Stewards.



11.0 ORGANIZATION

The Covenant Community is organized according to Districts situated in Dioceses in any part of the world, and is governed as one Community by the **Council of Servant Leaders**. A *District* is a group of members and or disciples residing within an Archdiocese of Diocese, whose establishment and authority to function in the Diocese has been approved in writing by the Diocesan Bishop.

The Council of the Servant Leaders is composed of seven (7) Servant Leaders who reside in the Ecclesiastical Province of Manila composed of the **Head Servant and Servant Leaders for Pastoral, Evangelization, Formation, Mission, Management and District Development**.

11.1 THE SEAT OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY

The Seat of the Covenant Community is the Community Council of Servant Leaders

11.1.a. The Council of Servant Leaders consists of the following Apostolates: Pastoral, Evangelization, Formation, Mission, Management and District Development.

11.1.b The Community Council of Servant Leaders is the governing body of all the Districts of the Covenant Community. It is composed of the Head Servant and all of the Servant Leaders.

11.2 FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF SERVANT LEADERS

The functions of the Council as a body are:

11.2.a. to discern God's Word and its actualization for the Community;

11.2.b. to govern the Community and make decisions and directions on Community life;

11.2.c. to exercise pastoral care for the Community and her members;

11.2.d. to review all teachings to the Community;

11.2.e. to appoint those who exercise responsible pastoral and apostolic service;

11.2.f. to lead the Community through its active presence and witness at all Worship Services and Assemblies

11.3 RESOLUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

The resolution of the Council *en banc* is required for the following:

11.3.a. decisions requiring new policy;

- 11.3.b. decisions requiring interpretation of existing policy;
- 11.3.c. decisions on operational issues raised by District Councils
- 11.3.d. decisions on matters clearly affecting the life of the entire Community.

11.4 FUNCTIONS OF SERVANT LEADERS AS COUPLES

- 11.4.a. to oversee the spiritual life of individuals, couples and families in the Community, particularly in their assigned Apostolate;
- 11.4.b. to witness actively to the Word of God and the teachings of the Church particularly on marriage and family life; and
- 11.4.c. to shepherd personal lives and services of those who may be assigned under their pastoral care.

11.5 FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVANT LEADER AS AN INDIVIDUAL

- 11.5.a. to be fully responsible and accountable, as the Chief Executive Officer, for the attainment of the Community Apostolate which he is assigned to oversee;
- 11.5.b. to exercise pastoral authority and responsibility over the District Stewards of the Apostolate, of which he is the Pastoral head.

11.6 FUNCTIONS OF THE HEAD SERVANT

- 11.6.a. to coordinate and support the different activities of the Servant Leaders;
- 11.6.b. to preside over the meetings of the Council;
- 11.6.c. to ensure that Community-wide concerns are adequately addressed and resolved; and
- 11.6.d. when called for particular situations, to decide on matters which need immediate resolution, and report this to the Council at its next meeting.

11.7 FUNCTIONS OF THE FOUNDER

The Spiritual Director recognized Sonny and Bai delos Reyes as Founder Couple of the Community. In his pastoral letter, he specified their functions as follows:

- 11.7.a. As “the director of the Vision (of the Community) in relation to the Universal Vision of the Church”, i.e. to act as Consultor to the Spiritual Director on Community governance and policy, and as assistant on any matter delegated by the Spiritual Director.
- 11.7.b. As the “overseer, together with the emerged Head Servant, of the vision and commitments of the Community.
 - i. To guide the Council of Servant Leaders and District Council of Stewards in the interpretation and observance of the Covenant of

- Communion, and to offer constructive critique on the decisions and actions of the governing bodies in the light of the Covenant.
- ii. To oversee the development and effectiveness of the Institute for Parish Community Development Foundation, the Breaking the Yoke of Poverty Foundation, the National Prayer Movement, and the Christian Discipleship Formation Institute/Foundation.
- 11.7.c. As the “center and protector of unity” in the Community, to resolve conflicts and reconcile differences between Council of Servant Leaders and any District Council of Steward, and
- 11.7.d. “when deemed necessary or when called for, to intervene, mediate, offer counsel, make visitations of different Districts and their equivalent, and represent the community in official gatherings.”

11.3 THE APOSTOLATES AND THEIR GENERAL FUNCTIONS

- 11.3.a. **Pastoral Apostolate:** Oversee the Community’s pastoral care program for all disciples.
- i. Ensures the sound implementation and development of the Community’s pastoral care system in all Districts;
 - ii. Assists in the identification and development of the spiritual gifts of the Community’s disciples;
 - iii. Enables the observance of standards and pre-requisites for shepherding and pastoral care;
 - iv. Manages the provision of a personal, , prayerful, and informed counseling services.
- 11.3.b. **Evangelization Apostolate:** Ensure the conduct of all Encounter programs, PLSG, Life in the Spirit Seminar, Praise and Liturgy., and Worship in all the Districts according to the norms and standards of the Community.
- i. Supports the Mission Apostolate in the conduct of the LSS and all Encounters;
 - ii. Ensures the high level of attendance of the encounter graduates into the LSS and the Community’s Growth programs;
 - iii. Assists the Formation Apostolate in the continuous development of a pool of sharers and encounter presentors;
 - iv. Advocates and develops Christian Principles and Values on Family and Life.

11.3.c. **Formation Apostolate:** Oversee the spiritual growth of Christian Disciples for service in the Community and in the larger Church.

- i. Manages the formation of mature, Spirit-empowered Disciples to advance the Community Mission;
- ii. Provides in-depth training of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers for the Community and the Church;
- iii. Enables the cultivation of Ministry gifts: Prophecy, Service, Teaching, Exhortation, Giving, Leading and Mercy;
- iv. Enables the instruction of Community Disciples and Parish Groups in the Gospel of Christ and Teachings of the Church.

11.3.d. **Mission Apostolate:** As the Community's Apostolate for social action, strengthen the Parish in building basic ecclesial communities and assist in breaking the yoke of poverty and oppression.

- i. Parochial --- Establishing the formation of Communities of Disciples in Parishes through the conduct of Encounter programs, Life in the Spirit Seminars and the Basic Formation Teachings;
- ii. Seeding --- "Seeding" in Parishes within a BLD District at least one (1) couple who have completed the Marriage Encounter, the Life in the Spirit Seminar, and the Spiritual Growth programs;
- iii. Intercessory --- Recruiting and equipping for coordinated intercession and spiritual warfare, prayer warriors in Parishes within a BLD District;
- iv. Housing and Livelihood – Assisting families out of poverty towards dignity and productivity as children of God.

11.3.e. **Management Apostolate:** Ensure the proper administration of the Community's personnel and material and financial resources, including those of the Foundations, Cooperatives and other Institutions or establishments organized by the Community and its Districts for the purpose of enhancing their financial and logistic capabilities in accordance with existing policies and guidelines.

- i. Oversees the administration of the different Secretariats serving the Council of Servant Leaders (CSL) and the Community Districts;
- ii. Oversees the management of the Foundations, the Cooperatives, and the other Institutions or establishments of the Community that are organized for business and other purposes that will enhance the financial and logistic capabilities of the Community and its Districts;

- iii. Ensures that all Districts exercise transparency and use generally accepted accounting and auditing procedures in the management of its resources;
- iv. Oversees efforts to generate funds and other material resources to support the resources requirements of the Community and its Districts for their administrative and other general objectives;
- v. Ensure that logistics requirements are provided for Community and the Districts' general activities such as Corporate Worship/Prayer Meetings Eucharist Celebrations and Community or District Assemblies.

11.3.f. **District Development Apostolate:** Provide guidance in the development of Community Districts and offers a resource to the District Council of Stewards in their governance of their respective Districts in accordance with the Covenant of Communion, the general policies and decisions of the Council of Servant Leaders, the Spiritual Director and the Catholic Bishop Conferences.

- i. Assists in the formation of Community Districts and in their pursuit of the Community's Vision, Charism and Mission;
- ii. Ensures the clear and shared understanding of established Community policies and guidelines;
- iii. Documents the major development of each District for information-based evaluation and policy formation;
- iv. Advises the District Council of Stewards in Community governance. Monitors the Full Fledge Districts to Full Term status for the Council of Servant Leaders, through the designated District Development Deputy. (DDD)

11.4 COMMUNITY DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

Each Community District is organized into Ministries, Programs and Homesteads.

11.4.a. The Ministries are :

For Pastoral Apostolate:

- i. Pastoral Services
- ii. Youth Ministry
- iii. Singles Ministry
- iv. Solo Parent Ministry
- iv. Mark 10 Ministry

For Evangelization Apostolate:

- i. Marriage Encounter Ministry
- ii. Family Encounter Ministry
- iii. Life in the Spirit Ministry
- iv. Praise Ministry
- v. Liturgy Ministry
- vi. PLSG (Post LSS Group)

For Formational Apostolate:

- i. Teaching Ministry
- ii. Intercessory Ministry
- iii. Discipling Ministry
- iv. Word Ministry
- v. Witness Development Ministry
- vi. Coach Development Ministry

For Management Apostolate:

- i. Service Ministry
- ii. Treasury Ministry
- iii. Secretariat
- iv. District Foundation
- v. Technical Group

For Mission Apostolate:

- i. Parish Services Ministry
- ii. Institutional Services Ministry
- iii. District Services Ministry
- v. District in Process Shepherds

11.4.b. The Programs are:

- i. Encounter Programs: Marriage, Family, Solo Parents, Singles and Youth
- ii. Life in the Spirit Seminars
- iii. Christian Discipleship Formation
- iv. Pastoral Care and Development
- v. Mission Management.

11.4.c The Homesteads, organized by the District Council of Stewards in consultation with the District Leaders' Conference, integrate the pastoral and mission functions of the Community.

11.4.d In response to a specific need of the District, Ministries and Programs may be merged, integrated or created as per recommendation of the District Council of Stewards, with the approval of the Council of Servant Leaders.

11.5 DISTRICT COUNCIL OF STEWARDS

The **District Council of Stewards** is the local governing body of the Community District. It is composed of 3 to 5 resident Couple Stewards. The number determined by the **Council of Servant Leaders**, according to the current growth stage of the District:

11.5.a. **Pastoral Steward Couple** shall oversee the Mark 10, Youth, Single, Solo Parents and Pastoral Services Ministry Coordinators.

11.5.b. **Evangelization Steward Couple** shall oversee the Marriage Encounter, Family Encounter, Life in the Spirit, PLSG, Praise and Liturgy Ministry Coordinators.

11.5.c. **Formation Steward Couple** shall oversee the Intercessory, Teaching, Discipling, Word, Witness Development and Coach Development Coordinators.

11.5.d. **Management Steward Couple** shall oversee the Service and Treasury Ministries, the District Foundation and Secretariat, and shall coordinate with the District Office of the BLD Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

11.5.e. **Mission Steward Couple** shall oversee the Parish Services, District Services and Institutional Services Ministry Coordinators and the District in Process Shepherds.

11.6 DISTRICT LEADERS CONFERENCE

Each of the District's Ministries, Programs and Homesteads, as well as its Outreaches and Districts-in-Process shall be served by a Coordinator or a Shepherd. The Coordinator or Shepherd shall be recommended for appointment by the District Council of Stewards and shall serve with no specific term of Office, but at the discretion of the Council of Servant Leaders. All Ministry Coordinators, Foundation Executive Directors, Cooperative Managers, Program

Coordinators, Homestead, Outreach and DIP Shepherds, DIP Interim District Council of Stewards as the implementing arm of the District, shall collectively form the **District Leaders Conference**, which shall meet at least once a quarter to plan, coordinate and implement District programs and activities.

11.6.a. The DCS collectively present to the Council of Servant Leaders their recommendation for appointment all candidates for Coordinators and Homestead Shepherds. Their appointment is at the discretion and approval of the Council of Servant Leaders.

The DCS shall submit their recommendation in the following manner:

- i Recommendation of the District Council of Stewards signed by all the Stewards.
- ii Personal Information Sheet of the disciples.
- iii Strengths of the Disciples.
- iv Weaknesses of the Disciple and actions to be taken to address the weakness

11.6.b. The District Council of Stewards assigns Covenant Disciples to their Ministries and Homesteads, after consultation and acceptance.

11.7 GROWTH STAGES OF COMMUNITY DISTRICTS

All Covenant Disciples of a District are of one heart and one mind, united with the Council of Servant Leaders and the other Districts in agreeing, abiding and promulgating the Terms of the Covenant of Communion. The said District shall spearhead the implementation of the BLD Mission in the Diocese where they reside.

11.7.a. Criteria for a Potential District:

- i. At the start as a prayer group, must have at least 2 Couples who took the BLD ME and LSS and are willing to form part of the Core Group.
- ii. Must be a potential staging area towards the development of the other Parishes in their Diocese and possibly to the other Dioceses in the Ecclesiastical Provinces where they belong.
- iii. Must assume the name of the Diocese.
- iv. Must be the only BLD District in the Diocese.

11.7.b. **Prayer Group**

A newly formed group of BLD ME, LSS graduates, Committed or Covenant Disciples desiring to establish a BLD District in their Diocese or as initiated by another BLD District and with the approval of the Council of Servant Leaders. They are normally known as Core Group Members.

They will start the area through a regular LWG and Prayer Meeting. They will continue to establish relationship with the Bishop through the Diocesan Renewal Commission Head/Family Life Commission Head while awaiting approval for the start of the MEW, LSS and Teachings.

11.7.c. **District In Process (DIP):**

A Prayer Group is one which has obtained a written approval from the Diocesan Bishop, allowing BLD to conduct the MEW, LSS and Discipleship Formation Program for its members.

The development of the District in Process and its members must be patterned, molded and operated as indicated in the Terms and General Policies of the Covenant of Communion.

The DIP should support the BLD Mission. It should allocate means for its covenanted members for initial exposure to mission work projects organized by the Administering Full Term Districts, or the Council of Servant Leaders and their Diocesan Bishop.

The area will be governed by an Interim District Council of Stewards, (Evangelization, Formation & Management) supported by a District in Process Shepherd, all appointed by CSL upon the recommendation of the Administering District DCS. Specific policies relevant to the District may be formulated by the Interim DCS and the assigned DIP Shepherd upon recommendation by the Administering District DCS. These policies are brought up for approval to the CSL through the District Development Servant Leader.

The Interim DCS Tricord, with the guidance of the DIP Shepherd, should prepare an Annual Plan for the development of the DIP. These plans are submitted, through the Mission Steward, to the DCS of the Administering District. Copy of the plan shall be furnished to the Council of Servant Leaders through the District Development Servant Leader.

In their initial MEW and LSS, members of the Council of Servant Leaders and Administering District DCS are to be invited to serve as MEW/FEW sharers or Council's Representative to the LSS.

11.7.d. Full-Fledged District

A District in Process which has obtained the written approval of the Diocesan Bishop in establishing a District in the Diocese for the continuous development of its disciples and members. The District will also be the staging area in supporting the Diocese and in assisting the Parishes in building their own Community of Disciples.

As a Full-Fledged District, the DCS shall act as the representatives of the District and its Covenant Disciples to all the Terms of the Covenant of Communion. They shall also establish their own District Foundation as approved by the Council of Servant Leaders. The DCS shall serve as Trustees of the Foundation for as long as they are members of the DCS.

The District is governed by the District Council of Stewards composed of the Stewards for Evangelization, Formation, Management and Pastoral emerged from the active Covenant Disciples of the District. (For existing Full-Fledged Districts which have an approved mission area after two years, a Mission Steward shall be added to the District Council.)

The Full-Fledged District is directly under the guidance of the Council of Servant Leaders through a District Development Deputy (DDD). The Council of Servant Leaders shall designate a DDD who shall assist the DCS in the developmental needs of the District. The DDD reports directly to the District Development Servant Leader.

Subject to their resources and District schedules and as approved by the Council of Servant Leaders, covenanted disciples of a Full Fledged District shall be asked to assist their former Administering District or any District who is need of their support, as part of their immersion into mission.

11.7.e. Elevation from DIP to Full Fledged District Requirements

- i. With twenty (20) active Covenanted Disciples;
- ii. With at least two (2) Covenant Couples who have presented either in the LSS or ME;
- iii. With at least two (2) Covenant Couples who are currently accredited to teach by the Council of Servant Leaders;
- iv. With all the members of the District Council of Stewards serving as Prayer Leaders.

11.7.f. **Full-Term District**

A Full-Term District is a Mission-ready District who shall be responsible in administering to the needs of the different parishes within the diocese where the District belongs.

As a Full-Term District, the DCS will no longer have a DDD to assist them. The District Council of Stewards will be appointed by the Council of Servant Leaders from among the emerged leaders of the District who have been serving as Encounter/LSS sharer, or Prayer Leader or Teacher and has been a member of the District Leadership Conference formerly known as BOC. They would directly and regularly report to the CSL the developments in their District.

11.7.g. **Minimum Resources of a Full-Term District**

Disciples	- 72 Covenanted Disciples (Luke 10:1-2)
Ministries/Programs	- at least 7 (ME/FE, Service, Intercessory, Praise, Teaching, LSS, Treasury, Secretariat)
Homestead	- at least 1 Homestead
LSS Sharers	- 3 Couples/3 Singles and or Solo Parents
ME Sharers	- 4 Couples (2 A & 2 B)
FE Sharers	- 1 Family or in lieu of 2 Solo Parent; or 2 Single
Instructors	- 11 Covenanted Disciples
Prayer Leaders	- 11 Couples – Covenanted
Spiritual Adviser	- who presents in their own ME/LSS Retreats

As discerned by the Council of Servant Leaders, a Full-Term District can be tapped to administer the development of other Potential Districts or other parishes outside of their own Diocese.

11.7.h. **BLD Prayer Community**

A **Prayer Community** is primarily an aggrupation of BLD Disciples which evolved from a “**full-fledged**” District unable to fulfill the basic requirements of a District not because of choice but because of circumstances. The principal reason for its so-called inability is membership migration or change of residences of its members.

Among the difficulties encounter by the “so-called” Districts are the following:

- i. Lack of Covenant Disciple couples who could be given governance and pastoral responsibilities (Tricord or District Stewards) over Heads of Ministries or Apostolates;
- ii. Lack of Covenant Disciple couples who could be given functional and pastoral responsibilities (Heads of Ministries or Apostolates) over male and female members of Ministries and Apostolates;
- iii. Lack of Corporate Worship Leader couples; and
- iv. Lack of Teachers, Presentators, Shepherds, etc.

The **Prayer Community** will still be governed by a Tricord (Evangelization, Formation, Management) whose membership need not be limited to Covenanted Disciples couples but may include Covenanted Single and/or Solo Parent Disciples. The Tricord will be shepherded by the Pastoral Counselor, a resident Covenanted Disciple couple, who will pastorally be under the Pastoral Servant Leader.

All programs, e.g., the Weekend Encounters (M.E., S.E., S.P.E., F.E., and Y.E.), L.S.S., and the Christian Discipleship Formation and other activities akin to a “full-fledged” District will continue, thereby ensuring the spiritual growth and development of its members. Moreover, the **Prayer Community** must be extended all available assistance to bring it back to “full-fledged” status.

In effect, the **Prayer Community** will continue to function as a “full-fledged” District, minus of course, the said category (“**Full-Fledged**” District) and without the restrictions on appointments/assignments of disciples to positions of responsibility, i.e., singles and solo parents who are covenant members may be emerged/assigned as Tricord, Worship Leaders, Ministry Coordinators, etc. The Prayer Community will be allowed the use of BLD name as follows: **Bukas-Loob sa Diyos “(BLD) PRAYER COMMUNITY”**.

The existing disciples (Covenant and Committed) of a BLD District shall retain their respective status and shall continue to function as such in the new **Prayer Community**. Moreover, in the event of a transfer of residence of a member disciple, said disciple will still retain his/her membership status in the “**receiving**” District/DIP/Prayer Community after proper endorsement from the “**sending**” District/DIP/Prayer Community.

A **Prayer Community** could also evolve from a BLD-DIP which encounters great difficulty in moving on to become a “**Full-Fledged**” District. A reasonable period of time, normally 5 years after its inception as a frame should the leadership foresee a continued difficulty in harnessing enough resources to fulfill the basic requirements of being a “**Full-Fledged**” District, the Tricord may opt to establish the group instead into a **BLD-Prayer Community** by tendering a request to the Council of Servant Leaders (CSL) through the DIP Shepherd. The

CSL, after evaluating the request, communicates its decision to the Tricord, again through the DIP Shepherd.

Moreover, all Community programs will continue to be made available to the **Prayer Community** to ensure the spiritual growth and development of its members. Should the **Prayer Community**, over the normal course of time, be able to develop the necessary resources to be categorized as a **“Full-Fledged”** District, the Tricord resubmits a request to the CSL for an upgrading or re-classification.

11.8 FORMATION OF DISTRICTS

11.8.a. A District is formed when a Diocesan Bishop formally give his approval in writing to the Covenant Community to conduct its Encounter, Renewal and Discipleship Formation programs in his Diocese.

11.8.b. The Council of Servant Leaders, after receiving the formal approval from the Diocesan Bishop, assigns an existing Full-Term District, referred to as “Administering District,” to administer to the needs of the Prayer Group which is referred to as “District in Process (DIP)”

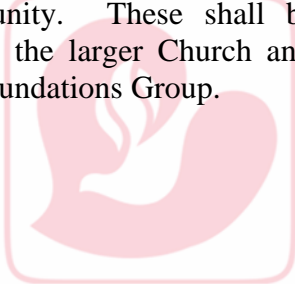
11.8.c. The Administering District then assumes responsibility for the formation and development of the District in Process. The functions of the Administering District are:

- i. To form, where available, a Core Group of Community members residing in the District in Process, who are at least graduates of the Community’s Marriage Encounter and Life in the Spirit Seminar;
- ii. To assign a District Shepherd Couple, who shall supervise the conduct of the Community’s Encounter, Renewal and Discipleship Formation programs, and guide the District in Process in its development until the District in Process attains the status of Full-Fledged District. A Full-Fledged District is one which is composed of at least twenty (20) Covenant Disciples whose request to be recognized as such a District shall be approved by the Council of Servant Leaders and endorsed by their Diocesan Bishop; and
- iii. To provide the service of Community Disciples from the Administering District Council for the pastoral, program and administrative needs of the District in Process.
- iv. On special circumstances, the Council may assign a Full-Pledged District who is nearing Full-Term Status to serve as “Administering District to a “District in Process”.

- 11.8.d. When the DIP has produced covenant members and has achieved the required criteria, the Administering District recommends for approval to the CSL its elevation to Full Fledged status.
- 11.8.e. The development of a Full Fledged District is monitored by the District Development Servant Leader for the Council of Servant Leaders, through the District Development Deputy (DDD). At such time when the Full Fledged District is ready to be elevated to Full Term status, the District Development Servant Leader recommends this action to the Council of Servant Leaders for its approval.

11.8 MISSION INSTITUTES

The three Mission Institutes namely: IPCD, BYPI, and NPMP have spin-off from the Covenant Community. These shall be the vehicles of the Covenant Community in serving the larger Church and coordinate with the Community through the Mission Foundations Group.



12.0 GOVERNANCE

12.1 PROCESS OF EMERGENCE

Servant Leaders are selected by the Spiritual Director from among a list of eligible Covenant Disciples nominated by all Covenant Disciples from all Community Districts through a process of emergence.

12.1.a. **The process of selection and emergence for Servant Leaders consists of four (4) phases described as follows:**

- i. All active Covenant Disciples from all Districts are provided by the Management Steward with a list of disciples eligible for nomination for Servant leadership. These are male covenant disciples who have remained in the Community covenant for at least five full years (excluding leave periods) married to an active covenant disciple, and has complied with the Community policy on faithful attendance at Community worship and living word group services
- ii. Every active Covenant Disciple then selects from the list of eligibles those whom they believe are qualified for servant leadership: the number they nominate shall not exceed twenty five percent (25%) of the list of eligibles.
- iii. The results of the general nomination shall be tabulated by a committee of three Covenant Disciples who are not eligible for nomination, appointed by the Spiritual Director upon the recommendation of the Council of Servant Leaders and nominated by their respective District Council of Stewards. This is the Community Committee on Emergence Overseers (CCEO).
- iv. The highest-ranking third (thirty three per cent (33%) of the names figuring in the tabulation are convened by the CCEO for the functional phase. They will nominate from among themselves those disciples whom they believe will best serve the functions and object of each one of these Community Apostolates. Each nominator may nominate three different disciples as Servant Leader for each Community Apostolates indicating his preferences by giving the score of 3 for his first choice, the score of 2 for his second choice and the score of 1 for his third choice. Any disciple may be nominated only thrice by any one nominator: ranked differently each time, and for three different functions.

- v. The list of nominators is circularized among all Covenant Disciples. Any Covenant Disciple may register his/her objection or reservation regarding any nominator, provided that this is done in writing, signed by the person(s) submitting the objection or reservation, sealed and delivered to the Spiritual Director who may, at his discretion, consider the contents of the letter(s), and may require a face-to face dialogue between the parties concerned.
- vi. The CEO again tabulates the results, and presents to the Spiritual Director two tables: the Table of General Ranking and the Table of Functional Ranking (that is by Apostolate). The Spiritual Director will then discern the names of as many Servant Leaders as there are Community Apostolates plus one (1).
- vii. The Council of Servant Leaders will provide the implementing guidelines for the emergence process with the approval of the Spiritual Director.
- viii. Those who accept the call of Servant Leadership will then assemble for two (2) purposes: to elect a Head Servant; and to determine who will act as Servant Leader for each of the Apostolate.

12.1.b. Common Criteria for selecting Servant Leaders

- i. Strong working knowledge of and witness to the Word of God;
- ii. Spirit of Servanthood (humility, submission, respect for others, answering the needs of others ahead of oneself, other oriented);
- iii. Fruitfulness in shepherding service;
- iv. Sensitive to the needs of the larger Church;
- v. Working understanding of the Community and of their respective mission fields;
- vi. Free from spiritual pride and self- righteousness;
- vii. Meaningful, contributive presence;
- viii. Family and personal life in order;
- ix. Headship in the conjugal relationship and in the family;
- x. Ability to work with others and in a team;
- xi. Openness to feedback and critique: and
- xii. Managerial ability (resourcefulness, ability to delegate, prudent and open advocacy of convictions, ability to acquire information relevant to decision- making, ability to integrate differing opinions or options, effectiveness in written and oral communication).
- xiii. Coming from the Districts in the EPM for Executive Council*

- xiv. Coming from all Full-term Districts as members of the Community Council.*

12.1.c. **Functional Criteria** for selecting Servant Leaders are included in Annex 2; The objectives of Community Apostolates are listed in Annex on Organization.

12.2 TERM OF OFFICE

The term of as Servant Leader shall be three (3) years. His service may be renewed for another term of three (3) years. After two (2) terms, the Servant Leader is required to take a sabbatical leave of one (1) year. He may then be eligible for nomination and serve again at the next general or special emergence, at the discretion of the Spiritual Director.

12.3 DISTRICT COUNCIL OF STEWARDS

The Council of Servant Leaders appoint the District Council of Stewards (DCS) for each District, after discerning the results of a process of emergence.

12.3.a. The Council of Servant Leaders will appoint the DCS for each District:

- i. For DIP's, the Council of Servant Leaders may appoint Interim Couples. They will have an indefinite term of office, and serve at the discretion of the Council.
- ii. For Full-Fledged Districts, the DCS will be selected and emerged from among the first three (3) batches of active Covenant Disciples.
- iii. For Full-Term Districts, the DCS shall be appointed by the Council of Servant Leaders through a process of emergence from among the active Covenant Disciples of the District, who have remained in the covenant for three (3) years including official leave periods. Such disciples should have served as a member of the District Leaders Conference formerly (BOC) and is serving (any two) as a prayer leader, or an encounter sharer or an instructor.”

12.3.b. **Qualifications, eligibility and process for emergence of District Stewards for Full Term District**

- i. Common criteria for nomination as District Stewards are: compliance with the norms of the District: faithful attendance at worship and word sharing session; evidence of Christian leadership; and availability for the performance of apostolate functions.
- ii. A committee on District Committee on Emergence Overseers (DCEO) of three (3) non-eligible members, composed of either Covenant or Committed Disciples, shall be appointed by the Spiritual Adviser.
- iii. All active Covenant Disciples shall assemble for the emergence process. Each individual disciple will nominate at least three (3) disciples for each Steward Apostolate function (i.e. Pastoral, Evangelization, Formation, Management, Mission) indicating their rank preferences by giving their first preference for a specific function a rank of three (3), their second preference a rank of two (2) and their third preference a rank of one (1).
- iv. The DCEO shall tabulate the results of the emergence and report this to the Council of Servant Leaders.

12.4 TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTION AND PERMANENT REPLACEMENT OF SERVANT LEADERS AND DISTRICT STEWARDS

12.4.a. BACK UP AND TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTION

In the Council of Servant Leaders

- i. When the Servant Leader goes on leave for a period of 2 weeks to no more than 3 months, the pre-agreed back-up Servant Leader takes over the function.
- ii. When the leave is from 3 months to no more than 6 months, a temporary substitution is called for. In such cases, a former Servant Leader, even one on Sabbatical Leave, must be requested to temporarily assume the vacated position until the Servant Leader on leave is able to resume work.

In the District Council of Stewards

- i. When both spouses go on leave for a period of 2 weeks to no more than 6 months, a coordinator couple of the same ministry, who has been assigned by the DCS to be the understudy of the particular

Steward going on leave, will automatically assume the position on a temporary basis. The Council of Servant Leaders must have previously approved the coordinator couple, who are members of the District Leaders Conference

- ii. When only one couple spouse goes on leave for a period of 2 weeks to no more than 3 months, the other spouse continues to perform the functions of the position.
- iii. When one of the spouses goes on leave for 3 months to no more than 6 months, a coordinator couple of the same ministry, who has been assigned by the DCS to be the understudy of the particular Steward going on leave, will automatically assume the position on a temporary basis

12.4.b. **PERMANENT REPLACEMENT**

In the Council of Servant Leaders

When a Servant Leader goes on leave for more than 6 months a permanent replacement will be appointed from the list of emerged from the last General Emergence for Servant Leaders. The Spiritual Director, who has the sole authority to appoint the Servant leader, may appoint at his discretion, the replacement by following any one of the procedure proposed:

- i. From the list of the leading forty-two (42) nominees who figured in the last General Emergence for Servant Leaders, the Spiritual Director may appoint the Servant Leader directly from the remaining names, less the incumbent; or
- ii. From the list of the top twenty (20) emerged nominees and excluding the incumbent Servant Leaders, choose directly the Servant Leader; or
- iii. Ask the incumbent Servant Leaders to make recommendations of ten (10) names from the top twenty (20) emerged nominees, indicating their profile, including their strengths and weaknesses. In which case, the CSL may form a committee to do research and profiling to aid the CSL in deciding *en banc* the names to be submitted to the Spiritual director.
- iv. Any past Servant leader, who is an active Covenant Disciple and is no longer on Sabbatical Leave may be chosen for the unfinished term.

In the District Council of Stewards:

When the absence of one of the spouses is more than 6 months, The Council of Servant Leaders will appoint a permanent replacement. The CSL will appoint from the list of top fifteen (15) emerged nominees of the District, excluding the incumbent District Stewards. The CSL may choose to appoint from other emerged nominees lower than the top fifteen (15) if it discerns to do so.

12.5 DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT DEPUTY

- 12.5.a. The District Development Servant Leader shall recommend to the Council of Servant Leaders experienced Covenant Disciples who shall serve as District Development Deputy (DDD). A DDD is a Covenant Couple who have gained sufficient experience and have demonstrated fruitful evidence of leadership serving as District Leaders.
- 12.5.b. The DDD as a staff member of the Council of Servant Leaders shall act as the Council's Representative to a Full-Fledged District, guiding the development of the District and its resources such as sharers, teachers and worship leaders. They are also tasked to coordinate inter-district activities as designed by the Council. They have no pastoral nor governance functions over the District Council of Stewards.
- 12.5.c. The DDD shall also be tasked to function as Fund Coordinators for the Mission Foundation Group. They shall target or attract new individuals, associations that are not the regular source of donations of any district.

12.6 DISCIPLE'S MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Each Covenant disciple shall have a voice in their own service assignment(s). Every covenant disciple submits to the District Council of Stewards their reference for ministry service, in ranked order: a rank of 3 for their first preference; a rank of 2 for their second preference and a rank for 1 for their third preference. The DIP Shepherd for DIP's and Pastoral Steward for both Full-Fledged and Full-term Districts deliberates on the Disciple's Ministry assignment."

- 12.6.a. All nominees for service assignment shall be cleared by the DIP Shepherd for DIP's and Pastoral Steward for both Full-Fledged and Full Term Districts.

12.6.b. After due consideration of the needs of the Community Apostolates and Homesteads and of the qualifications and requirements of Ministry service, the decision of the DCS shall be executory, and the Covenant Disciple shall submit to the final decision.

12.6 SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

The Head Servant or any Servant Leader in charge of any Community Apostolate may recommend to the Council the services of Covenant Members who shall serve on as per need basis and for a specific period perform tasks for their Apostolate subject to consultation with the DCS of the disciple's district.

12.7 POLICY DECISION AND CONSULTATION

All policy decisions in the Covenant Community shall be collective and consensual. No policy decision may be amended except by the unanimous agreement of the respective governing body in the Community: the District Council of Stewards and the Council of Servant Leaders

12.7.a. All disciples are affected by the consequences of a Community decision, or who may significantly contribute to the soundness of that decision, shall be consulted and provided ample opportunity to express their opinions on the question of the decision.

12.7.b. Upon the substantive completion of the consultative process, the District Council of Stewards (for ministries/homesteads) or the Council of Servant Leaders (for the entire Covenant Community or a particular District) shall deliberate, discern and form a decision on the question on hand

12.7.c. Any District Steward or Servant Leader who retains a serious objection to the proposed policy, based on the Word of God and on the Church teachings, shall officially register their objection and rationale in the minutes of the meeting. No action then be made by the District Council or the Council of Servant Leaders on the proposal.

12.7.d. The proponent of the proposal may then elevate the proposal or appeal to higher authority: from the District Council to the Council of Servant Leaders; from the Council of Servant Leaders to the Spiritual Director. All decisions may be reversed by the action of higher authority.

12.7.e. On questions pertaining to the canonicity or status of the Covenant Community, the final appellate body is the Episcopal Commission on the Laity of the Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines.

12.8 RESOLVING WRONG DOINGS

Disregard or violation of policy constitutes sufficient grounds for a report of wrong doing which shall be conducted in the following procedure:

- 12.8.a. The plaintiff shall approach the defendant in private, to seek clarification, dialogue and reconciliation.
- 12.8.b. If admission, apology and reconciliation are not attained, the plaintiff will present at least two (2) witnesses to the defendant. In the presence of the defendant's Pastoral Head.
- 12.8.c. If repentance and reconciliation are still not offered by the defendant, then the plaintiff shall present the report to the Pastoral Servant Leader for Districts or to the DIP Shepherd for DIP
- 12.8.d. The DCS shall appoint three (3) Covenant Disciples to form the District's Reconciliation committee, composed of three (3) Covenant Disciples.
- 12.8.e. A formal inquiry is then conducted by the Reconciliation Committee, which submit their recommendation for sanction to the District Council of Stewards.